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House of Representatives

The House met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ADERHOLT).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 28, 2006.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ROBERT B. ADERHOLT to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

''Oh, Lord, You have examined me and You know me through and through. You discern even my thoughts from afar.''

It is our nature, Lord God of heaven and earth, to hold us in Your living presence always. It is our nature to think of You or think of others only momentarily. So fixed on ourselves. So limited are we.

Be with each of us, that we may be our very best, and prove ourselves worthy of Your love and Your grace. Be with Congress and its work and deliberations today, that this government may merit the trust of the American people and manifest the strength of the democracy to the nations of the world.

Without You, O Lord, we can do nothing. With You and in You we can establish a kingdom of peace, goodness and justice now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. FOXX led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 17, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on February 17, 2006, at 1:45 p.m.:

That the Senate agreed to H. Con. Res. 345.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk of the House.

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, a year ago we were filled with hope that the proposed United Nations Human Rights Council would correct the deeply flawed human rights mechanisms in that body. We thought that once and for all repressive regimes would be held accountable for their crimes.

However, our hopes were quickly dashed last Thursday when the latest proposal for the new Human Rights Council was made public. Rather than taking the time to do something constructive, to make things right, the international community chose consensus over substance. There was a race to the lowest common denominator. And the result? A flawed proposal which empowers dictatorships while weakening democratic countries such as the United States and Israel.

Much more work needs to be done, Mr. Speaker. We must ensure that the new council is not mere cosmetic changes, but true reform. Let us support our U.S. Ambassador, John Bolton, by rejecting this so-called reform. It is nothing but a farce.

BUSH ADMINISTRATION IGNORES THE LAW ON SECURING OUR PORTS

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, the Bush administration should have never approved a deal to allow the United Arab Emirates to operate at least six major U.S. ports. The administration claims it went through the proper process in approving the deal, but the administration did not conduct a 45-day investigation that is legally required. It would be nice if someone over at the White House would actually read the laws passed here in Congress.

If the Bush administration had done its homework, they would have discovered that a 45-day investigation is mandatory in cases like this where the company is controlled by a foreign government and the acquisition could affect our national security.

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Had Congress not expressed outrage with the plan, a 45-day investigation would not be taking place today. However, investigation is simply not enough. I have absolutely no confidence that the Bush administration will conduct a proper investigation without pressure from Congress. Democrats and Republicans here in the House must stand against this proposal. We already know our ports are vulnerable. We should not add to that vulnerability by turning our port operations over to another country.

OUR ECONOMY IS DOING GREAT

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, our economy is doing great. But Americans will not find that out from the Main Street media. New York Times, January 2006: the U.S. economy slowed sharply at the end of 2005.

Atlanta Journal Constitution, January 2006: economic growth slows to a snail's pace.

The New York Times again, January 2006: pockets of concern slow a strong U.S. economy.

But what the facts show, the U.S. economy grew 3.1 percent during 2005. The unemployment rate is 4.7 percent, the lowest since July 2001.

The Congressional Budget Office projects economic growth at 3.6 percent in 2006. Personal incomes grew above inflation last year in 49 out of 50 States. Two million jobs were created last year, and more Americans are working than ever before. Average weekly earnings grew faster in 2005 than the average growth during the Clinton years.

Do not believe the headlines. Our economy is the envy of the industrialized world, and we are doing great.

PORT SECURITY

(Mr. FEENEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my concern with the potential port management transfer to Dubai Ports World.

Less than 1 month ago, our President stood in front of us and told us that homeland security was the number one issue this Nation faces. And, in fact, this administration has a strong and great record in defending our homeland.

But last week, when I was home, Americans throughout my district expressed deep concern that this fast track deal had not been given the type of scrutiny that all of us took a constitutional oath to do when we said we would protect our country.

I need to say that, although the United Arab Emirates has been recently a good friend, including a friend in the war on terror, this deal deserves much more discourse and much more scrutiny before it goes forward.

I plan to support legislation to provide congressional oversight for such important decisions in the future and to put a hold on this deal unless and until Congress satisfies itself, as the administration has, that America's interests and security will not be imperiled.

STATUS OF THE ECONOMY

(Mr. CARTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, my son Johnny and his new bride bought a house last fall. He is a baseball coach at our local high school. He has joined a record number of people, the largest in the history of the United States, who own their own home. The great American Dream, to own your own home.

The naysayers say the economy is struggling, but the facts do not prove out to be the truth. More people own their own home in America than at any time in the history of our Nation.

We are growing. We have an unemployment rate of 4.7 percent, and that is one of the lowest in history. Texas unemployment is at an all-time low in modern history. Our economy grew a solid 4.1 percent in the third quarter, the 10th straight quarter of GDP at a rate above 3 percent.

We are producing more. We are growing more. We are providing more jobs. We need to prevent the tax increases that many in this body wish to make. We need to make sure that we maintain a good tax structure and keep the tax cuts in position so that this growth will continue. It is good for the American Dream.

PORT ACQUISITION

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, it is said that Washington does two things well, nothing and overreact. And both have been in high relief in the last week in our Nation's Capital.

Americans learned just a few days ago of the approval by the Committee on Foreign Investment of the United States that a company owned by the United Arab Emirates had purchased the ability to operate ports in six major American cities.

Those on the do-nothing side argued very quickly that the contract had been vetted in the CFIUS program, a 30-day perfunctory review. They argued that no more review was necessary, despite the fact that the UAE had been the home to the banks that funneled money to the 19 hijackers on 9/11 and, in fact, had endorsed the Taliban government in Afghanistan before that attack.

On the overreact side, many in Congress, especially, it seems, Democrats in the Senate, called for a complete cancellation of the contract without regard to the fact that since 9/11 the United Arab Emirates has been a strong ally of the United States, providing a safe harbor for more than 500 of our ships to be refueled and readied.

For my part, I joined those in Congress who called for a thorough investigation of this contract in the next month and a half and in an agreement reached this weekend between the administration, Congress, and the companies involved of a 45-day review to go forward.

But in order for this contract to be moved forward, the American people must be absolutely certain that doing so will not compromise the methods and practices that the Coast Guard, Customs, and Homeland Security employ to protect our ports.

OUR ECONOMY

(Mr. GINGREY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud the Republican fiscal policies that have led the United States economy to an expansion rate of 3.5 percent in 2005. Over the last year we have experienced real economic successes as a result of our legislation that puts American families first.

In 2005 we witnessed historically low unemployment rates, a GDP growth rate of 4.3 percent, and 30 straight months of employment gains. It is no wonder consumer confidence rose last month to the highest level in several years. The current unemployment rate of 4.7 percent is lower than the average rates in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

Our policies, Mr. Speaker, are working. And just last month our payroll employment rose by another 193,000 jobs.

Mr. Speaker, our economy is strong. Household net worth is at an all-time high. Construction spending is at an all-time high. Homeownership is at an all-time high.

I think we can all see the trend developing here. As a Congress, we must adhere to the principles of lower taxes and more responsible government spending. These are the policies that have a proven track record of growing our economy. I am greatly encouraged that economic forecasters project our robust economy will continue in 2006.

RECOGNIZING PRESIDENT BUSH'S HISTORIC TRIP TO INDIA

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, while preparing for his upcoming visit to India, President Bush recently highlighted the unique role India is playing in the 21st century. As the largest democracy in the world and

one of the largest economies in the world, India possesses a rare combination of freedom and innovation which is paving the way for the country's bright future.

The United States already shares a strong strategic partnership with India, enhanced by the extraordinary success of 2.2 million Indian-Americans. Our nations are working together to defeat the global threat of terrorism, support democracy around the world, and encourage fair trade. Last year, exports from America to India increased by 30 percent, clearly indicating a bright future for U.S.-India trade with mutual benefit.

By traveling to India this week, President Bush is taking another step to cement the bonds of this strong relationship. I appreciate his leadership, and I am confident that he will witness the same positive developments I saw during my recent trip to India.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

SECURING OUR HOMELAND

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, we are hearing a good bit about national security today; and whether it is ports or the PATRIOT Act, we know that there are things that we in this body can do and steps we can take to be certain that America is a safer place for our children, for our families to live, to work, to enjoy our lives.

Mr. Speaker, the PATRIOT Act as it comes back around and as we hear more about this and hear more about the reauthorization of this, I would encourage our colleagues to remember this is a tool that has proven to be successful and useful in our national security. It has proven to be a useful tool in keeping America safe. It has proven to be useful to law enforcement. It deserves reauthorization. It deserves reconsideration, and I encourage all Members of this body to support reauthorization of the PATRIOT Act.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 16, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER, Effective today, February 16th, I resign my seat on the Committee on Education pending my appointment to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

Sincerely,

JOHN BARROW.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted.

There was no objection.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 17, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on February 17, 2006, at 1:25 p.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4745.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk of the House.

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ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ADERHOLT). Pursuant to clause 4 of rule I, Speaker pro tempore TOM DAVIS signed the following enrolled bill on Friday, February 17, 2006:

H.R. 4745, making supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 2006 for the Small Business Administration's disaster loans program, and for other purposes.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO MEXICO-UNITED STATES INTERPARLIAMENTARY GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 276h, and the order of the House of December 18, 2005, the Chair announces on February 16, 2006, the Speaker appointed the following Members of the House to the Mexico-United States Interparliamentary Group:

Mr. KOLBE, Arizona, Chairman
Mr. MCCAUL, Texas, Vice Chairman

COMMUNICATION FROM THE HON. CURT WELDON, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable CURT WELDON, Member of Congress:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 17, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to notify you formally, pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that I have been served with a subpoena for testimony and documents issued by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

After consultation with the Office of General Counsel, I have determined that compliance with the subpoena is inconsistent with the precedents and privileges of the House.

Sincerely,

CURT WELDON,
Member of Congress.

PORT SECURITY

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, the idea that any foreign government could control our ports sets off alarm bells for many Americans. And it ought to. Our Nation's ports are among our most critical infrastructure.

And that is why I cannot fathom why the Bush administration would willingly transfer the operation of 20 U.S. ports to a company owned by the United Arab Emirates, a country who may be an ally today but has had a checkered past when it comes to supporting terrorism. In approving the transaction, we see once again how the administration conducts business behind a veil of secrecy, cutting corners, failing to follow the law and acting at the behest of not the American citizens but industry. Indeed, they only agreed to the 45-day review the law requires after the company suggested it. And while mid-level officials were signing off on this deal, the President was nominating a top DP World executive to serve in his administration, a blatant conflict of interest.

Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that Dubai Ports World says there will be a firewall between the company and its U.S. ports, make no mistake, their employees will be operating these ports as of Thursday.

And whether the issue is ports, the Iraq War, the wiretapping of American citizens, what concerns me is this Republican Congress has never once asked this administration the tough questions. It has to. Congress must not once again give in to a policy that is clearly not in the public interest.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

FACILITATING SHAREHOLDER CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS TO MAKE SETTLEMENT COMMON STOCK AVAILABLE UNDER THE ALASKA NATIVE CLAIMS SETTLEMENT ACT

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 449) to facilitate shareholder consideration of proposals to make

Settlement Common Stock under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act available to missed enrollees, eligible elders, and eligible persons born after December 18, 1971, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 449

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. TECHNICAL AMENDMENT TO ALASKA NATIVE CLAIMS SETTLEMENT ACT.

Section 36(d)(3) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1629b) is amended—

(1) by striking ''(d)(3)'' and inserting ''(3)'';

(2) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''of this section'' and inserting ''or an amendment to articles of incorporation under section 7(g)(1)(B)'';

(3) in subparagraph (A)—

(A) by striking '', or'' and inserting ''; or''; and

(B) by striking ''such resolution'' and inserting ''the resolution or amendment to articles of incorporation''; and

(4) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''such resolution'' and inserting ''the resolution or amendment to articles of incorporation''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. RENZI) and the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, S. 449, which is sponsored by Alaska Senator LISA MURKOWSKI, corrects a problem related to the issuance of stock by Native corporations pursuant to the Native Alaska Claims Settlement Act of 1971.

The bill eases certain restrictions placed on Native corporations that have made it practically impossible for many of them to issue new stock to young Alaska Natives. The same legislation has already been passed by the House as part of H.R. 3351, the Native American Technical Corrections Act.

In passing this bill today, we should recognize and applaud the efforts of the congressman for all of Alaska, Mr. YOUNG, who has labored for years to bring this bill before the House today.

I urge adoption of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. RAHALL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, S. 449 is noncontroversial legislation to make it easier for Alaska Native corporations to issue new stock.

Although S. 449 has neither been the subject of a hearing nor a markup in the Committee on Resources, it is sensible legislation which seeks to allow for expanded partition by Alaska Natives in the Native corporations established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971. I am not aware of any opposition to S. 449 and urge support for its passage.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 449, a bill to facilitate shareholder consideration of proposals to make settlement common stock under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) available to missed enrollees, eligible elders, and eligible persons born after December 18, 1971.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), as originally enacted, limited Alaska Native Regional Corporations from enrolling Natives born after December 18, 1971, as shareholders in their respective corporations. Subsequent amendments to ANCSA have allowed Regional Corporations to include Natives born after December 18, 1971 (often referred to as "New Natives" or "Shareholder Descendants"), if existing shareholders of the Corporation adopt a resolution at an annual meeting. Thus far, very few Native Corporations have adopted resolutions to include Shareholder Descendants, in part because the standard of adopting a resolution is too high.

As the law now exists, Alaska Native Corporations (ANCs) may issue new stock to children of their original shareholders born after 1971 and missed enrollees and additional stock to Native Elders, but they may not do so unless a majority of the corporation's shares approve such a change at a meeting of the corporation's shareholders. However, because not all shareholders attend corporation meetings, it is difficult at any meeting to achieve a vote in which a majority of all shareholders, whether or not represented at the meeting, agree to have new stock issued.

S. 449 amends the law to require that only a majority of shares represented at the meeting itself assent to the issuance of new stock, so long as a quorum is present, in order for new stock to be issued.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this important legislation.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. RENZI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 449.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ACT COMMEMORATING THE LITE, OR LIFETIME INNOVATIONS OF THOMAS EDISON

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1096) to establish the Thomas Edison National Historical Park in the State of New Jersey as the successor to the Edison National Historic Site, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1096

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Act Commemorating the LITE, or Lifetime Innovations of Thomas Edison''.

SEC. 2. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this Act are—

(1) to recognize and pay tribute to Thomas Alva Edison and his innovations; and

(2) to preserve, protect, restore, and enhance the Edison National Historic Site to ensure public use and enjoyment of the Site as an educational, scientific, and cultural center.

SEC. 3. THOMAS EDISON NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established the Thomas Edison National Historical Park as a unit of the National Park System (hereafter the ''Historical Park'').

(b) BOUNDARIES.—The Historical Park shall be comprised of—

(1) all property owned by the United States in the Edison National Historic Site as well as all property authorized to be acquired by the Secretary of the Interior for inclusion in the Edison National Historic Site before the date of the enactment of this Act, as generally depicted on the map entitled the ''Edison National Historic Site'', numbered 20003B, and dated April 1977; and

(2) all property authorized to be acquired for inclusion in the Historical Park by this Act or other law enacted after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) MAP.—The map of the Historical Park shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service.

SEC. 4. ADMINISTRATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall administer the Historical Park in accordance with this Act and with the provisions of law generally applicable to units of the National Park System, including the Acts entitled ''An Act to establish a National Park Service, and for other purposes,'' approved August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535; 16 U.S.C. 1 et seq.) and ''An Act to provide for the preservation of historic American sites, buildings, objects, and antiquities of national significance, and for other purposes,'' approved August 21, 1935 (16 U.S.C. 461 et seq.).

(b) ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY.—

(1) REAL PROPERTY.—The Secretary may acquire land or interests in land within the boundaries of the Historical Park, from willing sellers only, by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange.

(2) PERSONAL PROPERTY.—The Secretary may acquire personal property associated with, and appropriate for, interpretation of the Historical Park.

(c) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary may consult and enter into cooperative agreements with interested entities and individuals to provide for the preservation, development, interpretation, and use of the Historical Park.

(d) REPEAL OF SUPERSEDED LAW.—Public Law 87–628 (76 Stat. 428), regarding the establishment and administration of the Edison National Historic Site, is repealed.

(e) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the ''Edison National Historic Site'' shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Thomas Edison National Historical Park''.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. RENZI) and the gentleman

from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 1096 redesignates the Edison National Historic site as the Thomas Edison National Historic Park. The park will encompass all lands currently contained in the historic site and property designated for inclusion by the Secretary of the Interior prior to passage of this act.

Typically, an historic site is considered by the National Park Service to contain a single historical feature, while generally a National Historic Park extends beyond single properties or buildings. Based on this definition, Edison Historic Site will be more appropriately designated as a National Historic Park. Supporters of the park anticipate that this redesignation will bring more attention, visitation, and revenue to the Edison Historic Site.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1096.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. RAHALL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, the legacy left by Thomas Edison is among the most important in American history. Through his generosity, the National Park Service is able to interpret the legacy for future generations, and H.R. 1096 will help further that important goal.

In addition to the sponsor, other members of the New Jersey delegation, including Representatives ROB ANDREWS, FRANK PALLONE, DONALD PAYNE, and BILL PASCRELL, are to be commended for their efforts in bringing this legislation to the floor.

I urge our colleagues to support H.R. 1096.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT), the author of the bill.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1096, a piece of legislation that benefits an important historic landmark from my home State of New Jersey, the Thomas Edison National Historic Site.

I also want to thank my colleagues from the other side of the aisle for their support and their hard work on this as well, Congressman DONALD PAYNE and Congressman BILL PASCRELL for all their work in joining with me in sponsoring this important legislation.

Tom Edison's contributions, most notably the incandescent light bulb, the motion picture camera, and the phonograph, have had a profound effect on the way people live their lives around the world. In fact, Life Magazine once honored him as the most important individual for the last 1,000 years.

The Thomas Edison National Historic Site in West Orange, New Jersey is a national treasure, encompassing Edison's home of 45 years, his laboratories and offices, and a vast collection of artifacts and historic documents.

Since 1997, the Edison Preservation Foundation has successfully partnered with the National Park Service to provide resources for the restoration of the site's historic buildings, artifacts and such, and plans to establish an endowment to support it for future operation including education programs for children. This partnership is really a great example of the public/private partnership working together and can serve as a role model for other programs in the future considering scarce financial Federal resources.

Unfortunately, both the historic structures where Edison lived and worked and irreplaceable treasures they now hold are at serious risk due to extensive water and damage and age-related decay. Although the site historically has been a major education destination for students from around the region, the need for renovations has led to a temporary closure of the site to visitors. While private support through the efforts of the Edison Preservation Foundation is crucial to efforts to restore the site, a long-term commitment from the Federal Government is also necessary for future success. So to ensure this long-term commitment, we have H.R. 1096, which commemorates Edison's lifetime accomplishments; redesignates, consistent with the National Park Service guidelines, the Edison Historic Site as the National Historic Park; and authorizes appropriations for the support of the site. This legislation will enable the Edison site to more effectively compete for scarce Federal funds and it would also strengthen the Edison Preservation Foundation's ability to raise private dollars.

Finally, Thomas Edison's legacy is an important component of the history of the State of New Jersey and the United States. So it is important that this Congress affirm its support for the Edison site by advancing this legislation.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) and commend him for his excellent leadership on this legislation.

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of H.R. 1096, the Act Commemorating the Lifetime Innovations of Thomas Edison. The Thomas Edison Historic Site in West Orange, New Jersey is a national historic treasure, and I am privileged to have it located in my congressional district and have had the pleasure of visiting the site on a number of occasions.

The laboratory complex consists of buildings that date back to 1887. These labs house the technology and the technological innovations and artifacts that changed the course of not only America but the entire world. We have visitors from throughout the world that come to the site, many from Asian countries where technology has become a very important part of their development and in many instances even bow to the statue and pictures of Thomas Edison because they revere the importance of technology that has really lighted the world through his inventions. The labs house the technology and innovations. And from the light bulb to the motion picture camera, Edison's unparalleled innovations are being preserved for current and future generations. The first movie was made there, the Black Maria it is called, and the movie studio is as it was over 100 years ago. The light bulb, the phonograph and records that were cast there at this site all need to be preserved.

Over the years, I have witnessed a positive impact of this unit of the National Park Service. The Edison laboratory complex has opened its doors and resources to assisting in the education of the community, particularly our young people who have had an opportunity to study and to have innovative lessons there. As a former teacher, I am well aware of the value of having a piece of history accessible to augment the learning process by providing lesson plans for teachers, hosting onsite and virtual tours, and facilitating programs and activities for students. The Edison site has provided an invaluable learning experience for these young people.

Thomas Edison devoted his life to technological innovations. His work ethic and commitment to improving the quality of life for others is a lesson that is extremely applicable today. Edison's improvement on the telephone and telegraph machines put him on the cutting edge of communications technology. As we in Congress consider the reauthorization of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, Edison's legacy reminds us of how far we have come.

This June we will celebrate the reopening of the Edison complex. For 2 years the National Park Service and the Thomas Edison Preservation Foundation have worked together to restore and revitalize this historic site.

□ 1430

Over 400,000 artifacts and 5 million pages of documents that trace Edison's process of inventions have been deteriorating due to poor environmental

conditions and age-related decay. Many years ago, I made a request to allocate an appropriations to address these issues, and we were able to get $5 million about 10 years ago. The result is what we see today.

I am very appreciative that my colleagues approve this appeal. The repairs and enhancements of this century-old building will improve the preservation of the priceless artifacts, ensuring that this treasure will remain an educational and cultural destination for generations to come. Passage of this bill will ensure the long-term success of the Edison Historical Site and demonstrate the congressional commitment to our history. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to be able to thank my good friend from New Jersey, Mr. PAYNE, for his eloquence in commenting on this very important site that will be established. The site is a national historic treasure and contains the world's largest collections of materials related to Thomas Edison.

As a member of the House Science Committee, clearly we should use every opportunity to focus on America's researchers and inventors and emphasize that Thomas Edison is one of America's greatest inventors, who has shown not only his love for research and invention, but his inexhaustible energy and genius that produced 1,093 patents in his lifetime, frankly, more than any other American.

Just this weekend we spent time in the city of Houston with the State of the Black Union, and one of the issues dealt with the digital divide among African Americans. The idea of highlighting the importance of invention and the importance of technology of that time by establishing and making better the Edison National Historical Site is, I think, an asset not only to the Nation but certainly to the place where it is lodged. I frankly think that America is a Nation that has great creativity, and I am proud to be an American for that very reason. We are problem-solvers.

Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate the further recognition of the works of Thomas Edison by establishing the Thomas Edison National Historical Park in the State of New Jersey, it causes me to be moved to comment on some of the statements that have been made earlier on the floor of the House and the week's events as relates to signs of showing that we are not creative in our governance of America today, that is, of course, the debate and the recognition of the recent contract with UAE as relates to the taking over of a number of ports throughout America.

Frankly, let me just say that this is not a debate about the UAE, though we now know today that the Coast Guard has indicated that they are not sure that there is not a potential for there to be a security risk in light of port operations being in the hands of foreign entities.

My concern, of course, in this whole debate is the fact that we are dealing with foreign entities in one of our most difficult areas to secure. We know that a ship laden with weapons of mass destruction can be volatile and dangerous.

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I will not yield at this point.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I raise a point of order on the germaneness of the subject matter.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ADERHOLT). The gentleman will state his point of order.

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, although I appreciate very much the gentlewoman's comments as they relate to Thomas Edison and in particular her teaching, which enlightened me on his being the greatest inventor in American history, I would ask that we look at the germaneness of the subject matter and confine debate to the relevance of the subject matter, please.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is correct. Debate should be confined to the pending question.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as my good friend from the Republican side wishes to extinguish debate, let me just indicate, as I started out before, that Thomas Edison represents innovativeness. Unfortunately, our present administration is not innovative.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am hoping that my colleagues will join me in being innovative by not yielding to any compromises that may quash the thoughtfulness that we would have in dealing with our homeland security, which, of course, also involves technology.

I hope that we will have a reasonable debate. My good friend from the other side of the aisle, I hope he will engage in this debate so that legislation that I am offering that is creative, that deals with putting a moratorium on any of these operations owned by foreign entities, a study by the GAO, a study by Homeland Security about our security, I hope that we will have the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to be relevant at another time.

Again, let me say I congratulate the sponsors of this legislation dealing with the Thomas Edison National Historical Park. It exudes innovativeness and respect for creativity in America.

It is sad to say that the last week's activities and our failures for America's ports show no creativity. It is time for Congress to be as creative as it can be in securing the Nation's homeland.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I wish to include these in the extension of remarks.

I want to speak in strong support of H.R. 1096—legislation to help restore the Thomas Edison National Historic Site. I congratulate my colleague SCOTT GARRETT for introducing this worthy legislation. It has been a privilege to work closely with Representative GARRETT and Representative DON PAYNE, whose district houses a large portion of the Edison site, to preserve this national treasure.

I am proud that I represent a region of New Jersey that has given birth to some of the greatest innovations in our Nation's history: Thomas Edison's Glenmont estate in West Orange and the Great Falls National Historic District in Paterson—America's First Industrial City. Each of these impressive areas—only 10 miles apart—sprang from the imagination of two of the great pioneers in American history: Thomas Edison and Alexander Hamilton. Both of these sites—the Edison National Historic Site and the Great Falls Historic District—have been included among the most endangered historic areas in our Nation. The artifacts of both sites are in terrible physical condition and are in grave peril of being lost to the country forever.

Together, these majestic places tell the inspiring story of the rise of the greatest technological and economic power the world has ever known. I strongly believe that it is the role of the Federal Government to partner with the local community to preserve the glory of these places for all future generations to behold.

Although these sites are both close to my heart, I want to specifically voice my support for the preservation and rehabilitation of the Edison National Historic Site, which embodies Edison's legacy as a pioneer of American technology. The Edison National Historic Site, encompassing Edison's home and laboratory complex, is regarded as one of America's original research and development facilities. Half of Edison's astonishing 1,093 patents were earned during the 44 years he lived in West Orange.

The classic inventions created at this site include the phonograph, electric generating systems, the dry storage battery, and the motion picture camera. Edison left a vast collection of artifacts, models, photographs, drawings, and furnishings at the Edison site. In addition, he left nearly 3,500 notebooks documenting every experiment, idea, failure, observation and business strategy of his long career.

Even as Thomas Edison lives on as one of the leading visionaries of our time, his home and labs have tragically fallen into severe disrepair due to age-related decay. The public and private sector must work together to ensure that adults and young people alike will always be able to rediscover the genius of Edison and the impact he has had on all of our daily lives. The support of the National Park Service has enabled the Edison Preservation Foundation to create a vital public-private partnership to maintain the site as a major community and educational resource.

Despite this progress, Congressional support through H.R. 1096 is vital to the Edison site's long-term success. The legislation is an important symbol of Congress's commitment to preserving the legacy of one of America's most influential inventors and to restoring a Federal site that is a historic landmark. I urge the House of Representatives to move forward and approve this important legislation.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. RENZI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1096, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

STE. GENEVIEVE COUNTY NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE STUDY ACT OF 2005

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1728) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of designating the French Colonial Heritage Area in the State of Missouri as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1728

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Ste. Genevieve County National Historic Site Study Act of 2005''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) AREA.—The term ''Area'' means Ste. Genevieve County, Missouri, which includes the Bequette-Ribault, St. Gemme-Amoureaux, and Wilhauk homes, and the related and supporting historical assets located in Ste. Genevieve County, Missouri.

(2) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the National Park Service.

SEC. 3. STUDY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are made available to carry out this Act, the Secretary shall, in consultation with the State of Missouri—

(1) complete a study on the suitability and feasibility of designating the Area as a unit of the National Park System, which shall include the potential impact that designation of the area as a unit of the National Park System is likely to have on land within the proposed area or bordering the proposed area that is privately owned at the time that the study is conducted; and

(2) submit to the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate a report describing the findings of the study.

(b) CONTENTS.—The study under subsection (a) shall be conducted in accordance with Public Law 91–383 (16 U.S.C. 1a–1 et seq.).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. RENZI) and the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1728, introduced by Congressman RUSS CARNAHAN of Missouri and amended by the Resources Committee, would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the feasibility of designating the French Colonial Heritage Area in eastern Missouri as a unit of the National Park System. This area contains some of the only existing examples of the French colonial period settlement in North America dating to circa 1785.

I urge adoption of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. RAHALL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I do commend the gentleman from Missouri, Representative CARNAHAN, for valuing the historic and cultural resources which make his district unique and for seeking ways to interpret and share those resources more broadly.

I spoke with him personally on the phone last night. He is in his district at the current time attending very important activities, but this legislation is just as important to him. Otherwise, he would be here speaking on this personally.

If the study we are authorizing today should support such a move, we look forward to working with Representative CARNAHAN on legislation to make this area a unit of the National Park System.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1728.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1728, the Ste. Genevieve County National Historic Site Study Act of 2005.

This bill will authorize the Secretary of the Interior to study the feasibility of designating areas within Ste. Genevieve County, Missouri, as a unit of the National Park System.

This study is important to the area, as it will help preserve the great history in the region.

Ste. Genevieve's historical significance derives from French colonial settlement in Missouri.

It was an outpost of the French empire and demonstrates France's efforts to colonize the central region of North America.

Today, Ste. Genevieve remains steeped in French tradition, both culturally and architecturally.

The historic region in Ste. Genevieve has a rich collection of resources, including a significant number of 18th century French colonial structures.

Included in the proposed site study are two of the only five remaining vertical log houses known to survive in North America.

Built around 1800, each stands together on their original sites, standing as a reflection of our history, which needs to be preserved for our future.

In addition to these two homes, historic downtown Ste. Genevieve, as well as a common field used by French settlers, known as Le Grand Champ, are further examples of the history and tradition that exists in Ste. Genevieve County.

This bill is important because the study will not only ensure the preservation of local colonial history, but it will result in economic development from increased tourism and entrepreneurship.

I'd like to thank Chairman POMBO and Ranking Member RAHALL for their work on this bill. I would also like to thank my colleague and co-sponsor, Congresswoman EMERSON for her support.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. RENZI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1728, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: ''A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of designating portions of Ste. Genevieve County in the State of Missouri as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING THE CREATION OF THE NASCAR-HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES CONSORTIUM

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 677) recognizing the creation of the NASCAR-Historically Black Colleges and Universities Consortium.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 677

Whereas the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that, while there are 1.3 million automotive technicians currently employed, industry figures confirm that an additional 50,000 technicians are needed to fill open positions each year;

Whereas the National Automotive Dealers Association reports that 57 percent of their dealers' operating profit is generated by their parts and service departments; that dealers consider it difficult to find a qualified technician; and that 42 percent of all dealer technicians have been engaged in that line of work less than one year;

Whereas the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing, Inc. (''NASCAR''),

the NASCAR Universal Technical Institute, and a collaboration of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (''HBCUs'') have agreed to create a strategic alliance focused on increasing the number and quality of job opportunities for African-American students in key racing and other related automotive business activities including automotive engineering and technology, automotive safety, sports marketing, and other automotive industry areas;

Whereas NASCAR and its partner HBCUs are establishing a formal structure to increase the number and quality of job opportunities for African-American students with NASCAR in key racing and other related automotive business activities through the NASCAR Universal Training Institute and the NASCAR Diversity Internship Program;

Whereas NASCAR has agreed to efforts to enhance the identification of employment opportunities with NASCAR such as Internships, full time jobs, including entry level management positions, part-time jobs for college students, and post-graduate job placement for students pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees at partner HBCUs;

Whereas NASCAR and its partner HBCUs have developed a program to increase awareness, access to, and participation by African-American students in the NASCAR Universal Training Institute and NASCAR Diversity Internship Program by partner HBCUs for the racing and other related automotive industries; and

Whereas NASCAR and the partner HBCUs will seek opportunities to establish and enhance the funding of targeted job development activities by partner HBCUs, and to generate support for the HBCUs in their efforts to enhance curriculum development in sports marketing, finance, human resource management and other automotive industry areas: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing, Inc., the NASCAR Universal Technical Institute, and a collaboration of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and their creation of a strategic alliance to increase the number and quality of job opportunities for African-American students in key racing and other related automotive business activities;

(2) commends NASCAR, the NASCAR Universal Technical Institute, the NASCAR Technical Training Institute, and the Historically Black Colleges and Universities, for their efforts to increase the number and quality of job opportunities for African-American students in key racing and other related automotive business activities; and

(3) encourages the Departments of Education and Labor and other appropriate agencies of the Federal government to support this effort.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 677.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 677, a measure to recognize the creation of the NASCAR-Historically Black Colleges and Universities Consortium. I thank the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS) for offering this legislation and for his support of this important partnership.

It is fitting that we are considering this resolution on the final day of Black History Month, 4 weeks during which our Nation has celebrated the countless contributions of African Americans to our Nation's history.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities, or HBCUs, have played an important role in enriching the lives of not just African Americans, but our entire country. In fact, President Bush once noted, ''Our Historically Black Colleges and Universities opened the door to knowledge when other doors were barred. And today they offer exciting opportunities to young people to contribute to their country.''

While compromising only 3 percent of our Nation's 2- and 4-year institutions, HBCUs are responsible for producing 28 percent of all bachelor's degrees, 15 percent of all master's degrees, and 17 percent of all first professional degrees earned by African Americans. And through its new partnership with the popular sport of NASCAR, the impact of HBCUs is sure to grow.

The new NASCAR-HBCU Consortium will promote diversity throughout NASCAR, including its marketing, service, and engineering departments. This is particularly meaningful as our Nation seeks to increase the number of students studying math and science in college. According to the Department of Education's most recent figures, only about 9 percent of students receiving a bachelor's degree in math or science are African Americans, so the creation of this consortium could not have come at a better time.

The United States must produce more students interested in math and science in order for our Nation to excel in an increasingly global economy. HBCUs are sure to be at the forefront of this effort.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud NASCAR for recognizing the contributions HBCUs have made to American education and culture and, more importantly, the contributions they will make in the future. I am proud that the House has taken the lead in promoting the efforts of this consortium, which will ensure new and exciting career opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students attending HBCUs. I ask my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 677, which recognizes the creation of the recently formed partnership between NASCAR and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. This partnership is aimed at increasing the number and quality of job opportunities for African American students in the NASCAR workforce, as well as other related fields, including automotive engineering and technology, automotive safety, sports marketing and other automotive industry areas.

□ 1445

This year, 2006, marks NASCAR's 57th year of racing. Sadly, during its 57 years, NASCAR has had just five black drivers to ever compete in a Cup Series race.

In 1963, Wendell Scott finished 10th or better in the points standings three times, and came away with the victory. However, Scott did not receive his trophy until a month after the fact.

Second place finisher Buck Baker, who was white, was awarded the trophy in fear of fan uproar. Today, nearly 45 years later, the number of black NASCAR fans have increased, but minority drivers and automotive technicians are still nearly nonexistent.

According to an ESPN poll, approximately 6.6 million NASCAR fans are black, yet no black driver has competed at the Cup Series level since Willie T. Ribbs ran three races 20 years ago.

The on-track program is not NASCAR's only effort at diversifying the predominately white sport. NASCAR offers awards, diversity scholarships to minority undergraduate and graduate students attending HBCUs.

The scholarship program is in its sixth year, and the NASCAR diversity internship program is in its seventh year. The internship program is a 10-week paid summer internship that introduces minority students to NASCAR and various career opportunities throughout the industry.

Many of the summer interns have graduated and are currently pursuing engineering and sports management careers. As the automotive industry grows and becomes more technologically demanding in the coming decades, this partnership between NASCAR and Historically Black Colleges and Universities will become increasingly vital.

Mr. Speaker, I support the resolution and urge my colleagues to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the author of this important resolution, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS).

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 677, a resolution recognizing the importance of the NASCAR–HBCU Consortium. On February 8, 2006, the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing, NASCAR, announced a new collaboration with Historically Black Colleges and Universities and the Universal Technical Institute.

The effort, known as the NASCAR–HBCU Consortium, focuses on increasing the number of job opportunities for African American students in racing, technology, automotive safety and sports marketing. I am especially pleased that over 40 Members of Congress have joined my colleague, Representative WATT, and me in introducing this resolution.

Being from Alabama, I have firsthand knowledge of many of the partners in this consortium. As a race fan, I have spent many days at the Talladega Super Speedway, a facility that I am proud to represent here in Congress. In addition, I have the honor of representing three of the leading HBCUs in the Nation: Talladega College, Alabama State University, and Tuskegee University. Their excellence and commitment to education are known across our Nation.

In Alabama, we have been blessed by a thriving and growing automotive industry. Both Honda and Hyundai have built large plants in my congressional district, and they employ thousands of Alabamians with good jobs at good wages.

Mr. Speaker, it is critical that all our young folks have the skills to compete for these jobs. This new partnership should help more of tomorrow's workers take advantage of these new opportunities.

I also call on the United States Departments of Education and Labor to support this consortium as well. And finally I would like to thank Speaker HASTERT for his participation at the announcement of this consortium.

Also I wish to thank Majority Leader BOEHNER and Chairman MCKEON for expediting this resolution for consideration. With that, I respectfully ask the House for its support of this resolution.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she might consume to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for his leadership in managing this legislation as it comes to the floor, and let me give my appreciation to Mr. ROGERS and Mr. WATT for really pinpointing an area that has such vast popularity and recognition and finding in it an opportunity for education and jobs.

This partnership between NASCAR, the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing, as well as the HBCUs, is close to a partnership longing to be established.

This relationship that deals with a sport that has come to be one of the most popular in the United States of America, one that probably has the greatest Sunday afternoon or Saturday afternoon audience of any of our sports, and maybe our sports combined, now can stand as a symbol of opportunity and civil rights.

It is a symbol now of a combination of the needs of the NASCAR sports industry, and Historically Black Colleges. How important it is that we discuss and debate this on the last day of commemorating African American History Month.

Let me point out what is most exciting about this effort. One, HBCUs are known to be one of the greatest resources for talented African American students and others. In addition, Historically Black Colleges are found mostly in the South, where it is known that the NASCAR effort is most popular, but also the heart of that effort.

Of course, it combines education, skills and job opportunity. So this partnership is all that we would ask it to be. We now look to the Department of Education to really engage itself in whatever efforts are necessary to promote, encourage and facilitate this partnership. Let us provide the necessary resources, governmental if at all, necessary to ensure that the partnership continues.

Finally, let me say, let me encourage the young people who might be listening to this debate that the opportunity now stands for you to put your internship, full-time jobs, including entry-level management positions, part-time jobs and postgraduate job placement for students pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees at partner HBCUs.

The skills would be, of course, the technical aspects of this business, and that is relating to the automotive business activities, including automotive engineering and technology, automotive safety, sports marketing and other automotive industry areas.

Mr. Speaker, as I conclude, I want to congratulate my colleagues and also say that this is, of course, planting the seeds. I have been discussing with my universities in Texas the idea of looking at sports management to cover the NFL, the NBA, and American baseball. These are important economic engines, and it is certainly a very important step that this resolution, H. Res. 677, is going forward, partnering HBCUs with NASCAR.

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I do not have any more speakers, and reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure now to yield such time as he may consume to the cosponsor of this resolution and the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, Representative MEL WATT.

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, Mr. DAVIS, for yielding the time.

I am honored to be an original cosponsor with my friend, Congressman ROGERS from Alabama, of this legislation. Some people probably are wondering why this kind of interesting coalition has come together.

Well, for me, it is about having the Lowes Motor Speedway in Charlotte, North Carolina, not inside my congressional district, it is actually in an adjoining congressional district represented by one of my other North Carolina colleagues. But we know the value of NASCAR and motor sports in North Carolina and in the area from which I come.

The second thing that converges here is the recognition that I have five Historically Black Colleges and Universities in my district, and two of them have already become a part of this partnership and will benefit from NASCAR's diversity initiative: North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro, North Carolina, and Winston-Salem State University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Representative DAVIS has indicated the history of NASCAR when it comes to drivers, and that is important, but I want to emphasize that this is not only about having drivers in the cars. NASCAR is a massive conglomerate of entities, and a lot of people view NASCAR or motor sports as just the guys that are out there running around the track or the guys in the pits. There are marketing opportunities, there are accounting opportunities; this is a major corporate undertaking here. There are engineering opportunities.

I was so very impressed when I went to one of the shops there to know that this is not just somebody putting a car out there, it is massaging the tolerances and doing what is necessary to get those cars, engineering-wise, to perform at their maximum performance level. So we think this has tremendous potential for job opportunities for an increase of diversity.

Now, is this unique? It may be somewhat unique for NASCAR, but it is certainly not unique for the Congressional Black Caucus. The Congressional Black Caucus, which I am honored to chair, has been in the forefront of pushing job opportunities in every area of our lives: in the sports arena, in the business arena, in the financial services arena, you just name it, go down the list. So, for us, this is not a unique program, it is a natural progression and an expansion of what we set out to do.

And then, finally, I would just say that, as most things, this is at its bottom line about money.

If we can take the fan base of NASCAR and superimpose on it all of the African American potential that is out there, so that there is an equal amount of customer and fan base in the African American community as there is in other communities, you will see the same thing happen in NASCAR that you saw happen when Tiger Woods became the superstar that he is in golf.

You will see the same thing happen in NASCAR that has happened in football and basketball and baseball and other sports. They have recognized that there is a customer base out there that, if they take advantage of it, can be cultivated if people who look like the customers are involved in it.

So we dare not delude ourselves that this is all about just goodwill. This is about money at its base. And it is about the American way, the capital way of doing things.

We support that. We are not adverse to it. We are not opposing it. We are

supporters of that. We think this is a way to do it.

I want to congratulate my good friend, Mr. ROGERS. And when we introduced this resolution, a stream of my colleagues came immediately to support the resolution.

I thank Speaker HASTERT for joining us at the press conference where this was rolled out. And I thank the leadership on both sides of the aisle for expediting this resolution to the floor of the House.

□ 1500

It does not cost us any money. All we are doing is congratulating, encouraging private enterprise to be more diverse in their customer base, in their employment base, in their opportunities that are extended to all Americans. That is what this is all about. It deserves our unqualified support, and I encourage my colleagues to support it without even thinking about it a second time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 677.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CELEBRATING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF TEXAS WESTERN'S 1966 NCAA BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 668) celebrating the 40th anniversary of Texas Western's 1966 NCAA Basketball Championship and recognizing the groundbreaking impact of the title game victory on diversity in sports and civil rights in America, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 668

Whereas Don Haskins was a high school basketball star at Enid High School in Enid, Oklahoma, a college standout at Oklahoma A&M (now Oklahoma State) under his mentor, Coach Hank Iba, and a successful Texas high school basketball coach, amassing a 157–41 win-loss record coaching Benjamin, Hedley, and Dumas High Schools;

Whereas in 1961 Don Haskins became the coach of the men's basketball team at Texas Western College, which was later renamed the University of Texas at El Paso;

Whereas early in the 1965–1966 basketball season Don Haskins told Texas Western president Joseph Ray, ''The way our boys line up now, my six best boys are black. If I leave two or three of them out because they're black, they'll know it. [And] the white boys will know it.'';

Whereas the 1966 Texas Western team of Bobby Joe Hill (Detroit, Michigan), Orsten Artis (Gary, Indiana), Togo Railey (El Paso, Texas), Willie Worsley (New York, New York), David Palacio (El Paso, Texas), Dick Myers (Peabody, Kansas), Harry Flournoy (Gary, Indiana), Louis Baudoin (Albuquerque, New Mexico), Nevil Shed (New York, New York), Jerry Armstrong (Eagleville, Missouri), Willie Cager (New York, New York), and David ''Big Daddy'' Lattin (Houston, Texas) finished the basketball season 28–1;

Whereas on March 19, 1966, Coach Don Haskins' all-black starting line-up, the first such line-up to ever appear in a major championship contest, defeated the heavily-favored University of Kentucky to win the NCAA Basketball Championship, an event defined by many as the ''Brown v. Board of Education of athletics'';

Whereas the Miners' victory accelerated the pace of racial integration in college athletics and contributed to the expansion of the civil rights movement into the realm of sports;

Whereas when recounting his historic impact on diversity in college sports, Don Haskins said, ''I just played my best guys, like any coach would do.''; and

Whereas over the course of his career Don Haskins also coached the Miners to 32 winning seasons, seven Western Athletic Conference championships, four Western Athletic Conference tournament titles, and 21 post-season appearances, creating a proud tradition of college basketball success and community spirit in El Paso that persists to this day and winning entry into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 1997: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives celebrates the 40th anniversary of Texas Western's 1966 NCAA Basketball Championship and recognizes the groundbreaking impact of the title game victory on diversity in sports and civil rights in America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 668.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

It gives me great pleasure to rise in support of House Resolution 668, which celebrates the 40th anniversary of Texas Western's 1966 NCAA basketball championship and recognize the groundbreaking impact of the title game victory on diversity in sports and civil rights in America.

Texas Western's victory occurred 40 years ago, 1966, during the midst of the civil rights movement to end discrimination against blacks. The 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed institutional racial segregation. In Vietnam, blacks were fighting and dying alongside their fellow white soldiers. Blacks were not, however, playing basketball at many schools in the South, where de facto segregation still reigned.

For Don Haskins, coach of the Texas Western Miners men's basketball team, a person's race did not matter. To him ability on the basketball court mattered more than the color of the player's skin. To Coach Haskins, the only thing that really mattered was winning.

This was the philosophy Coach Haskins used on the night of March 19, 1966. That night the Texas Western Miners made history by defeating the number-one-ranked, all-white University of Kentucky Wildcats for the NCAA basketball championship, a game of historical significance because no other college team at the time had ever started five black players in a major championship contest. In fact, when Texas Western defeated Kentucky 72–65, a game still celebrated as one of the biggest college basketball upsets in NCAA history, there were no black basketball players in the Southeastern or Atlantic Coast Conferences.

This remarkable triumph helped shift the national perception of black athletes and helped bring about the widespread desegregation of college sports. In turn, the desegregation of college sports helped to spread greater equality throughout American society.

Mr. Speaker, the man behind Texas Western's success is Don Haskins. His 38-year reign at Texas Western, now the University of Texas El Paso, allowed him to become one of the winningest coaches in NCAA history. He amassed a 719–354 record, 32 winning seasons, seven Western Athletic Conference Championships, four Western Athletic Tournament titles, and 21 post-season appearances. In 1997, Coach Haskins was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. He retired from coaching in 1999.

Coach Don Haskins is truly a living legend in college sports. He believed that as a coach he should recruit the best raw talent he could find no matter the player's race, background, or life story. If not for the colorblind dream of Coach Haskins to win basketball games with his team's most talented players, history may not have been made on the night of March 19, 1966.

I want to thank my colleague from Texas (Mr. REYES) for introducing this legislation and bringing forth a lesser known, yet significant, piece of history in college athletics. I am happy to join my colleagues in celebrating the 40th anniversary of Texas Western's 1966 NCAA basketball championship. I ask my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise in support of H. Res. 668, a resolution to celebrate the 40th anniversary of

Texas Western's 1966 NCAA basketball championship.

I am proud to join my colleague and very good friend, the resolution's author, Congressman SILVESTRE REYES from El Paso, in commemorating the 40th anniversary of this watershed event in our struggle for racial equality.

On March 19, 1966, Texas Western College's Coach Don Haskins led an all-black starting lineup to a 72–65 win over an all-white team from the basketball powerhouse, University of Kentucky. For Coach Haskins, he was simply putting his best players on the floor. For the Nation, he delivered the message that in competition, talent and ability mattered more than race. This is a lesson that we are still learning today.

The young men who took Texas Western College to a 28–1 championship season braved racism and hostile crowds to carry their team and their college to victory. I invite you to see this 1966 team photo in front of Memorial Gym, courtesy of the University of Texas El Paso. These champions were Bobby Joe Hill, Orsten Artis, Togo Railey, Willie Worsley, David Palacio, Dick Meyers, Harry Flournoy, Louis Baudoin, Nevil Shed, Jerry Armstrong, Willie Cager, and David Lattin.

It is fitting that on this 40th anniversary of the 1966 Miners breaking the color barrier in the NCAA championship game, that we reflect on how far we have come and how far we have yet to go. College enrollments are at an all-time high; and yet black, Hispanic, and low-income students are not enrolling and graduating at the rates we need for our Nation to put its best players on the floor.

Texas Western College is now the University of Texas El Paso. As an institution, it continues to lead the charge in developing our best talents without regard to race, ethnicity, or family income. The University of Texas El Paso is one of our Nation's leading Hispanic-serving institutions: 72 percent of its students are Hispanic. It is third in the Nation for producing Hispanic undergraduates, and is also rated the top engineering school for Hispanics. Since 1988, it has been led by a Latina, Dr. Diana Natalicio, a top administrator and a trailblazer by anyone's measure.

The University of Texas El Paso, in the spirit of the 1966 championship Miners, continues to break barriers and continues to refuse to let race, ethnicity, or family income trump talent and hard work.

I hope that all my colleagues will join me in celebrating this milestone in college athletics and racial equality.

Please join me in saluting the Miners on the 40th anniversary of their NCAA championship, and I urge you to vote for this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6½ minutes to my friend and colleague from El Paso, Texas (Mr. REYES), the author of this legislation.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Texas and also the gentleman from Florida for allowing us the time to speak here on this very important event, not just for El Paso and not just for Texas but for our whole country, for a whole generation of players and those that have benefited from their accomplishments.

I rise today in strong support, Mr. Speaker, of H. Res. 668, a resolution that celebrates the 40th anniversary of Texas Western's 1966 NCAA basketball championship, recognizing the groundbreaking impact of that title game victory on diversity in sports and, of course, on the impact, as my colleagues have stated, of civil rights in America.

I am proud to have introduced this bill and honored to have the opportunity to speak in this Chamber today about the importance of what a basketball team and a coach achieved 40 years ago.

This afternoon I want to thank Leader BOEHNER and Chairman MCKEON and Ranking Member MILLER for their support in bringing this very important legislation to the floor.

On March 19, 1966, the Miners of Texas Western, which is now UTEP, led by Coach Don Haskins, defeated the University of Kentucky at Cole Field House in College Park, Maryland. This significant championship game gave the NCAA basketball championship at a crucial time to Texas Western College.

At a time when the bitter politics of racism dictated to many coaches around the country who got to play, Coach Haskins started five black players in the NCAA basketball championship game, the first time in America that this country had seen an all-black starting lineup in a major championship contest.

In 1966, as a strengthening civil rights movement met poisonous political dispute and violence, the Miners were clearly able to demonstrate to a Nation and the sports world the virtue of desegregation and equality.

As the athletic establishment abided by that unwritten rule that said, play two on the road, three if you are really behind, referring of course to black players, Coach Haskins looked past the color of the players' skin and concentrated on winning games and eventually the national championship.

Years later Coach Haskins would say, ''I just played my best guys like any coach would do.'' That simple principled courage changed the course of American athletics and provided an important advance in the struggle of civil rights in our Nation.

The Texas Western's championship was an event defined by many as the Brown v. Board of Education of athletics. Like many whose lives were constrained by their appearance and background, I found extraordinary significance in that 1966 game.

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I was a Texas Western student during the fall semester of 1965 and had an opportunity to see these great players play. Shortly thereafter, I was drafted into the Army and eventually went on to fight in Vietnam. In March of 1966, I was still in El Paso, only stationed at Fort Bliss doing basic training. For those of us who were in the military at the time, the hypocrisy of America's racial policies were very clear. We saw a country that would not hesitate to send black and Hispanic soldiers to fight and die in foreign wars, but would not fight for us back at home.

Coach Haskins' and the Miners' victory helped reveal to a nation the absurdity of racism and the futility of segregation.

I returned from Vietnam and chose a career in public service and a career in which my successes followed from my abilities and my own hard work. Of course, I found that life does not abide by that perfect rule of a game like basketball, but I remain inspired today by Texas Western's win, and I know that I would not have had the opportunities I did have had it not been for the courage of people like Don Haskins and his Miners.

Today, a university, a city and a country are improved by the achievement of that 1966 team. Soon after that championship, Texas Western became the University of Texas at El Paso or, as we call it now, UTEP, and its basketball program continued to thrive under Coach Haskins until his retirement, as my colleagues have said, in 1999. Coach Haskins eventually led UTEP to 32 winning seasons, seven Western Athletic Conference championships, four Western Athletic Conference tournament titles, and 21 postseason appearances.

Last year, the Miners won 27 games, 16 at our own Don Haskins Center in El Paso, named after the great coach, and they also earned a spot in the NCAA tournament. This year, they are again near the top of their conference, a testament to the enduring tradition of college basketball success created by Don Haskins.

The university itself has been transformed from a small mining school into a hub of academic excellence and world-class research. El Paso, long proud of its Miners and its NCAA championship, has enjoyed the attention of a nation this year, as millions of Americans have fallen in love with the Miners through the recently released film ''Glory Road,'' which is currently being shown around the country.

It is especially important for us to honor the 1966 Miners today on the eve of their accomplishment, here shown in that championship game against Kentucky. We must revise our historical injustice, the injustice of a group of men being judged by who they were, not how they played.

At the time, the Texas Western Miners were denied an opportunity to appear on the Ed Sullivan Show, but just last week I want to commend President Bush and First Lady Laura Bush as they honored this team at the White House, shown here in this photograph with the President, the original members of that 1966 championship team.

So this afternoon I want to congratulate Coach Don Haskins, Bobby Joe Hill, Orsten Artis, Togo Railey, Willie Worsley, David Palacio, Dick Myers, Harry Flournoy, Louis Baudoin, Nevil Shed, Jerry Armstrong, Willie Cager, and David ''Big Daddy'' Lattin on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of their NCAA championship and for all of their successes in their lives. Today, we also remember, of course, Bobby Joe Hill who died and was unable to be in this photograph here in 2002.

So, Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 668.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA) for yielding me time, and I want to extend serious, serious commendations to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES) for his introduction of this resolution, for his keen insight and the opportunity to note progress in our country.

Forty years ago, on March 19, 1966, the Texas Western basketball team, the Miners, defeated the University of Kentucky at Cole Field House in College Park, Maryland, to win the NCAA basketball championship.

This victory marked the first time that an all-black starting lineup appeared in a major championship athletic contest.

Often regarded as the Brown v. Board of Education of sports, the Miners' victory over the heavily favored Wildcats ushered college basketball specifically, and sports more generally, into the civil rights movement. Prior to this event, athletics remained largely insulated from the civil rights swell.

This bill recognizes the historic accomplishment of Coach Don Haskins and the 12 players from the 1966 team. These players deserve recognition today, and two of the gentlemen are close neighbors to my congressional district, Orsten Artis and Harry Flournoy, both from Gary, Indiana.

These men finished the basketball season with an impressive 28–1 record. Ultimately, Coach Haskins led the Miners to 33 winning seasons and 21 post-season appearances.

This resolution recognizes the incredible effect that the 1966 NCAA basketball championship of Texas Western, now the University of Texas at El Paso, had on promoting diversity in sports and accelerating racial integration in college sports. I am pleased to support this resolution and urge its passage.

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I will continue to reserve the balance of my time at this point.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to another good friend and colleague from the great State of Texas, Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON-LEE of Houston.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, let me thank my dear friend from Texas, Congressman HINOJOSA, and of course, allow me to add my very, very, very sincere congratulations and appreciations to my friend and Representative from El Paso, the Honorable SILVESTRE REYES.

For those of you who are trying to get your eyes and your ears focused on this debate, let me just remind you of a celebrated movie by the name of ''Glory Road.'' Today, we have the opportunity to celebrate the real deal, the real thing, and that team was known as Texas Western, now known as the University of Texas at El Paso.

Just think of 40 years ago, 1966, or 2 years after the 1964 Civil Rights Act, 1 year after the 1965 Voting Rights Act and 3 years after the tragedy of the four little girls in Birmingham. This was a tumultuous time in America's history, and so the idea of a coach, albeit the right idea, to place on the court of a basketball championship game five black boys, young men, to be able to play against the favored team, the University of Kentucky, was in itself a shocking, shocking occurrence.

But yet Don Haskins, a courageous or just a wise leader, decided to put his best foot forward, and out of that came the 1966 Texas Western team.

Might I congratulate all of the players: Bobby Joe Hill, Orsten Artis, Togo Railey, Willie Worsley, David Palacio, Dick Myers, Harry Flournoy, Louis Baudoin, Nevil Shed, Jerry Armstrong, Willie Cager, and right from the great city of Houston, now the fourth largest city in the Nation, David ''Big Daddy'' Lattin.

We are delighted to be able to join my colleagues from Texas to say that we are proud of that measure of civil rights history. We salute certainly the wisdom of Don Haskins, and remind America that sports and the playing field, whether they be courts, or tennis courts, whether they be the NFL playing field or whether they be the baseball field or the soccer field, we know that sports generate character and integrity, but it also develops teamsmanship. So the idea of the youngsters of America today playing on the playing fields of athletic America hopefully will create the new civil rights movement. And as a city that just experienced the All Star Game, I can tell you the whole game of basketball certainly represents diversity as we have our young men, and many of those who have come from foreign lands, but it also is an opportunity for young men and women to work together.

I want to congratulate the manager of this bill, Congressman HINOJOSA, and congratulate Congressman REYES, for their wisdom in saluting these young men, and I am delighted to have been an original cosponsor.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the proposed bill, H. Res. 668, ''Celebrating the 40th anniversary of Texas Western's 1966 National Collegiate Athletic Association Basketball Championship victory.''

On March 19, 1966, Coach Don Haskins and his Texas Western College Miners advanced to the NCAA Championship game against the segregated, all-White University of Kentucky Wildcats. Coach Haskins made the decision to put in an all-Black starting lineup, something that had never been done before.

He made the announcement prior to the game and was thought to be a fool. It was the notion at the time that a team had to have at least one White player on the lineup to have a shot at winning a game, let alone the National Championship. Coach Haskins and his TW Miners shattered that school of thought with their triumphant win against the Wildcats.

The victory on the court was not only a victory for the Miners, but a victory for civil rights. When Coach Haskins made the decision to start an all-Black lineup, he did so not to make a statement about racial equality, but in his own words to ''play my five best players. Race didn't matter to me.''

The team's win was much more than simply a win on the basketball court signaling that a change had taken place in collegiate sports. The bold step taken by Don Haskins accelerated the pace that athletic teams were being integrated throughout the South.

The team's success did not come without a price. After the win Coach Haskins received over 40,000 hate mail letters, illustrating the climate of hostility towards African Americans in the South during that time.

The team's accomplishments both paralleled and contributed to the landmark events being made in the civil rights movement at the time. Basketball historian Neil Isaacs has called it the ''Brown v. Board of Education of college basketball . . . Since that time, no pretender to basketball eminence has ever drawn a color line in its recruiting.''

I am proud to say that one of the most influential players on the team, David Latin, hails from my district of Houston. The massive 6′7″ Center, paved the way for the team, scoring 16 points in the title game. As a testament to Latin's skill, he advanced to the NBA as a first-round pick to play for the San Francisco Warriors.

The memory of the team and their magnificent 1966 NCAA Championship win has recently been captured in the Disney film ''Glory Road.'' The memory of Coach Haskins has been solidified by his induction into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame for his remarkable achievements as a coach.

As a Member of Congress deeply concerned with advancing the causes of civil liberties and a co-sponsor of H. Con. Res. 59, a bill similar to the one before us, which recognized both the teams and players of African-American basketball teams for their achievement and contribution to basketball and to the Nation prior to the integration of the white professional leagues, I ask my colleagues to join with me in support of H. Res. 668.

Today we should rise and honor the memory of both the Texas Western College team and their coach, Don Haskins, who led them to a National Championship, and in doing so advanced the cause of civil rights and decreased segregation in athletics.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 668 to give recognition where recognition is long overdue. With this resolution, Congress applauds the groundbreaking significance of the 1966 NCAA Division I men's basketball championship in which Texas Western upset the heavily favored University of Kentucky. That year, the Miners had an all-Black starting line-up, a first in a national championship competition that helped change the perception of Black athletes.

Texas Western Coach Don Haskins and his players may not have set out to change history, but they did. The 1966 championship game helped pave the way for integration of athletics, opening sports to the civil rights movement, often being dubbed, the Brown v. Board of Education of sports. The next season, the Southwest Conference was integrated, and in 1967–68, Vanderbilt broke the Southeast Conference color barrier.

Unfortunately, it has taken decades before Coach Haskins and his players' achievements have been recognized. In 1966 there were no trips to the White House or appearances on the Ed Sullivan show, both customary for national champions. The team did not even receive national championship rings until their 20-year reunion in 1986.

It is time to recognize the profound contribution to the civil rights movement that this game spurred, and to recognize the 1966 NCAA Division I men's basketball champions, the Texas Western Miners. I urge my colleagues in joining me in supporting this bipartisan legislation.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 1966 Texas Western Men's Basketball Team. Their NCAA championship victory over Kentucky forever changed college athletics.

Even though it had been over a decade since Brown v. Board of Education, many colleges had lagged behind on implementing integration into their athletics programs. In 1966, college basketball players were often recruited on the basis of their skin color rather than playing ability. Texas Western coach Bob Haskins did not succumb to pressures to start his White players. He simply played his best players regardless of skin color.

This resulted in the first time an all-Black starting line-up participated in a major athletic championship contest. The impact was felt throughout the country when little-known Texas Western upset legendary all-White Kentucky.

Perhaps most important in this victory was the stereotypes and misconceptions that were broken down. For many, the assumption remained that Black players would not be skilled or smart enough to successfully compete against White players. Bob Haskins and Texas Western proved on a national stage that Black players can win and are as smart and talented as their White counterparts.

The 1966 Texas Western men's basketball team opened the doors for schools that had stalled in implementing integration policies into their athletics programs; breaking down barriers and forever changing college athletics.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Congressman SILVESTRE REYES for offering House Resolution 668, a resolution which celebrates this year's 40th anniversary of Texas Western's 1966 NCAA Basketball Championship.

The year of 1966 marked a number of ''firsts'' by African Americans. The Honorable Robert C. Weaver became the first African American Cabinet member with his appointment as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Edward Brooke became the first popularly elected African American to the United States Senate, and it also marked the first time a collegiate basketball team, the Texas Western Miners, sporting an all African American line-up won the NCAA Men's Division I Basketball Championship.

What made this victory important, and what we are commemorating here today, is not the fact that a team starting all African American student athletes beat a team of all White student athletes. We commemorate rather, the closing of one more chapter of segregation and bigotry to a new chapter where we judge an individual on the content of their character and qualifications and not on the color of their skin.

The Texas Western Miners, in their victory over the University of Kentucky Wildcats, opened up numerous opportunities for student athletes of all races and creeds to attend college, participate in sports, and become eligible for athletic scholarships. The fact that the impact that this victory did so much to change the perception of African-American athletes and to speed the desegregation of intercollegiate sports, has lead many people to label this historic event as the Brown v. Board of Education of athletics.

Finally, any tribute to the Minors would be incomplete without acknowledging their coach, Don Haskins. Coach Haskins is to be commended for his continued commitment to build on the foundation of integration that he inherited at Texas Western—the first college in a Southern state to integrate its athletic teams—and for his courage in facing collegiate basketball's racial issues directly.

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize the 40th anniversary of Texas Western's 1966 NCAA Basketball Championship. The title game had a profound impact on the state of racial integration in sports and civil rights in America.

On March 16, 1966, Coach Don Haskins led the first ever all-Black starting lineup to play in a major championship contest in a victory over the heavily-favored Kentucky Wildcats.

Coach Haskins played high school basketball in Enid, Oklahoma, and in college at Oklahoma A&M (now Oklahoma State). He then became a successful high school basketball coach in Texas. Haskins was a coach at Dumas High School before becoming the head of the men's team at Texas Western College, now the University of Texas at El Paso, in 1961.

Haskins coached the Miners to 33 winning seasons over the course of his career with the Miners. He won seven Western Athletic Conference championships, four Western Athletic Conference tournament titles, and made 21 post-season appearances. He established a proud winning tradition in the community of El Paso that still exists today. Coach Haskins was voted in to the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 1997.

The Texas Western Miners' victory was a watershed moment for diversity in college athletics. It helped expand the civil rights movement into the realm of sports. On January 13, 2006, Walt Disney Pictures released Glory Road, which tells the story of the historic 1966 season and pays tribute to the dedication and bravery of Coach Haskins.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I have no more speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I also yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 668, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

LOUIS BRAILLE BICENTENNIAL—BRAILLE LITERACY COMMEMORATIVE COIN ACT

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2872) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of Louis Braille, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2872

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Louis Braille Bicentennial—Braille Literacy Commemorative Coin Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds as follows:

(1) Louis Braille, who invented the Braille method for reading and writing by the blind that has allowed millions of blind people to be literate participants in their societies, was born in Coupvray, a small village near Paris, on January 4, 1809.

(2) Braille lost his sight at the age of three after injuring himself with an awl in the shop of his father Rene, a maker of harnesses and other objects of leather.

(3) A youth who was both intelligent and creative and was blessed with dedicated parents, a thoughtful local priest and an energetic local schoolteacher, Braille adapted to the situation and attended local school with other youths of his age, an unheard-of practice for a blind child of the period.

(4) At the age of 10, when his schooling otherwise would have stopped, Braille—with the aid of the priest and schoolteacher—was

given a scholarship by a local nobleman and went to Paris to attend the Royal Institute for Blind Children where he became the youngest pupil.

(5) At the school, most instruction was oral but Braille found there were books for the blind—large, expensive-to-produce books in which the text was of large letters embossed upon the page.

(6) Soon Braille had read all 14 books in the school, but thirsted for more.

(7) A captain in Napoleon's army, Charles Barbier de la Serre, had invented ''night writing'', a method for communicating on the battlefield amidst the thick smoke of combat or at night without lighting a match—which would aid enemy gunners—that used dots and dashes that were felt and interpreted with the fingers, and later adapted the method for use by the blind, calling it Sonography because it represented words by sounds, rather than spelling.

(8) Braille adopted the Sonography method instantly but soon recognized that the basis in sound and the large number of dots—as many as 12—used to represent words was too cumbersome.

(9) By the age of 15, and using a blunt awl, the same sort of tool that had blinded him, Braille had developed what is essentially modern Braille, a code that uses no more than 6 dots in a ''cell'' of 2 columns of 3 dots each to represent each letter and contains a system of punctuation and of ''contractions'' to speed writing and reading.

(10) In contrast to the bulky books consisting of large embossed letters, Braille books can contain as many as 1000 characters or contractions on a standard 11-by-12-inch page of heavy paper, and to this day Braille can be punched with an awl-like ''stylus'' into paper held in a metal ''slate'' that is very similar to the ones that Louis Braille adapted from Barbier's original ''night writing'' devices.

(11) Also a talented organist who supported himself by giving concerts, Braille went on to develop the Braille representation of music and in 1829 published the first-ever Braille book, a manual about how to read and write music.

(12) 8 years later, in 1837, Braille followed that publication with another book detailing a system of representation of mathematics.

(13) Braille's talents were quickly recognized, and at 17 he was made the first blind apprentice teacher at the school, where he taught algebra, grammar, music, and geography.

(14) He and two blind classmates, his friends who probably were the first people to learn to read and write Braille, later became the first three blind full professors at the school.

(15) However, despite the fact that many blind people enthusiastically adopted the system of writing and reading, there was great skepticism among sighted people about the real usefulness of Braille's code, and even at the Royal Institute, it was not taught until after his death on January 6, 1852.

(16) Braille did not start to spread widely until 1868 when a group of British men—later to become known as the Royal National Institute for the Blind—began publicizing and teaching the system.

(17) Braille did not become the official and sole method of reading and writing for blind United States citizens until the 20th Century.

(18) Helen Keller, a Braille reader of another generation, said: ''Braille has been a most precious aid to me in many ways. It made my going to college possible—it was the only method by which I could take notes on lectures. All my examination papers were copied for me in this system. I use Braille as a spider uses its web—to catch thoughts that flit across my mind for speeches, messages and manuscripts.''.

(19) While rapid technological advances in the 20th Century have greatly aided the blind in many ways by speeding access to information, each advance has seen a commensurate drop in the teaching of Braille, to the point that only about 10 percent of blind students today are taught the system.

(20) However, for the blind not to know Braille is in itself a handicap, because literacy is the ability to read and the ability to write and the ability to do the two interactively.

(21) The National Federation of the Blind, the Nation's oldest membership organization consisting of blind members, has been a champion of the Braille code, of Braille literacy for all blind people and of the memory of Louis Braille, and continues its Braille literacy efforts today through its divisions emphasizing Braille literacy, emphasizing education of blind children and emphasizing employment of the blind.

(22) Braille literacy aids the blind in taking responsible and self-sufficient roles in society, such as employment: while 70 percent of the blind are unemployed, 85 percent of the employed blind are Braille-literate.

SEC. 3. COIN SPECIFICATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the ''Secretary'') shall mint and issue not more than 400,000 $1 coins bearing the designs specified in section 4(a), each of which shall—

(1) weigh 26.73 grams;

(2) have a diameter of 1.500 inches; and

(3) contain 90 percent silver and 10 percent copper.

(b) LEGAL TENDER.—The coins minted under this Act shall be legal tender, as provided in section 5103 of title 31, United States Code.

(c) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all coins minted under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

SEC. 4. DESIGN OF COINS.

(a) DESIGN REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The design of the coins minted under this Act shall be emblematic of the life and legacy of Louis Braille.

(2) OBVERSE.—The design on the obverse shall bear a representation of the image of Louis Braille.

(3) REVERSE.—The design on the reverse shall emphasize Braille literacy and shall specifically include the word for Braille in Braille code (the Braille capital sign and the letters Brl) represented in a way that substantially complies with section 3 of Specification 800 of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress specifications for Braille, and is tactilely indiscernible from printed or written Braille.

(4) DESIGNATION AND INSCRIPTIONS.—On each coin minted under this Act there shall be—

(A) a designation of the value of the coin;

(B) an inscription of the year ''2009''; and

(C) inscriptions of the words ''Liberty'', ''In God We Trust'', ''United States of America'', and ''E Pluribus Unum''.

(b) SELECTION.—The design for the coins minted under this Act shall be—

(1) selected by the Secretary after consultation with the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Federation of the Blind; and

(2) reviewed by the Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee.

SEC. 5. ISSUANCE OF COINS.

(a) QUALITY OF COINS.—Coins minted under this Act shall be issued in uncirculated and proof qualities.

(b) MINT FACILITY.—Only 1 facility of the United States Mint may be used to strike any particular quality of the coins minted under this Act.

(c) PERIOD FOR ISSUANCE.—The Secretary may issue coins minted under this Act only during the 1-year period beginning on January 1, 2009.

SEC. 6. SALE OF COINS.

(a) SALE PRICE.—The coins issued under this Act shall be sold by the Secretary at a price equal to the sum of—

(1) the face value of the coins;

(2) the surcharge provided in section 7(a) with respect to such coins; and

(3) the cost of designing and issuing the coins (including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, overhead expenses, marketing, and shipping).

(b) BULK SALES.—The Secretary shall make bulk sales of the coins issued under this Act at a reasonable discount.

(c) PREPAID ORDERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall accept prepaid orders for the coins minted under this Act before the issuance of such coins.

(2) DISCOUNT.—Sale prices with respect to prepaid orders under paragraph (1) shall be at a reasonable discount.

SEC. 7. SURCHARGES.

(a) SURCHARGE REQUIRED.—All sales of coins under this Act shall include a surcharge of $10 per coin.

(b) DISTRIBUTION.—Subject to section 5134(f) of title 31, United States Code, all surcharges which are received by the Secretary from the sale of coins issued under this Act shall be promptly paid by the Secretary to the the National Federation of the Blind to further its programs to promote Braille literacy.

(c) AUDITS.—The National Federation of the Blind shall be subject to the audit requirements of section 5134(f)(2) of title 31, United States Code, with regard to the amounts received by the National Federation under subsection (b).

(d) LIMITATION.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), no surcharge may be included with respect to the issuance under this Act of any coin during a calendar year if, as of the time of such issuance, the issuance of such coin would result in the number of commemorative coin programs issued during such year to exceed the annual 2 commemorative coin program issuance limitation under section 5112(m)(1) of title 31, United States Code (as in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act). The Secretary of the Treasury may issue guidance to carry out this subsection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2872, a bill designed to advance a nationwide Bsraille literacy campaign by honoring Louis Braille with a commemorative coin to be issued in 2009, the bicentennial year of his birth.

Louis Braille created the code of raised dots for reading and writing that bears his name and brings literacy, independence, and productivity to the blind.

Born in 1809, Louis Braille became blind due to an accident in his father's

workshop. By believing in the capacity of the blind to learn, Braille demonstrated an understanding of blindness that was extraordinarily enlightened and positive for the times in which he lived.

Blind people today would be far less likely to achieve the goals of independence and productive living without the positive contributions Louis Braille made and the example he set throughout his life. Today, blind members of society are teachers, doctors, lawyers, scientists, mathematicians and much, much more because of Louis Braille.

A means of achieving literacy is vital for everyone, including, of course, people who are blind. Therefore, effective use of Braille is one of the most essential skills for blind people to achieve success. Research shows that more than 90 percent of employed persons who are blind use Braille.

Effective use of Braille is as important to the blind as independent mobility, knowledge in the use of adaptive technology, and the core belief that equality, opportunity and security are truly possible for all people who are blind.

The Louis Braille Commemorative Coin will feature representation of the image of Louis Braille on one side and will include the word for Braille in actual Braille code on the other side. The inclusion of Braille code on the commemorative coin is a significant and historic aspect of this bill.

In addition, all sales of the Braille Commemorative Coin will include a surcharge of $10 per coin, which will be distributed to the National Federation of the Blind to promote Braille literacy. As a condition of receiving the proceeds from this surcharge, the National Federation of the Blind will be subject to annual audits to ensure that these proceeds, of course, are being spent for the authorized purpose and will be required to raise matching funds from private sources.

□ 1530

If all the coins authorized under this bill are sold, the surcharges could generate up to $4 million plus the matching $4 million that the National Federation of the Blind would be required to raise privately. That is potentially $8 million to promote Braille literacy for all people in the country who are in need of Braille literacy. The Nation's blind would greatly benefit by this investment in Braille literacy.

The National Federation of the Blind has committed to raising their share of these funds and promoting Braille literacy with the proceeds. Based on our work with the NFB in the past, I know they are up to this task. I worked very closely with the NFB on the Help America Vote Act, Mr. HOYER and I both did, and Senators DODD and BOND and MCCONNELL in the Senate, in order to ensure that voting booths were equipped to allow the blind to vote independently without outside assistance. Their grass-roots advocacy and unyielding support on that bill helped that dream become a reality for the Nation's blind.

Again, with this bill, the National Federation of the Blind put their grass-roots network into action to build overwhelming support for this commemorative coin. I'm confident this same grass-roots network will raise the matching funds required and effectively promote Braille literacy on a nationwide basis with the proceeds from this coin's surcharge.

The National Federation of the Blind currently fosters Braille literacy in a number of ways: from mentoring programs, in which experienced Braille readers as volunteers teach and encourage novices, to publishing instructions for schoolchildren, to research in effective methods of teaching and learning Braille, to one-on-one Braille instruction in residential training centers. Literacy in Braille is emphasized throughout its programs and services as an essential tool for blind persons to participate successfully in modern society.

The Federation emphatically links competence in the basic skills of blindness, like Braille, to its broader understanding of blindness, a condition feared above most others by society. When blindness occurs, the federation seeks, through its nationwide membership, to reach individuals, children, or adults who experience sight loss to convey the message that while blindness is not sought by anyone, obviously, everyone can successfully handle lack of sight with proper training and alternative skills, combined with a can-do attitude.

But even with that effort, only about 10 percent of blind children are taught Braille. Issuance of the Louis Braille commemorative coin can aid that effort, forming a springboard for a nationwide Braille literacy campaign drawing all these strands together and focusing the joint energy of thousands of volunteers powered by a big idea, resulting in high-profile attention to the literacy crisis amongst the blind while helping this broad volunteer corps to attract social attention to the positive thrust of the federation.

The story of Braille as a literacy tool and the story of the federation in emphasizing participation are parallel. Given the proper tools, we humans can overcome apparently insurmountable obstacles and achieve great things. Louis Braille, the man, did so. Hundreds of thousands of blind Americans do so every day. Hundreds of thousands of blind Americans could do so much more if they had the tool of literacy easily at hand and the can-do attitude to accompany it.

Honoring Louis Braille and promoting literacy for the blind will have lasting value for our society.

I want to thank Congressman BEN CARDIN for his cosponsorship of this important bill, and I want to thank over 300-some of our colleagues who have actually signed on to the bill, and I appreciate the gentleman from Massachusetts being here today on this bill and all the input and work he has done on it.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation to create the Louis Braille commemorative coin and help advance Braille literacy nationwide.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I agree with the words of the gentleman from Ohio.

First of all, let me express the regrets of our colleague from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) who was a major sponsor of this bill and who, I think, is the Representative of the National Federation of the Blind. He very much wanted to be here. He had a previous engagement, and he stayed here until the very last minute. I know he has a statement for the RECORD, but I did want to convey to people his having made an extraordinary effort to be here personally.

As I said, I agree with what the gentleman from Ohio said. I will say that I had inquired as to whether or not there might be some alternative financing arrangement. I appreciate this is a first-rate organization that makes enormous contributions. There are some other organizations that work in the field as well. But it was not possible to work anything out, and I did not want to stand in the way of this very important legislation, both in terms of commemorating Louis Braille and in terms of making the funding available.

So I give this legislation my support.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I rise in support of the proposed legislation of H.R. 2872, recognizing Louis Braille Bicentennial Braille literacy Commemorative Coin Act.

Louis Braille invented the Braille method for reading and writing by the blind that has allowed millions of blind people to be literate participants in their societies. Braille, who lost his sight at the age of three after injuring himself with an awl in the shop of his father, recognized that the basis in sound and the large number of dots as many as 12 used to represent words was too cumbersome. He developed a code that uses no more than 6 dots in a cell of 2 columns of 3 dots, each to represent each letter and contain a system of punctuation and of contractions to speed writing and reading. He later published another book detailing a system of representation of mathematics.

Braille's talents were quickly recognized and at 17, he was made the first blind apprentice teacher at the school, where he taught algebra, grammar, music and geography.

However, despite the fact that many blind people enthusiastically adopted the system of writing and reading, but there was great skepticism among sighted people about the real usefulness of Braille code. His literacy aids the blind in taking responsible and self-sufficient roles in society, such as employment. While 70% of the blind are unemployed, 85% of the employed blind are Braille-literate.

I propose that Secretary of the Treasury mint and issue no more than 400,000 one dollar coins bearing specific designs. The design

of the coins minted under this Act shall be emblematic of the life and legacy of Louis Braille and the design on the obverse shall bear a representation of the image of Louis Braille.

I support H.R. 2872 for many foregoing reasons and I urge my colleagues to follow suit.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2872, and I want to thank my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio, for his leadership on this bill. It has been a pleasure to work with him in advancing this important legislation. I also want to extend my appreciation to Chairman OXLEY and Ranking Member FRANK, of the Financial Services Committee, for their support.

This bipartisan bill celebrates the achievements of Louis Braille, who created a system of reading and writing for the blind that has gained widespread acceptance since his death more than one hundred fifty years ago. To mark the 200th anniversary of his birth in 1809, this bill authorizes the minting of $1 coins bearing the image of Braille himself and emphasizing Braille literacy.

I want to particularly express my deep appreciation to the National Federation of the Blind for their vital advocacy for more than 1.3 million blind persons in the United States. Since its inception in 1940, the National Federation for the Blind has worked tirelessly to battle discrimination, increase public awareness, and develop and support technological advances.

The NFP also distributes The Braille Monitor, a monthly news publication, as well as online resources and a quarterly publication for the parents of blind children. With more than 50,000 members and affiliates in every state across America, NFB has led the way in demonstrating its ability to serve the interests of the blind population.

This bill holds special significance for me, as the National Federation of the Blind is headquartered in my Congressional district, in Baltimore, Maryland.

Dr. Marc Maurer, who has served as President of the National Federation of the Blind for 20 years, has shown exemplary leadership of this organization, as has the NFB's First Vice President, Joyce Scanlan, an active member since 1970. Sharon Maneki, President of the Maryland Chapter, has been instrumental in advancing the cause of blind persons throughout our state. I would also like to thank Jesse Hartle of the NFB for his hard work on behalf of the organization.

I am pleased to note that H.R. 2872 is cosponsored by the entire Maryland delegation, as well as by more than 300 members of the House.

The NFB's mission statement declares that "the real problem of blindness is not the loss of eyesight but the misunderstanding and lack of information which exist." As part of this mission, the NFB has been campaigning to increase awareness of the Braille system of communication.

The Braille code became dominant in the United States during the 20th century, and it served as a gateway to education for the blind.

In recent years the Braille code has been in declining use among the blind population. It is currently taught to only about ten percent of blind students and is usually not taught at all to the elderly.

The NFB holds as one of its major goals the reintroduction of Braille into education for the blind. Braille readers can read up to 400 words per minute, comparable to the speed of print readers. Braille is also essential for notetaking, mathematics and the study of foreign languages. Moreover, the computerization of Braille allows users to write much more rapidly than in the past.

Commemorating the contributions of Louis Braille is a worthy goal.

Increasing awareness of Braille and broadening opportunities for use as an educational tool are two other pivotal goals that this legislation will help achieve.

I want to thank my colleagues for their resounding support of H.R. 2872 and urge the House to help further the legacy of Louis Braille by voting for this bill.

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2872, the "Louis Braille Bicentennial—Braille Literacy Commemorative Coin Act," introduced by my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. NEY.

Mr. Speaker, I confess I learned something reading this legislation. All of us know some blind people, and all of us, of course, see Braille writing in elevators and elsewhere as we move through our daily lives.

But sitting down and reading the story of the courage and the intelligence it must have taken for a young blind man 200 years ago in France to fight for an education for himself when many sighted kids his age weren't getting even a high school education, is remarkable. And doing it when there were very few books printed for the blind—those only with giant embossed letters—must have been excruciatingly slow and taken a huge amount of self-discipline. To have discovered and modified a method of communication used by the Army into something that could easily be reproduced and read—and more importantly written by the blind, which was not really the case with those giant embossed letters—was a truly revolutionary breakthrough.

As a result, Mr. Speaker, long before the amazing technology that we all take for granted, the blind who were taught to read and write Braille were able to live normal lives and participate fully in society. Still, and this is something else I learned, despite all the independence that reading and writing Braille confers on the blind, only about 10 percent of blind children are taught Braille. Thus, I support the provision in the bill that devotes income from surcharges on the sale of these coins to a Braille Literacy Program operated by the National Federation of the Blind. And I think it is important to note that the silver dollar coins that would be produced under this bill would all bear, on their reverse, a full-sized Braille abbreviation for Braille—the raised dots that form the letters BRL.

Mr. Speaker, this commemorative coin program, like all those that pass through the Financial Services Committee, proceeds at no cost to the taxpayer and requires the beneficiary, in this case the NFB, to raise from private sources an amount equal to or greater than the amount of surcharge income that will be received, and also demands strict post-disbursement audit process to ensure that the funds are used for their statutorily intended purpose. In this case, I have no doubt that the NFB can raise the matching funds and will use the income to really very effectively raise the profile of Braille literacy.

And so, Mr. Speaker, noting that 302 Members of the House have co-sponsored this bill, I urge its immediate passage.

I also submit for the RECORD the following exchange of correspondence:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,
Washington, DC, February 27, 2006.

Hon. WILLIAM M. THOMAS,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives, Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMAS: I am writing concerning H.R. 2872, the "Louis Braille Bicentennial-Braille Literacy Commemorative Coin Act," which was introduced in the House and referred to the Committee on Financial Services on June 13, 2005. It is my expectation that this bill be scheduled for floor consideration in the near future.

As you know, section 7 of the bill establishes a surcharge for the sale of commemorative coins that are minted under the bill. I acknowledge your committee's jurisdictional interest in such surcharges as revenue matters. However, I request that your committee forego action on H.R. 2872 in order to allow the bill to come to the floor expeditiously. I appreciate your cooperation in so doing, and agree that your decision to forego further action on this bill will not prejudice the Committee on Ways and Means with respect to its jurisdictional prerogatives on this or similar legislation. I would support your request for conferees on those provisions within your jurisdiction should this bill be the subject of a House-Senate conference.

I will include a copy of this letter and your response in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD when this bill is considered by the House. Thank you again for your assistance.

Yours truly,

MICHAEL G. OXLEY,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC, February 27, 2006.

Hon. MICHAEL G. OXLEY,
Chairman, Committee on Financial Services, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN OXLEY: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 2872, the "Louis Braille Bicentennial-Braille Literacy Commemorative Coin Act," which is scheduled for Floor action on Tuesday, February 28, 2006.

As you noted, the Committee on Ways and Means maintains jurisdiction over matters that concern raising revenue. H.R. 2872 contains a provision that establishes a surcharge for the sale of commemorative coins that are minted under the bill, and thus falls within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means. However, in order to expedite this bill for floor consideration, the Committee will forgo action. This is being done with the understanding that it does not in any way prejudice the Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation.

I appreciate and agree to your offer to include this exchange of letters on this matter in the Congressional Record during floor consideration.

Best regards,

BILL THOMAS,
Chairman.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from

Ohio (Mr. NEY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2872, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING THE PRESIDENT TO AWARD A CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1259) to authorize the President to award a gold medal on behalf of the Congress, collectively, to the Tuskegee Airmen in recognition of their unique military record, which inspired revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1259

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds the following:

(1) In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt overruled his top generals and ordered the creation of an all Black flight training program. President Roosevelt took this action one day after the NAACP filed suit on behalf of Howard University student Yancy Williams and others in Federal court to force the Department of War to accept Black pilot trainees. Yancy Williams had a civilian pilot's license and had earned an engineering degree. Years later, Major Yancy Williams participated in an air surveillance project created by President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

(2) Due to the rigid system of racial segregation that prevailed in the United States during World War II, Black military pilots were trained at a separate airfield built near Tuskegee, Alabama. They became known as the ''Tuskegee Airmen''.

(3) The Tuskegee Airmen inspired revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces, paving the way for full racial integration in the Armed Forces. They overcame the enormous challenges of prejudice and discrimination, succeeding, despite obstacles that threatened failure.

(4) From all accounts, the training of the Tuskegee Airmen was an experiment established to prove that so-called ''coloreds'' were incapable of operating expensive and complex combat aircraft. Studies commissioned by the Army War College between 1924 and 1939 concluded that Blacks were unfit for leadership roles and incapable of aviation. Instead, the Tuskegee Airmen excelled.

(5) Overall, some 992 Black pilots graduated from the pilot training program of the Tuskegee Army Air Field, with the last class finishing in June 1946, 450 of whom served in combat. The first class of cadets began in July 1941 with 13 airmen, all of whom had college degrees, some with Ph.D. degrees, and all of whom had pilot's licenses. One of the graduates was Captain Benjamin O. Davis Jr., a United States Military Academy graduate. Four aviation cadets were commissioned as second lieutenants, and 5 received Army Air Corps silver pilot wings.

(6) That the experiment achieved success rather than the expected failure is further evidenced by the eventual promotion of 3 of these pioneers through the commissioned officer ranks to flag rank, including the late General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., United States Air Force, the late General Daniel ''Chappie'' James, United States Air Force, our Nation's first Black 4-star general, and Major General Lucius Theus, United States Air Force (retired).

(7) 450 Black fighter pilots under the command of then Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., fought in World War II aerial battles over North Africa, Sicily, and Europe, flying, in succession, P–40, P–39, P–47, and P–51 aircraft. These gallant men flew 15,553 sorties and 1,578 missions with the 12th Tactical Air Force and the 15th Strategic Air Force.

(8) Colonel Davis later became the first Black flag officer of the United States Air Force, retired as a 3-star general, and was honored with a 4th star in retirement by President William J. Clinton.

(9) German pilots, who both feared and respected the Tuskegee Airmen, called them the ''Schwartze Vogelmenschen'' (or ''Black Birdmen''). White American bomber crews reverently referred to them as the ''Black Redtail Angels'', because of the bright red painted on the tail assemblies of their fighter aircraft and because of their reputation for not losing bombers to enemy fighters as they provided close escort for bombing missions over strategic targets in Europe.

(10) The 99th Fighter Squadron, after having distinguished itself over North Africa, Sicily, and Italy, joined 3 other Black squadrons, the 100th, the 301st, and the 302nd, designated as the 332nd Fighter Group. They then comprised the largest fighter unit in the 15th Air Force. From Italian bases, they destroyed many enemy targets on the ground and at sea, including a German destroyer in strafing attacks, and they destroyed numerous enemy aircraft in the air and on the ground.

(11) 66 of these pilots were killed in combat, while another 32 were either forced down or shot down and captured to become prisoners of war. These Black airmen came home with 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, Bronze Stars, Silver Stars, and Legions of Merit, one Presidential Unit Citation, and the Red Star of Yugoslavia.

(12) Other Black pilots, navigators, bombardiers and crewman who were trained for medium bombardment duty as the 477th Bomber Group (Medium) were joined by veterans of the 332nd Fighter Group to form the 477th Composite Group, flying the B–25 and P–47 aircraft. The demands of the members of the 477th Composite Group for parity in treatment and for recognition as competent military professionals, combined with the magnificent wartime records of the 99th Fighter Squadron and the 332nd Fighter Group, led to a review of the racial policies of the Department of War.

(13) In September 1947, the United States Air Force, as a separate service, reactivated the 332d Fighter Group under the Tactical Air command. Members of the 332d Fighter Group were ''Top Guns'' in the 1st annual Air Force Gunnery Meet in 1949.

(14) For every Black pilot, there were 12 other civilian or military Black men and women performing ground support duties. Many of these men and women remained in the military service during the post-World War II era and spearheaded the integration of the Armed Forces of the United States.

(15) Major achievements are attributed to many of those who returned to civilian life and earned leadership positions and respect as businessmen, corporate executives, religious leaders, lawyers, doctors, educators, bankers, and political leaders.

(16) A period of nearly 30 years of anonymity for the Tuskegee Airmen was ended in 1972 with the founding of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., in Detroit, Michigan. Organized as a non-military and nonprofit entity, Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., exists primarily to motivate and inspire young Americans to become participants in our Nation's society and its democratic process, and to preserve the history of their legacy.

(17) The Tuskegee Airmen have several memorials in place to perpetuate the memory of who they were and what they accomplished, including—

(A) the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., National Scholarship Fund for high school seniors who excel in mathematics, but need financial assistance to begin a college program;

(B) a museum in historic Fort Wayne in Detroit, Michigan;

(C) Memorial Park at the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio;

(D) a statue of a Tuskegee Airman in the Honor Park at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado; and

(E) a National Historic Site at Moton Field, where primary flight training was performed under contract with the Tuskegee Institute.

SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the award, on behalf of the Congress, of a single gold medal of appropriate design in honor of the Tuskegee Airmen, collectively, in recognition of their unique military record, which inspired revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces.

(b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the ''Secretary'') shall strike the gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

(c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the gold medal in honor of the Tuskegee Airmen under subsection (a), the gold medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where it will be displayed as appropriate and made available for research.

(2) SENSE OF THE CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should make the gold medal received under paragraph (1) available for display elsewhere, particularly at other appropriate locations associated with the Tuskegee Airmen.

SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

Under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck under section 2, at a price sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

SEC. 4. NATIONAL MEDALS.

Medals struck pursuant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS; PROCEEDS OF SALE.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be charged against the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund, an amount not to exceed $30,000 to pay for the cost of the medals authorized under section 2.

(b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 3 shall be deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1259, introduced by the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), which would award a Congressional Gold Medal, the highest honor the Congress can bestow, on the Tuskegee Airmen.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, this award is long, long overdue. Pilots of the 99th Fighter Squadron, including the first group of black pilots who trained at the little airstrip in Alabama near Tuskegee College, and later the 100th, 301st, and 302nd, were not even expected by some to be capable of meeting the challenge. Cruelly, studies commissioned by the Army War College in the 1920s and 1930s speculated that African Americans were capable neither of military leadership nor of flying increasingly complex fighter aircraft.

Tell that theory to Lee A. Archer, the young man from Yonkers who grew up dreaming of being a fighter pilot and reading comic books about the gallant fighter pilots of the First World War. Lee Archer flew 169 combat missions in his P–40 Tomahawk, P–39 Cobra, P–47 Thunderbolt, and his P–51 Mustang, known as the Macon Belle. He became an ace, notching five downed enemy aircraft in his career.

Tell that also to then-Captain Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., a West Point grad, who was one of the first 13 pilots trained near Tuskegee and became the first black flag officer in the Air Force, retiring with three stars and being granted a fourth in retirement by President Clinton.

Tell that to Lieutenant Clarence ''Lucky'' Luster, who destroyed three German planes and earned a Distinguished Flying Cross the day Archer notched his first victory.

In all, Mr. Speaker, these men, who were not supposed to be able to fly, came home from piloting their distinctive, red-tailed fighters with 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, Bronze and Silver Stars and Legions of Merit, a Presidential Unit Citation, and even the Red Star of Yugoslavia. They also came home with the knowledge that no one could plausibly assert that a segregated armed services made any sense, and integration soon followed.

After the war, these men became business and political and civic leaders, many quite successful both in and outside the military, blazing trails at home the way they had blazed the trails in the skies of North Africa and Europe. Today, Mr. Speaker, we are here during Black History Month to add one more honor to that list.

The legislation before us, cosponsored by 308 Members of the House, seeks to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the Tuskegee Airmen as a group and give it to the Smithsonian for display, with provisions that the medal may be loaned out temporarily to appropriate sites: perhaps to Moton Field in Alabama, where they trained, or to the Air Force Academy, where a statute of a Tuskegee Airman stands in Honor Park.

Rarely, Mr. Speaker, do we get to do something in this great Chamber that is so widely supported, so appropriate, and so long overdue. It is a pleasure to be here today with Mr. WATT, who is managing the bill, and also again with Mr. RANGEL and the many sponsors of this. Also, I can tell you that we were there for the 60th anniversary with Mr. RANGEL and the Speaker and leaders, and my wife and Mrs. Rangel, and it was a pleasure to be there on that historic day with our congressional delegation.

I commend Mr. RANGEL and the other Members for supporting this, and I urge immediate passage of H.R. 1259.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am a proud cosponsor of this bill, but that is not why I am here. I am here because of the protocols of the House. The protocols of the House say that a bill goes through a committee and somebody on that committee should be controlling time. But the protocols of the House sometimes put you in a position that you know you are inadequate to effectively do, and that is my position today, because the real person who should be being honored by controlling time is the person who was the original cosponsor of this, my good friend and colleague, Representative RANGEL.

So I want to proudly say that I am a strong supporter of this bill, but I want to yield immediately to my colleague from New York, Representative RANGEL, as much time as he may consume.

(Mr. RANGEL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, the modesty of the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus amazes even me, because destiny would have it that this is the last day of African History Month and he is the chairman of the historic Congressional Black Caucus. So that shatters protocol, and I thank him for his friendship, his support and the leadership that he has given to all Americans through the Congressional Black Caucus.

Today probably will be one of the closest days to bipartisanship that this august body has seen in a long, long time. And, of course, Chairman NEY is right: what a historic day that was when we went and saw how many tens of thousands of Americans were prepared to give up their lives, knowing the dangers of the Normandy beachhead.

We were there with Sam Gibbons and the leadership, and it did make all of us so proud to be Americans that day. We were not Republicans, Democrats or liberals; we were just so proud that we had this great Nation that had gone so far in providing her leadership for those who survived and for those who continue to serve.

We have 300 cosponsors of this bill in this body, and I am thoroughly convinced, Mr. Speaker, that the only reason we do not have the rest is that somebody on staff did not handle this right. Because there has been no one that has not felt proud to be able to say three things: thank you, thank you, thank you.

It is absolutely amazing how great this country is when you find young Americans, black as they may be, victims of racism though they may be, fighting to be able to defend this country against the Germans and the Italians and against the Japanese.

The NAACP fought and won the opportunity for this group of young people to be trained, even though the Army had already ruled that they could not be black airmen, or colored airmen or Negro airmen. So they won the right to put their lives on the line and share in the sacrifice to which this great Republic was attached.

I have to thank BARNEY FRANK. He gave me all the questions to ask Chairman OXLEY so that I could get the right answers in order to expedite the bill. And MIKE OXLEY has just been absolutely terrific, as has the Speaker in making sure that we guided this through the parliamentary procedure to be where we are today.

And talking about bipartisanship, Mr. HUNTER, the chairman of the Defense Committee, joined in with Mr. SKELTON, the ranking Democrat, to send a letter to all of his colleagues asking them to see their way clear to support this bill.

And, of course, the last is something that I have to thank Secretary Rumsfeld for. My book is not completed, and I am glad it is not, so I can thank him publicly for sending out a letter to the House and Senate recommending a gold medal for the historic Tuskegee Airmen. They fought not really just for black folks, but they fought for a better America. They fought for a better world. They were pioneers not only in fighting the war, but in showing and giving self-esteem to so many younger people, inspiring them to do what so many Americans just dream of doing, and that is to fly a plane in the defense of their country.

Even though they were denied all types of recognition during the time that they served, and even though they were subjected to all types of scourges by other people, they still continued to fight. There were 450 Tuskegee Airmen that served with the 99th Fighter Squadron and were able to then join with the 332nd Fighter Group in the 15th Air Force.

□ 1545

They flew 15,500 combat sorties, including more than 6,000 missions for the 99th Squadron before July 1944. Sixty-six pilots lost their lives and were killed in action. Thirty-two were

downed or became prisoners of war. And among the outfit they received 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 744 Air Medals, eight Purple Hearts and 14 Bronze Stars.

My colleagues, in all of the time that they were protecting American bombers on their missions from the United States to Europe, in all of that time, no matter how many times that they were shot down, they never lost a bomber, never lost a United States bomber throughout World War II. They set an example for all of us somehow to try to follow, and that is that the vestiges of slavery were not over then and they are not over now. And certainly, when we take a look at those brave young men and women that are fighting in Iraq, we cannot tell whether they are Republican or Democrats; and we do not care whether they are Black, White, or Brown. They are sharing the sacrifices that this great Nation is involved in.

I am so proud that because of my age, my community and my friendship, that the spirit of the Tuskegee Airmen is not involved with history books with me because one of those great airmen happens to be one of my very, very best friends, and that is Percy Sutton. Percy not only flew the planes but he was involved in intelligence and he provided the leadership, not just in the service, but became a leader in the civil rights movement and became a friend and advocate in support of Malcolm X, became the borough president of Manhattan, ran for mayor, and then when that did not work out, started out in business to become one of the most successful people in communication that we have had in the city and in the country.

And so, what did that mean to a CHARLIE RANGEL, who came from a depressed community? We had one symbol of hope. It was not World War II. It was restoring the Apollo Theater, and he brought back the Apollo, and with the empowerment zones, I invite all of you to be my guest in seeing the restoration of a historic beautiful community, Harlem. And Percy Sutton is the father and the creator of giving that type of leadership to my hometown.

What about Roscoe Brown?

Listen carefully. Roscoe Brown, with a single-engine fighter, was the first American to shoot down a German jet, with a propeller plane, was the first to shoot down a German jet fighter plane. And after this, he did not give up his struggle. He continued in education, became president of a university, and today still teaches in the Harlem community.

Lee Archer. As you pointed out, Mr. Chairman, a guy who dreamed as a kid and fulfilled that dream and then finally went into business and even today, even though he is retired, provides the leadership for small business people and others.

As we salute these people today, it gives us an opportunity to think about today and tomorrow, where color should never be an issue with those people that should not have to put their lives on the line to be respected as being Americans who are fully entitled to all of the benefits.

And to the Members today, I am certain that I speak for the members of the Tuskegee Airmen, let this be the beginning. As we say thank you, let me never have to apologize for forgetting someone or not giving them an opportunity. Let this be the day where Democrats and Republicans can come together, ranking Members and majority Members, in saying as we look at the past and see where we made mistakes; let this be the guidance to provide leadership for all of us to avoid the opportunities in the future.

To all of you who have supported the bill, on behalf of those survivors and their families of the Tuskegee Airmen, I say three things: thank you, thank you, and thank you very much.

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS).

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman and I thank my colleague, the ranking member, Mr. RANGEL, for his dedication and perseverance in obtaining the highest congressional honor for one of the most courageous groups of Americans, the Tuskegee Airmen. At a time when civil rights were still being denied and segregation persisted through many parts of our country, the Tuskegee Airmen bravely fought and gave their lives abroad for freedom and liberty that sadly oftentimes they did not receive here at home.

Before 1940, the African Americans were denied the right to fly with the United States military. However, from 1942 to 1946, the Tuskegee Airmen graduated 992 airmen from the pilot training program of the Tuskegee Army airfield, while 450 served in combat.

For every African American pilot, there were 10 other civilian or military African American men and women on the ground performing support duties. Many of them remained in the military during the post-World War II era and spearheaded the integration of the armed services with the integration of the Air Force in 1949.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to go to Iraq about a year ago and visited with the 332nd Fighter Group, the follow-on from the 99th Fighter Squadron that was the Tuskegee Airmen and had a chance to visit with the wonderful men and women who make up that 332nd Fighter Squadron. What a group they are. And they certainly recognize their roots. They recognize the heritage, the valiant heritage of the 99th Fighter Squadron. In fact, Balad air base, where this fighter group is stationed in Iraq, is the site for the Air Force's contingent aeromedical staging facilities where all the casualties in Iraq are brought to this central staging facility, stabilized, flown from Balad to Landstuhl, Germany and then subsequently flown from Landstuhl back here to Walter Reed in the United States.

When I was there in February, they had performed 19,000 such transfers from the battlefield with one intertransfer death. I had an opportunity to go back in August of this past year, in 2005: 27,000 patient transfers, again only the one intertransfer death.

Clearly, these men and women are following that great tradition that was started by the 99th Fighter Squadron. Well, sadly today, only 200 of the original Tuskegee Airmen are still with us. I am fortunate to have three of these courageous men living in the district that I represent: Mr. Don Elder, Mr. Robert McDaniel and Mr. Claude Platt. Recently, the Claude R. Platt VFW Tuskegee Airmen chapter was formed. And I am confident that others will benefit greatly from this chapter's rich history and legacy.

Gentlemen, thank you very much for your service and your dedication to your country. I am honored and privileged to represent you before the United States Congress.

Mr. Speaker, the mayor of my town of Highland Village, Texas, back home is the son of a Tuskegee Airman. Mayor Bill Lawrence was born and grew up in Tuskegee, Alabama; and his father served proudly with the 99th Fighter Squadron.

The 26th Congressional District of Texas also pays tribute to the brave men through the National Cowboys of Color museum located in Fort Worth, Texas. A wing of the museum is dedicated to the Claude R. Platt VFW Tuskegee Airmen chapter. The wing is the home of a number of personal artifacts, autographed paintings of the airmen in training, proclamations and other items of recognition.

Mr. Speaker, if you are ever in north Texas, Mr. Ranking Member, if you are ever in north Texas, I encourage you to visit this museum and learn more about the sacrifices and the contributions of these heroic Americans.

Mr. Speaker, once again I want to thank Ranking Member RANGEL for his bringing forth this legislation honoring the Tuskegee Airmen for their service and dedication to our country. We cannot say it enough. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes and 10 seconds to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the distinguished gentleman from North Carolina. Let me, as well, appreciate the fact, as Mr. RANGEL has said, that we have a bipartisan moment. I thank the chairman, Mr. NEY, for his support and leadership.

Mr. RANGEL, might I acknowledge you for a brilliant stroke of patriotic genius, for you have recognized that those who battled on the forefront of World War II, who may have worn a

different skin color, came home not in dishonor, but not with much honor. And so I am very humbled to have been one of the cosponsors to join you in the recognition, collectively, of the numbers of airmen who can claim Tuskegee, Alabama and the Tuskegee Institute as a starting point of them being able to reach their dreams of serving on the front lines in World War II and fighting for their America.

As Mr. RANGEL said earlier, these individuals suffered in a segregated America and, in fact, were rejected and rebuffed when they asked to join the United States military to sacrifice their lives. But they were persistent, and they got called to be the Tuskegee Airmen and there were personnel sent from Washington to train them. And sometimes they were thinking, why did I get this assignment? But now we are here today to honor them with a Congressional Gold Medal, some 992 black pilots, and then of course, any number of civilians who were likewise engaged.

Thirty years after the war was over, you heard nothing about the Tuskegee Airmen. And then, of course, they did the wise thing by establishing the first club.

I too have a personal story, because I am proud to say that my father-in-law, Phillip Ferguson Lee, was a Tuskegee Airman; and from the time of my marriage in the early years, what an honor to travel around him or to meet those gentlemen. I was honored to be able to see those gentlemen in their distinguished jackets, senior as they were, but proud and strong. Thank you, Mr. RANGEL. Thank you to the Tuskegee Airmen. Thank you, America, for recognizing these battle-worn soldiers. God bless them and God bless America.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1259, "to authorize the President to award a gold medal on behalf of the Congress, collectively, to the Tuskegee Airmen in recognition of their unique military record, which inspired revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces."

On July 19, 1941 the American Air Force created an all black flight training program at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. The Tuskegee Airmen were not only unique in their military record, but they inspired revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces, paving the way for integration of the armed services in the U.S.

The first class of cadets began in July 1941 with 13 men, all of whom had college degrees, some with PhD's and all had pilot's licenses. From all accounts, the training of the Tuskegee Airmen was an experiment established to prove that "coloreds" were incapable of operating expensive and complex combat aircraft. Stationed in the segregated South, the black cadets were denied rifles.

The Tuskegee Airmen were credited with 261 aircraft destroyed, 148 aircraft damaged, 15,553 combat sorties and 1,578 missions over Italy and North Africa. They destroyed or damaged over 950 units of ground transportation and escorted more than 200 bombing missions. "We proved that the antidote to racism is excellence in performance," said retired Lt. Col. Herbert Carter, who started his military career as a pilot and maintenance officer with the Tuskegee Airmen's 99th Fighter Squadron. Clearly, the experiment, as it was called, was an unqualified success.

The Tuskegee Airmen were awarded three Presidential Unit Citations, 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses and Legions of Merit, along with the Red Star of Yugoslavia, nine Purple Hearts, 14 Bronze Stars and more than 700 Air medals and clusters. It goes without question that the Tuskegee Airmen are deserving of the Congressional Gold Medal.

I would like to thank Congressman RANGEL for his work in bringing this legislation to the floor of Congress, and his efforts in gathering 308 cosigners. This is an important, and long overdue piece of legislation. I ask my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to give their support to H.R. 1259, authorizing "the President to award a gold medal on behalf of the Congress, collectively, to the Tuskegee Airmen . . ."

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SCHWARZ).

Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I have had the pleasure of meeting the Tuskegee Airmen, the survivors, on a number of occasions. A number of them live in my home State of Michigan, especially Major General Lucius Theus, who lived in Detroit, a distinguished member of the Tuskegee Airmen. They last rallied in Michigan at Jackson, Michigan, in the summer of 2004; and our colleague from the other body, Senator MCCAIN, and I were privileged to be at that meeting and greet the airmen.

As the unit approached its first year in action, it learned that it was being transferred to the 332nd Fighter Group, a unit activated at Tuskegee in mid-1942 and transferred to Michigan in 1943 where it conducted training at Selfridge Air Base and Oscoda Air Base, both in the eastern side, on the eastern side of the State of Michigan, before deploying to Italy. The 332nd was composed of four African American squadrons, the 99th 100th, 301st, and 302nd under the command of Colonel Davis.

Not long after arriving in Italy, the members of the 332nd were heavily involved in combat missions. Assigned to bomber escort with the 15th Air Force, it escorted the bombers on missions around Italy, flew on the raids to the access oil refineries in Ploesti, Romania, and strafed German troops retreating from Greece. It established a reputation for protecting its bombers. The pilots always followed Colonel Davis' orders. Your job is to protect the bombers and not chase enemy aircraft for personal glory, he said. The Germans called the 332nd the Schwartze Vogrl Menshen, the black birdmen, and began to see a plane with a red tail as something to fear.

On March 24, 1945, the 332nd went on the longest mission flown by the 15th Air Force to the Daimler-Benz tankworks in Berlin. On this mission, it downed three of the new Messerschmitt ME–262 jet fighters. The group received a distinguished unit citation for its performance that day.

At the end of the war, the Tuskegee Airmen returned to an America that was as segregated as the one they had left.

□ 1600

Some of the veterans became leaders in the fight for desegregation, both military and civilian. With their own community, they offered pride and encouragement. And to the white community they offered an example of the equality of men. The Air Force became desegregated in April of 1948. Unfortunately, the rest of the Nation would take much longer. But there is no doubt that the example, professionalism, and expertise of the Tuskegee Airmen hastened that day.

It is fitting today, then, Mr. Speaker, that this bill would bestow the Congressional Gold Medal, our body's highest expression of national appreciation for distinguished achievements and contributions, upon the members of the Tuskegee Airmen in recognition of their service to our country during World War II and in the years after that conflict. They are living examples of what is possible when racism is defeated and opportunities are equally available to all members of our great country.

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT).

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot rise to the heights of CHARLIE RANGEL, but I rise in tribute to the Tuskegee Airmen. For years, it seems we have considered bills honoring the contributions of these heroic airmen. It is about time this one passed and passed with huge support.

Their achievements in support of our efforts in World War II have inspired books and movies. They have earned decorations and awards for valor that are too numerous to cite. As Mr. RANGEL noted, 992 graduated from pilot training at Tuskegee; 450 went overseas to North Africa and Italy; some 150 died either in training or in combat missions. And yet, though they were shot down, not a single bomber, as Mr. RANGEL noted, among the many they escorted was ever shot down.

While their accomplishments have been recognized by the military, the military in truth cannot adequately honor all of their accomplishments because these men fought and won other battles that were not military in nature. They defied those who thought they lacked the intelligence, the skills, the courage, even the patriotism to fly and fight. Their courage in the air is legendary, but their courage on the ground and in our society made their achievements in the air all the more meaningful and remarkable.

Today, the impact of the Tuskegee Airmen reaches far beyond the skies of Italy and North Africa. Their service led to social changes in our country that include the integration of our Armed Forces. In 1948, Harry Truman

signed Executive Order 9981, directing equality of treatment and opportunity in all of the armed services. President Truman's order ended racial segregation in the military and was a major step towards ending racial segregation in the United States of America.

Today, we recognize the Tuskegee Airmen for valor in battle, but also for accomplishments that succeeded, that transcended the battlefield like Executive Order 9981. The Tuskegee Airmen, the 99th Fighter Squadron and the 332d Fighter Group, not only deserve the Congressional Gold Medal, they will add luster to it.

I salute the Tuskegee Airmen and I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2¼ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON).

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, on July 19, 1941, the United States military began a revolutionary program in Alabama to train black Americans as military pilots. The program helped change military culture and negative perceptions of blacks in the military, especially the Air Corps.

The Division of Aeronautics of Tuskegee Institute, the famed school of learning founded by Booker T. Washington in 1881, and I am a descendant of his, conducted flight training for aspiring black pilots; and my cousin, still alive, living here, Ira O'Neal, was one of those pilots. The first classes of Tuskegee Airmen were trained to be fighter pilots for the famous 99th Fighter Squadron slated for combat duty in North Africa. By the end of the war, 992 men had graduated from pilot training at Tuskegee, 450 of whom were sent overseas for combat assignment. I should also note that 16,000 men and women supported the Tuskegee Airmen program.

Mr. Speaker, the 450 pilots that flew combat missions over North Africa and Europe, five of them live in the 33rd Congressional District of Los Angeles and Culver City, which I represent. And they are Wilbert Johnson, William B. Ellis, Elbert T. Hudson, Samuel R. Hughes, and Roger B. Duncan.

Mr. Speaker, although pilots that flew twin-engine aircraft did not see combat, it does not take away from the barriers that broke because of their service. In my district there is an individual that flew twin-engine bombers. He is Oscar H. York.

Many others who were not pilots supported the Tuskegee Institute and are original members of the Tuskegee Airmen. These individuals also live in my district. And they are Floyd J. Cawthon, Jerry T. Hodges, Jr., Flora M. Lane, John Lehman, Theodore G. Lumpkin, Jr., Levi H. Thornhill, and Albert L. Wallace.

Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge both the historic as well as the heroic role all members of the Tuskegee Airmen played in securing our Nation's freedom as well as changing our Nation's culture and perception of African Americans.

Once again, I congratulate Congressman RANGEL for introducing this historic resolution of acknowledgment.

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. WATT and certainly Mr. RANGEL for their leadership on this, and Mr. NEY of Ohio for his leadership on this.

What an honor it is for me to stand here and to speak some words about the extraordinary contributions that the Tuskegee Airmen have made. Let me begin by simply setting the stage, because I think it is very important for us to understand the environment, the time that this activity happened in American history, for us to truly understand the significance of the Tuskegee Airmen. Let us go back for a moment to that time, and let us take a look at what was going on at that time.

In 1921, Benjamin O. Davis had early on, as one of our leading African Americans in the military, put forward the proposition that black men should be trained to fight, but yet there was great hesitation. As a matter of fact, the Federal Government issued a study which said that African American men were incapable, did not have the skill, the courage, the fortitude, and, in fact, they felt inferior to white people, so that they did not have the courage to do this, this at a time in 1921 when the first woman to even get a license to fly was an African American woman by the name of Bessie Queenie Coleman, and she flew as a daredevil.

Circle back to 1941. It was not until then that they gave the Tuskegee Airmen an opportunity at Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama, founded by Booker T. Washington.

And the story tells it all. For there is no greater story of freedom and American democracy than that story of the Tuskegee Airmen who, with bravery and courage, went and fought for the freedom of this country and the world while yet back at home African American citizens were second-class citizens.

So when we talk about the Tuskegee Airmen, it is more than just their flying. It is their extraordinary stand for courage in the face of difficulty. We salute the Tuskegee Airmen.

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time, and I will not take it all.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to note and pay tribute to what I am told are approximately 20 Tuskegee Airmen, who are still living and reside in North Carolina, and mention some of their names, from my congressional district two of them: from Greensboro, Harvey Alexander; from Salisbury, Fred Wilson. And from other parts of the State, I do not have all of their names, but I do want to pay tribute to the ones that I have: from Lenoir, North Carolina, George Shade; from Durham, William MacDonald and Dr. Stuart Fulbright; from Raleigh, North Carolina, my good friend Dr. Harold Webb, whom I have known forever, and Walter Chavis; from Smithfield, North Carolina, Hernando Palmer; and from Dudley, North Carolina, Wilson Eagleson, II.

I want to thank my colleague, Representative RANGEL, again for taking the lead in putting all this together to make this a truly bipartisan recognition of truly heroic and brave airmen.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, let me just say it is a great day for the Tuskegee Airmen. It is a great day for the United States, and it is a shining day for this institution of the House.

I think that if you look at the quote from Langston Hughes, a great African American poet, ''Dream your dreams, but be willing to pay the sacrifice to make them come true,'' our veterans have done that historically throughout the history of this country, and the Tuskegee Airmen have done that.

Again, I thank Congressman RANGEL for giving them the honor they so much deserve.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1259, authorizing the President to award a gold medal on behalf of the Congress to the Tuskegee Airmen. At a time when their country did not see fit to protect their rights, these brave young men nonetheless served valiantly on behalf of all American citizens.

During the Second World War, African-Americans were essentially second-class citizens in American society, and unfortunately this characterization did not end at the water's edge. Not permitted to train as aviators with their white comrades during World War II, 992 brave young men completed pilot training at Tuskegee's Moton Field, at the school founded by Booker T. Washington; 450 of these airmen were sent overseas for combat assignment, and 66 gave their lives during combat flights.

The Tuskegee Airmen populated the famed 99th Fighter Squadron and saw combat duty in North Africa. Others joined the 332nd Fighter Group, which flew missions from bases in Italy. Still others served similarly important roles as mechanics, gunners, and engineers.

Among these brave airmen are several individuals whose stories begin or end in the 12th Congressional District of New Jersey. As a young man, Robert Griffin worked at the local airport in Princeton, New Jersey, washing and refueling airplanes, earning just a few precious minutes of flying time per week. Though the Air Force would not train him as a fighter pilot due to his race, he eventually found a home at the Tuskegee Institute, becoming one of the first black flight mechanics. He later served in the U.S. Air Force after integration, and flew refueling and support missions for 13 years.

A current resident of Ewing, New Jersey—Retired Lieutenant Colonel Edward Harris—received his pilot's license from Tuskegee Institute and Tuskegee Army Air Base in 1944. He served 27 years in the U.S. Air Force and retired as commander of the 2017 Communications Group at McGuire Air Force Base. He subsequently served in the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, and currently resides in Ewing with his wife Delores.

Mr. Speaker, the Tuskegee Airmen are true testament to the selfless sacrifice and brave

service that the U.S. Armed Forces seek to instill in its soldiers, sailors, and airmen. I rise in support of H.R. 1259, and commend all those who would stand tall for their country before their country would not stand tall for them.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1259. By authorizing the Tuskegee Airmen to receive the Congressional Gold Medal, we are not only recognizing an exemplary military record, but also strength of character in the face of prejudice and racism. The Tuskegee Airmen, a unit of 1,000 African American pilots, were America's first black military airmen. Trained at Tuskegee Army Air Field in Tuskegee, Alabama, these men had to overcome biased notions of their fighting ability.

After graduation from pilot training at Tuskegee, 450 members of the unit were sent overseas for combat assignments. These men saw extensive action, completing 15,000 missions between 1941–1946 without losing one American bomber during any escort mission. Collectively they earned more than 744 medals and their heroic service led to the greater achievement of integrating the U.S. Armed Forces—a watershed event in American history. Their brave actions broke forever the myths that allowed segregation, inequity and injustice toward African-Americans to exist in our military.

Today, the remaining survivors, now in their 80's, are role models to generations of young men and women both in and outside of the military. The Tuskegee Airmen persevered and by sharing their stories have taught generations of Americans about the high price of freedom.

They were dedicated and determined young men who came from every section of the country. I am particularly proud to recognize the 38 airmen who were from the State of Virginia, 10 of whom are still living. The living Virginia Tuskegee Airmen are Howard Baugh of Petersburg, Wiley Selden of Norfolk, Grant Williams of Hampton, Ezra Hill of Hampton, Francis Home of Hampton, Theodore Wilson of Roanoke, William Green of Staunton, Carl Johnson of Charlottesville, Augustus Palmer of Newport News and Floyd Carter of Norfolk.

These men served as trailblazers in the efforts to create equal rights and equal treatment for all people. It is my honor to thank them for their service, legacy and rich heritage.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay homage to the Tuskegee Airmen, whose outstanding valor in World War II inspired revolutionary reform in the U.S. Armed Services. H.R. 1259 which I introduced on March 10, 2005 recognizes these achievements and on behalf of the people of the United States conferring upon the Tuskegee Airmen the Congressional Gold Medal, Congress' highest award. Today, I stand before this House with unbounded joy and pride as we prepare to enact this legislation honoring the Tuskegee Airmen who are still with us and honoring those who have passed on. I feel the joy of the wives and widows sons and daughters of Tuskegee Airmen who have waited a long time for this day.

I wish to thank the more than 300 Members of the House who signed on as cosponsors making this a truly bipartisan effort. I wish to commend particularly Chairman MICHAEL OXLEY and Ranking Member BARNEY FRANK, of the authorizing Committee on Financial Services as well as Chairman DUNCAN HUNTER and Ranking Member IKE SKELTON of the Armed Services Committee who made a bipartisan appeal to the entire House in support of this bill. I would be remiss not to mention Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld who commended this bill to the Members of the House.

WHO ARE THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN?

The term ''Tuskegee Airmen'' refers to all who were involved in a program the War Department established as a segregated unit in the Army Air Force (AAF) which was termed the ''Tuskegee Experiment.'' The program began on July 19, 1941 with primary training for the first flying cadets but it went on to train African Americans to fly and maintain combat aircraft. The Tuskegee Airmen included pilots, navigators and bombardiers.

Before 1940 African Americans were barred from flying in the United States Army. African Americans were believed to be lacking in qualifications for combat duty. In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt overruled his top generals and ordered the creation of an all Black flight training program. This action followed a pioneering civil rights lawsuit the NAACP filed in Federal Court on behalf of Yancy Williams and others to force the Department of War to accept African American pilot trainees.

On July 19, 1941, the Army Air Force (AAF) began a program in Alabama to train black Americans as military pilots. Due to the rigid system of racial segregation that prevailed in the United States during World War II, Black military pilots were trained at a separate airfield, Moton Field, built by Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. The Primary flight training was conducted by the Division of Aeronautics of Tuskegee Institute.

When the first classes of Tuskegee Airmen were completed, they were trained to be fighter pilots for the famous 99th Fighter Squadron, slated for duty in North Africa. Additional pilots were assigned to the 332d Fight Group which flew combat along with the 99th Squadron from bases in Italy.

The first aviation cadet class began in July 1941 and completed training nine months later in March 1942. Thirteen started in the first class. Five successfully completed the training, one of them being Captain Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., a West Point Academy graduate. The other four were commissioned second lieutenants, and all five received Army Air Corps silver pilot wings.

From 1942 through 1946, 994 pilots graduated at the TAAF receiving commissions and pilot wings. Black navigators, bombardiers and gunnery crews were trained at selected military bases elsewhere in the United States. Mechanics were trained at Chanute Air Base in Rantoul, Illinois until facilities were in place in 1942 at the Tuskegee Army Air Force Base.

Four hundred and fifty of the pilots who were trained at TAAF served overseas in either the 99th Pursuit Squadron (later the 99th Fighter Squadron) or the 332nd Fighter Group. The 99th Fighter Squadron trained in and flew P–40 Warhawk aircraft in combat in North Africa, Sicily and Italy from April 1943 until July 1944 when they were transferred to the 332nd Fighter Group in the 15th Air Force.

Nine-hundred and ninety-two Black pilots graduated from the pilot training program of the TAAF, with the last class finishing in June 1946. The Tuskegee Airmen who many thought would fail in combat, instead accomplished an outstanding combat record. They flew over 15,000 combat sorties, including more than 6,000 missions for the 99th Squadron prior to July 1944. They destroyed 111 German airplanes in the air and another 150 on the ground. They destroyed 950 railcars, trucks and other motor vehicles and sunk one destroyer with P–47 machine gun fire. They established a sterling record: No United States bombers were lost under escort of the 332nd, a unique achievement.

Sixty-six Tuskegee pilots were killed in action or accidents; thirty-two were downed and became prisoners of war. Among them the Tuskegee pilots received 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 744 Air Medals, 8 Purple Hearts and 14 Bronze Stars.

The Black fighter group, the 332nd, was made up of the 99th, 301st and 302nd Fighter squadrons. Individually and collectively the Tuskegee Airmen revealed the racism, bigotry and the lie underlying the conclusion of the 1925 Army War College Study that Blacks lacked intelligence and were cowardly under combat conditions; and therefore they would never be able to fly aircraft of any type. Although African American could work at unskilled jobs in segregated units in World War II, the Army War College's conclusion that they could not handle aircraft in combat had kept them from any training.

African American civil rights advocates raised their voices against this racism. The NAACP sued the government on behalf of Yancy Williams to allow him to be accepted as an aviation cadet. The Tuskegee Experiment was a response to civil rights advocacy. It is a lasting tribute to these early civil rights pioneers and the NAACP that Blacks finally allowed to train the day after Yancy Williams filed his lawsuit.

The Tuskegee Airmen overcame segregation and prejudice to become one of the most highly respected fighter groups of World War II. They proved conclusively that Black Americans could fly and maintain sophisticated combat aircraft. The Tuskegee Airmen's achievements, together with the men and women who supported them, paved the way for full integration in the United States Military.

The outstanding record of Tuskegee Airmen in World War II was accomplished by men whose names will forever live in hallowed memory. Each one accepted the challenge, proudly displayed his skill and determination while suffering humiliation and indignation caused by frequent experiences of racism and bigotry, at home and overseas. These airmen fought two wars—one against a military force overseas and the other against racism at home and abroad. They fought for rights of the people of the United States, when they were not entitled to those rights themselves.

The outstanding record of Tuskegee Airmen in World War II was accomplished by men whose names will forever live in hallowed memory. I am proud that my Colleagues in the House of Representatives have been supportive of this bipartisan bill to honor these men of valor.

Mr. TERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1259, a Resolution authorizing the President to award a gold medal on behalf of the Congress to the Tuskegee Airmen.

This recognition of the Tuskegee Airmen, members of an elite group who fought valiantly for America's freedoms overseas while

overcoming racial discrimination, is long overdue. Their story deserves to be told often, not just during this month of February, to remind all Americans of the many sacrifices made along the way by Americans of color in the military who faced discrimination here at home.

I have the privilege of representing four Tuskegee Airmen who reside in my Congressional District: Robert Holts, Ralph Orduna, and Charles Lane, all of Omaha and just south of Omaha in Bellevue, Harry Tull. A fifth Airman, Paul Adams, lives in nearby Lincoln, Nebraska. I am especially proud to note that Colonel Lane of Omaha was the youngest black fighter in World War II. His daughter, Karen Davis, is a longtime member of my District Office staff.

I also want to mention Omaha native Alphonza Davis, who graduated from Omaha Tech High School and later Omaha University. He finished first in his class at Tuskegee and was chosen squadron leader. He was killed in combat in 1944 while over Germany. The local Tuskegee Airmen chapter in Omaha is named after him.

Mr. Speaker, the story of the Tuskegee Airmen was written in the context of racial segregation that existed in our country during World War II. African Americans who wanted to fly in the military were trained at a separate location near Tuskegee, Alabama. The Tuskegee Airmen, known as the Red Tails because of the crimson tails on their aircraft, were the first squadron of African American combat pilots in the U.S. military. Nearly 1,000 men had graduated from pilot training at Tuskegee by the end of the war.

Under the command of Colonel Benjamin Davis, Jr., these aviators served in combat in campaigns in North Africa, Sicily and Europe. Colonel Davis later became the first African American general in the U.S. Air Force.

The Tuskegee Airmen and their record of success during the war are unmatched. Not a single American bomber protected by the Red Tails was ever shot down by enemy aircraft. By war's end, the Tuskegee Airmen had flown over 15,000 sorties, completed over 1,500 missions, destroyed more than 260 enemy aircraft, and more than 1,000 enemy vehicles on the ground. The Airmen were awarded 744 Air Medals, 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 14 Bronze Stars, and 8 Purple Hearts.

I join my colleagues in recognizing the Tuskegee Airmen for their gallant and heroic achievements and urge adoption of H.R. 1259. The award of gold medals to these national heroes is only a small token of the thanks they richly deserve for their service to our Nation.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1259, which recognizes the Tuskegee Airmen for their exemplary performance during World War II, and for paving the way for full integration of the U.S. military. I commend Mr. RANGEL for H.R. 1259, which recognizes the Tuskegee Airmen with a Congressional Gold Medal.

The Tuskegee Airmen were the Nation's first African-American fighter pilots at a time when many people thought that African American men lacked intelligence, skill, courage, and patriotism to become pilots. In spite of adversity and limited opportunities, the Tuskegee Airmen defied stereotypes and played a significant role in U.S. military history.

The first Tuskegee Airmen aviation class began in July 1941 and completed training March 1942. African American navigators, bombardiers, gunnery crews, maintenance, instructors, and mechanics were trained to be members of the 332nd Fighter group.

The Tuskegee Airmen overcame segregation and prejudice. Nine hundred and ninety-four pilots received commissions and pilot wings. Four hundred and fifty pilots served overseas in North Africa, Sicily and Italy. The Tuskegee Airmen combat record is impressive, including 66 pilots killed in action; 32 pilots captured; no bombers lost while being escorted by the 332nd, a unique achievement; 111 German airplanes were destroyed in the air, and 150 German airplanes were destroyed on the ground.

The Tuskegee Airmen proved conclusively that African Americans could fly and maintain sophisticated combat aircraft. The Tuskegee Airmen received numerous honors, including: 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses; 850 Medals; 14 Bronze Stars; and 9 Purple Hearts.

By the end of World War II, the 332nd became one of the most highly respected fighter squadron despite prejudice and social equality. The Tuskegee Airmen's achievements must be remembered in the spirit of the heroic Air Force role in the global war on terrorism. With this in mind, I stand today to support H.R. 1259 to express the sense of Congress that the U.S. Air Force should never forget the courage of the Tuskegee Airmen by honoring them with a Congressional Gold Medal.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of H.R. 1259, which authorizes the President to award the Tuskegee Airmen with the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor. In 1941, an experiment that began as an effort to prove the validity of a 1925 study that claimed African Americans lacked both the intelligence and courage to fly planes during combat, finished as a monumental testament that African Americans had both the aptitude, skill and valor, to not only become military pilots, but to meet and exceed any challenge presented. I also want to take this time to thank and congratulate my good friend and colleague, Representative CHARLIE RANGEL for introducing this legislation.

The story of the Tuskegee Airmen began when Yancy Williams, a Howard college student sued the U.S. Government for the right to participate as an aviation cadet. The Government was forced to either prove that blacks could not learn to fly or to accept them into their civilian pilot training program. As a result, a separate, all-black training facility was built by the Army Air Corps at Tuskegee Army Airfield. Though great racism existed at that time, and many of the original instructors were white, there was very little bias and prejudice reported by instructors during the training.

The first class of the Tuskegee Airmen graduated 5 of 13 cadets, who were made a part of the famous 99th Fighting Squadron. Additional pilots were assigned to the 332nd Fighter Group. Though it was 8 months after the second class graduated, the 99th Fighting Squadron finally deployed to the North Africa as a part of the Allied Armies. The Airmen soon built their reputation as both talented and fearless. The Germans nicknamed them ''Schawarte Vogelmenshen'' or Black Birdmen, they also earned the nickname, Redtail Angels, from American bombing crews, due to their reputation for being the only unit who never lost a bomber to enemy fighters during escort missions.

In all, between 1942 and 1946, 926 black pilots earned their wings and commissions and 450 of those pilots saw combat during World War II. As a result of their combat service, the Tuskegee Airmen logged 15,533 sorties in the skies over North Africa, Italy and Germany. They destroyed or damaged 409 enemy aircraft, fuel and ammunitions dumps and escorted 200 bomber missions. In total, the Tuskegee Airmen were awarded 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 8 Purple Hearts, 14 Bronze Stars, 744 Air Medals and Clusters and 3 Distinguished Unit Citations. This record is a soaring achievement that speaks to the depth of talent, heart and courage that they all exemplified. There were also huge human costs for their sacrifice as the Airmen suffered 66 combat deaths, and 33 were captured as prisoners of war. The sacrifice and contributions of the Tuskegee Airmen were the catalyst for President Truman issuing Executive Order 9981, which as of July 26, 1948, desegregated the United States Armed Forces.

The Tuskegee Airmen's contribution to this country is immeasurable. Their display of heroism and perseverance deserves our eternal gratitude. The Tuskegee Airmen are indeed justified of receiving Congress's highest honor, the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor.

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, they never lost a bomber.

The African-American fighter pilots we know today as the Tuskegee Airmen, flew more than 15,000 sorties, mostly bomber-support missions, over North Africa, Sicily and Europe during World War II. They downed roughly 500 enemy aircraft, and sank a destroyer—and they destroyed an awful lot of prejudice in the process.

It wasn't easy. More than 10 percent—66—were killed; 32 were downed and became prisoners of war. But all thousand or so who were trained at Moton Field near the old Tuskegee College in Alabama, now Tuskegee University, were heroes, whether or not they were among the 450 or so who saw combat duty. So were the roughly 12 black men and women who served as mechanics or other support crew for each pilot, and their black comrades who flew in medium bombers during the war.

Mr. Speaker, no one—man or woman, adults or the near-child drummer boys of the Civil and Revolutionary Wars—no one who goes to war in the defense of this country and the liberty for which it stands can be described as anything but valiant and courageous. But usually, Mr. Speaker, the only fight these heroes have is with the enemy.

The trailblazers of the first class of 13, all college grads and pilots, who went through fighter pilot training at Moton Field in the summer of 1941, and all who came after them, also had to fight prejudice. They beat that enemy as soundly as they beat the Axis, and it was not long after the war that the armed services of this country became integrated.

While the brave Tuskegee Airmen were recognized by their comrades in arms, and respected and feared by enemy pilots, they were relatively unknown after the war until the formation in 1972 of the Tuskegee Airmen Inc. Today, besides the scholarship fund it sponsors, there are several memorials to the Airmen, including one at the Air Force Museum at Dayton in my home State of Ohio. Today, we will approve legislation to award a Congressional Gold Medal to these brave men as a group, and give the medal to the Smithsonian Institution.

Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Gold Medal is the highest honor Congress bestows. It has gone to military heroes, including General George Washington, and heroes of the fight against prejudice. Thus, it is only fitting—and long overdue—that we recognize the Tuskegee Airmen in this manner, and do so during Black History Month.

It is for those reasons, Mr. Speaker, that I rise in strong support of H.R. 1259, introduced by the gentleman from New York, that would award a Congressional Gold Medal to the Tuskegee Airmen, and ask for its immediate passage.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1259. This resolution authorizes the President to award a gold medal on behalf of Congress to the Tuskegee Airmen in recognition of their unique military record, which inspired revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces.

As a veteran of the United States Air Force, I am proud to be a co-sponsor of this important resolution. I thank the gentleman from New York for introducing it and urge my colleagues' support.

Prior to the Tuskegee Airmen, all combat pilots had been white. In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered the creation of an all black flight training program to train black Americans as military pilots. Due to the rigid system of racial segregation that prevailed in the United States during World War II, black military pilots were trained at a separate airfield built near Tuskegee, Alabama. The Division of Aeronautics of Tuskegee Institute, the famed school founded by Booker T. Washington in 1881, conducted primary flight training. Thus, they became known as the Tuskegee Airmen.

The first classes of Tuskegee Airmen were trained to be fighter pilots for the famous 99th Fighter Squadron, slated for combat duty in North Africa. Additional pilots were assigned to the 332nd Fighter Group, which flew combat along with the 99th Squadron from bases in Italy.

Due to the success of the program, in September 1943, a twin-engine training program was begun at Tuskegee to provide bomber pilots. However, World War II ended before these men were able to get into combat.

By the end of the war, 992 men had graduated from pilot training at Tuskegee, 450 of whom were sent overseas for combat assignment. During the same period, approximately 150 lost their lives while in training or on combat flights.

The Tuskegee Airmen inspired revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces, paving the way for full racial integration in the Armed Forces. They overcame the enormous challenges of prejudice and discrimination, succeeding, despite obstacles that threatened failure. Yet, their impact can be felt far beyond the U.S. Armed Forces into nearly every aspect of American life. The strength and courage of the Tuskegee Airmen serve as an inspiration to all Americans, regardless of skin color or nationality.

It remains critically important for all Americans to know the Tuskegee Airmen's story and the struggles these men went through and ultimately overcame. I encourage everyone to learn more about these remarkable and inspirational men and urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1259, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 1259 and H.R. 2872 and to insert extraneous material thereon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

CONTINUATION OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO ZIMBABWE—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 109–93)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on International Relations and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency blocking the property of persons undermining democratic processes or institutions in Zimbabwe is to continue in effect beyond March 6, 2006. The most recent notice continuing this emergency was published in the *Federal Register* on March 4, 2005 (70 FR 10859).

The crisis constituted by the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions has not been resolved. These actions and policies pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue this national emergency and to maintain in force the sanctions to respond to this threat.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *February 27, 2006*.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 15 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DENT) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 1096, by the yeas and nays;

H. Res. 668, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 1259, by the yeas and nays.

The first and third electronic votes will be conducted as 15-minute votes. The second vote in this series will be a 5-minute vote.

ACT COMMEMORATING THE LITE, OR LIFETIME INNOVATIONS OF THOMAS EDISON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question of suspending the rules and passing the bill, H.R. 1096, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. RENZI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1096, as amended, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 399, nays 1, not voting 32, as follows:

[Roll No. 14]

YEAS—399

Ackerman	Berkley	Boucher
Aderholt	Berman	Boustany
Akin	Berry	Boyd
Alexander	Bilirakis	Bradley (NH)
Andrews	Bishop (GA)	Brady (PA)
Baca	Bishop (NY)	Brady (TX)
Bachus	Bishop (UT)	Brown (OH)
Baird	Blackburn	Brown (SC)
Baker	Blumenauer	Brown-Waite, Ginny
Baldwin	Blunt	Burgess
Barrett (SC)	Boehlert	Burton (IN)
Barrow	Boehner	Butterfield
Bartlett (MD)	Bonilla	Buyer
Barton (TX)	Bono	Calvert
Bass	Boozman	Camp (MI)
Bean	Boren	Campbell (CA)
Becerra	Boswell	

Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Carter
Case
Castle
Chabot
Chandler
Chocola
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Flake
Foley
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green (WI)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutknecht
Hall
Harman
Harris
Hart
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth
Higgins
Hinojosa
Hobson
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hostettler
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jenkins
Jindal
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maloney
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinney
McMorris
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Murphy
Murtha
Musgrave
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Ney
Northup
Norwood
Nunes
Nussle
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Otter
Oxley
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pombo
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Rothman
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Sabo
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz (PA)
Schwarz (MI)
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Sherman
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Sodrel
Solis
Souder
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Strickland
Stupak
Sullivan
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—1

Paul

NOT VOTING—32

Abercrombie
Allen
Beauprez
Biggert
Bonner
Brown, Corrine
Costa
Costello
Davis (FL)
DeLay
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Evans
Ford
Gutierrez
Hinchey
Istook
Lucas
McCollum (MN)
Millender-McDonald
Miller, Gary
Moran (VA)
Myrick
Nadler
Osborne
Owens
Rohrabacher
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Skelton
Sweeney
Tierney

□ 1854

So (two-thirds of those voting having responded in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CELEBRATING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF TEXAS WESTERN'S 1966 NCAA BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). The pending business is the question of suspending the rules and agreeing to the resolution, H. Res. 668, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 668, as amended, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 397, nays 0, not voting 35, as follows:

[Roll No. 15]

YEAS—397

Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Bradley (NH)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brown (OH)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Carter
Case
Castle
Chabot
Chandler
Chocola
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Flake
Foley
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green (WI)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutknecht
Hall
Harman
Harris
Hart
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth
Higgins
Hinojosa
Hobson
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hostettler
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jenkins
Jindal
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maloney
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinney
McMorris
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Murphy
Murtha
Musgrave
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Ney
Northup
Norwood
Nunes
Nussle
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Oxley
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pombo
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Rothman
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Sabo
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz (PA)
Schwarz (MI)
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Sherman
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder

Sodrel
Solis
Souder
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Strickland
Stupak
Sullivan
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Thomas
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—35

Abercrombie
Bass
Beauprez
Biggert
Bonner
Brown, Corrine
Costa
Costello
Davis (FL)
DeLay
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Evans
Ford
Gohmert
Gutierrez
Hinchey
Istook
Lucas
McCollum (MN)
Melancon
Millender-McDonald
Miller, Gary
Moran (VA)
Myrick
Nadler
Osborne
Otter
Owens
Rohrabacher
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Skelton
Sweeney
Terry

□ 1903

So (two-thirds of those voting having responded in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING THE PRESIDENT TO AWARD A CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). The pending business is the question of suspending the rules and passing the bill, H.R. 1259, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1259, as amended, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 400, nays 0, not voting 32, as follows:

[Roll No. 16]

YEAS—400

Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Bradley (NH)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brown (OH)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Carter
Case
Castle
Chabot
Chandler
Chocola
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Flake
Foley
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green (WI)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutknecht
Hall
Harman
Harris
Hart
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth
Higgins
Hinojosa
Hobson
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hostettler
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jenkins
Jindal
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maloney
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinney
McMorris
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Murphy
Murtha
Musgrave
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Ney
Northup
Norwood
Nunes
Nussle
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Otter
Oxley
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pombo
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Rothman
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Sabo
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz (PA)
Schwarz (MI)
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Sherman
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Sodrel
Solis
Souder
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Strickland
Stupak
Sullivan
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—32

Abercrombie
Beauprez
Biggert
Bonner
Brown, Corrine
Costa
Costello
Davis (FL)
DeLay
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Evans
Ford
Gingrey
Gutierrez
Hinchey
Istook
Kirk
Lucas
McCollum (MN)
Millender-McDonald
Miller, Gary
Moran (VA)
Myrick
Nadler
Osborne
Owens
Rohrabacher
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Skelton
Sweeney

□ 1920

So (two-thirds of those voting having responded in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: ''A Bill to award a congressional gold medal on behalf of the Tuskegee Airmen, collectively, in recognition of their unique military record, which inspired revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent from this Chamber today. I would like the RECORD to show that, had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 14, 15 and 16.

FOREIGN COUNTRIES OWNING AMERICAN PORTS

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the decision to let a United Arab Emirates-owned company take over operations at U.S. ports is dangerous and defies common sense. This is a matter of domestic security. The UAE, although our alleged friends now, recognized the Taliban, laundered money to 9/11 terrorists, and continues to participate in the Arab boycott against Israel.

These same foreign entities would have access to U.S. manifests showing what cargo is being shipped and where and when it is going. This decision affects military terminals in my district, like the port of Beaumont, where one-third of all military cargo deployed to and from Iraq comes through this port. Even the Coast Guard seems to be uneasy about this decision. There is an inherent problem and a national security risk in having state-owned foreign companies buying interest in American ports. This decision is unwise. We are putting a fox in our own hen house, and this decision ought not to be.

Mr. Speaker, allowing a foreign-owned business to infiltrate our ports

is just a risky business. And that's just the way it is.

NATIONAL SECURITY AND OUR TRADE AGREEMENTS

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I applaud the House Republican leadership for finally standing up to the President and saying no on this agreement, this $6.8 billion contract with the company from the United Arab Emirates.

The problem, however, is more fundamental than just stopping this one. It is what happens with national security in our trade agreements. We are in the middle of negotiating a trade agreement with the United Arab Emirates. If this trade agreement had already been signed, we could not back out of this deal with this United Arab Emirates country. It would be an unfair trade practice.

The administration and the Congress have it exactly backwards. Before signing trade agreements, before negotiating a new trade agreement, we need a provision to address national security concerns first. That means a review about all the implications of national security before we sign these trade agreements. That is why I am introducing legislation tonight to do just that.

HONORING MARGARET ROGERS GHIOTTO OF BROOKSVILLE, FLORIDA

(Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is March 1, and each March we celebrate the achievements of our American women during Women's History Month.

This year I want to take the opportunity to honor Margaret Rogers Ghiotto from Brooksville, Florida. A decorated and accomplished business leader and humanitarian, she deserves special recognition for her good work and deeds throughout her 89 years. She was a pillar in the Hernando County community until her death earlier last month. Her story is an inspiration to all Americans, but especially women.

Known by her friends and family as Weenie, her success as a businesswoman came at a time when a woman's place was supposed to be in the home. She owned and managed Rogers Christmas House, as well as Jennings House in Brooksville, Florida, that is on the National Register.

It was with great reverence and admiration that friends, family, and members of the community paid their respects to Margaret on February 18, 2006. Margaret's story is an inspiration not only to women business owners but to all residents throughout the Nation.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE GET IT

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important, as we have participated in the rising thunder of the discussion of port ownership around America, to say that the American people get it. What they get is that we are in a new day after 9/11. We want to make sure that our constitutional rights are protected, but we also want to make sure the homeland is secure. That is the promise that this administration made to the American people. And, frankly, to know that our ports are subjected to the potential of being bought and sold on the open market is a frightening concept.

It is well known that a tanker massed with weapons of mass destruction at any one of our ports could be probably more devastating than the horrific events of 9/11. Tomorrow, I will introduce legislation that will ask for a moratorium for the Nation's ports and the buying and selling to foreign entities, not entities in the Middle East, not entities in Europe, but all foreign entities. I will ask, as well, for a GAO study to determine what is the status of security for our ports. And finally, I will ask for a report on the security status of the 10 largest ports in America.

Let's give a solution. We don't need contracts that sell away our security.

HONORING NATIONAL PEACE CORPS WEEK AND THE 45TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEACE CORPS

(Mr. KLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the nearly 8,000 Peace Corps volunteers who served in more than 70 countries across the globe last year. More specifically, to celebrate National Peace Corps Week, I would like to acknowledge the 30 Peace Corps volunteers in Minnesota's Second Congressional District who graduated from St. Olaf or Carleton Colleges, which annually are among the Nation's small college leaders in providing volunteers to the Peace Corps.

The Peace Corps, celebrating its 45th anniversary, provides practical assistance to host countries by sharing America's most precious resource, its people. I commend the Peace Corps volunteers for teaching those throughout the developing world how to build a better life for themselves, their children, and their communities.

We should take time to honor these selfless volunteers for their valuable service.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD a list of Peace Corps volunteers from Minnesota's Second District.

ST. OLAF COLLEGE

Kraig R. Lothe, Christopher D. Stillion, Sarah A. Chambers, Elizabeth M. Kidd, Megan M. Gregory, Leah A. Gross, Anne E. Fraser, Autumn A. Notter, Matthew M. Toburen, Leslie A. Nechville, Colin T. Forman, Aaron D. Gerber, Erik N. Peterson, Jenell C. Stewart, Kai M. Logan, Kari L. Lewis, and Micheal J. Miller.

CARLETON COLLEGE

Susan E. Johnson, Katherine L. Jumbe, Nicholas Boekelheide, Katherine M. Valaas, Robert A. Valaas, Jesse M. Lamarre-Vincent, Sara A. Lehoullier, April K. Wilhelm, Nicholas R. Kasparek, Theodore J. Stroomer, Carl G. Ebeling, Ambrosia D. Mosby, and Elliot T. Hoel.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. RAMSTAD addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

LETTER FROM NAJIM ABDULLAH ABID AL-JIBOURI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I have with me a letter written by Najim Abdullah Abid Al-Jibouri, the mayor of Tall 'Afar, Iraq who saluted the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment. The mayor of Tall 'Afar saw that the United States soldiers were sacrificing and turning that city into a city that had an opportunity for freedom and prosperity, has carefully penned this letter, and a letter to the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment.

It states: ''In the name of God, the compassionate and merciful, to the courageous men and women of the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment, who have changed the city of Tall 'Afar from a ghost town in which terrorists spread death and destruction, to a secure city flourishing with life. To the lion hearts who liberated our city from the grasp of terrorists who were beheading men, women and children in the streets for many months. To those who spread smiles on the faces of our children and gave us restored hope through their personal sacrifice and brave fighting and gave new life to the city after hopelessness darkened our days and stole our confidence in our ability to re-establish our city. Our city was the main base of operations for Abu Mousab Al Zarqawi.

□ 1930

''The city was completely held hostage in the hands of his henchmen. Our

schools, governmental services, businesses, and offices were closed. Our streets were silent, and no one dared to walk them.

''Our people were barricaded in their homes out of fear; death awaited them around every corner.

''Terrorists occupied and controlled the only hospital in the city. Their savagery reached such a level that they stuffed the corpses of children with explosives and tossed them into the streets in order to kill grieving parents attempting to retrieve the bodies of their young.

''This was the situation of our city until God prepared and delivered unto them the courageous soldiers of the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment, who liberated this city, ridding it of Zarqawi's followers after harsh fighting, killing many terrorists, and forcing the remaining butchers to flee the city like rats to the surrounding areas, where the bravery of other Third Armored Cavalry Regiment soldiers in Sinjar, Rabiah, Zumar, and Avgani finally destroyed them.

''I have met many soldiers of the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment; they are not only courageous men and women, but avenging angels sent by The God Himself to fight the evil of terrorism.

''The leaders of this Regiment, Colonel McMaster, Colonel Armstrong, Lieutenant Colonel Hickey, Lieutenant Colonel Gibson, and Lieutenant Colonel Reilly embody courage, strength, vision, and wisdom. Officers and soldiers alike bristle with the confidence and character of knights in a bygone era.

''The mission they have accomplished, by means of a unique military operation, stands among the finest military feats to date in Operation Iraqi Freedom and truly deserves to be studied in military science. This military operation was clean, with little collateral damage, despite the ferocity of the enemy. With the skill and precision of surgeons they dealt with the terrorist cancers in the city without causing unnecessary damage.

''God bless this brave Regiment; God bless the families who dedicated these brave men and women. From the bottom of our hearts, we thank the families. They have given us something we will never forget.

''To the families of those who have given their holy blood for our land, we all bow to you in reverence and to the souls of your loved ones. Their sacrifice was not in vain.

''They are not dead, but alive, and their souls hovering around us every second of every minute. They will never be forgotten for giving their precious lives. They have sacrificed that which is most valuable.

''We see them in the smile of every child and in every flower growing in this land. Let America, their families, and the world be proud of their sacrifice for humanity and life.

''Finally, no matter how much I write or speak about this brave Regiment, I haven't the words to describe the courage of its officer and soldiers. I pray to God to grant happiness and health to these legendary heroes and their brave families.''

Mr. Speaker, there are no words that can improve upon this letter.

PORT SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, for more than a decade I have been expressing concern about our ports and our port security. Let me explain.

The United States has signed onto international agreements, consensus agreements, where we allow ships to be owned secretly and flagged under flags of convenience from countries that barely exist, Liberia, other countries, like Malta and Panama, who look at it as a way to make money, but care nothing about safety and security. And even they will freely admit they do not know who owns these ships.

Osama bin Laden may own a fleet of freighters. We are not allowed to know that, but they can sail into a U.S. port under a Liberian, Panamanian, or Maltese flag. That is a concern. We do not know who the crews are on these ships.

After an accident on my coast, where I started investigating the credentials of the Filipino captain, I found out that at an International Maritime Organization-approved school in the Philippines, which has never been visited or inspected, which does not exist; anybody, any terrorist, anybody, can buy captain's papers for about $2,500 and they are a captain. So if Osama bin Laden owns a ship, a terrorist buys fake papers, he is now a captain on that ship.

Well, but there must be measures to secure the cargo. Well, not really. We require a manifest, a piece of paper, or in this day and age, an electronic transmission of a list of what is in the containers on that ship.

Now, that is pretty hard to phony up. But then they put these little seals on there that a 6-year-old kid could peel off and open up if the container has been inspected. It would be too expensive, $1 to $2 per container, to have tamper-proof seals. So we cannot have tamper-proof seals. So we do not know who owns the ships. We do not know who crews the ships, and we do not know what is on the cargo on those ships that are coming into U.S. waters.

Then we have the ''thin blue line,'' the United States Coast Guard. Here are the concerns they raised about this UAE deal: The Coast Guard said, ''There are many intelligence gaps concerning the potential for DPW or PNO assets to support terrorist operations that preclude the completion of a thorough threat assessment. The breadth of the intelligence gaps also infer potential unknown threats against a large number of potential vulnerabilities.''

But then, when they were backed into a corner and their funding was probably threatened by the White House, the Coast Guard said, ''The DP World's acquisition of PNO in and of itself does not pose a significant threat to U.S. assets in ports in the continental United States.'' Notice the qualification. ''In and of itself.''

The Coast Guard knows that we do not know who owns the ships. The Coast Guard knows that we do not know who crews those ships. The Coast Guard knows that we do not know what is on those ships. So they are saying this is another level of concern, this government which supported the Taliban, Mr. Khan and his nuclear proliferation, actually controlling the physical facilities. If all that other stuff was taken care of, if we knew who owned the ships, if we knew who crewed the ships, if we knew exactly what was on the ships, if it was tamper-proof sealed, then maybe you could think about this.

Now, the President says he did not know a thing about it, but he knows it was absolutely fine because all his people took care of it. You would think that that might have included the Secretary of Defense. He says he did not know a thing about it, but he knows it is just fine too. And now they say, well, we will have a review for 45 days, but we know it is just fine. We just need that time to tell people it is just fine.

This is plain and simple the Bush administration once more putting commerce, putting multinational corporate profits ahead of the safety and security of the American people. This is about a free trade deal they are negotiating with the UAE. This is about our huge and growing trade deficit where more and more foreign countries are going to be coming back here, buying up critical assets in the United States of America, because we have a totally failed trade policy under this administration.

And what do they want to do? They want to do more of it, and now they want to allow people to buy terminals in our ports and jeopardize the security of the American people.

Enough is enough. It is time to stop this madness.

U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my objections to the proposed United Nations Human Rights Council.

The proposal offered by the U.N. General Assembly President is a far cry

from the reforms that we envisioned just a year ago. If adopted as is, the proposed Council could continue the U.N.'s roll down to irrelevance and would inhibit the efforts of the United States to promote and protect human rights worldwide.

Mr. Speaker, in creating the United Nations, an entity born from the ashes of the Holocaust and the struggle against tyranny in World War II, the nations of the world committed themselves to one goal: ''Never again.'' We would never again tolerate violations of fundamental freedoms and liberties endowed to each and every human being. A Commission on Human Rights was established to ensure that we would not waver in this commitment. It sought to protect the oppressed while holding the oppressors accountable for their actions. However, this commission has become a rogue's gallery, a country club for pariah states, a speaker's forum for dictators.

No farmer would designate a fox to guard his henhouse. No member of the international community in 1945 would have Heimler serve as a judge in Nuremberg; yet the United Nations deemed it acceptable and credible to have the likes of China, Cuba, Iran, and Sudan to sit on its Human Rights Commission.

We had to take action. As a result, the U.N. Reform Act was adopted by the House not once but twice, and it contained provisions to fundamentally reform the entities dealing with human rights at the United Nations. The Henry Hyde bill called for the United States to leverage our influence as well as our financial contributions to the United Nations in order to ensure that countries could only serve with members of any human rights body if they uphold the values embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We provided specific criteria for membership, criteria which seemed obvious, even self-evident, or so we thought.

It appears that it was not so obvious, not so self-evident, given that the current proposals for the U.N. Human Rights Council have no concrete human rights prerequisite for membership. But that is just the tip of the iceberg. There are other areas of grave concern.

The draft for the creation of the U.N. Human Rights Council does not establish criteria for membership. All members of the U.N. would be eligible for membership. This means that gross human rights violators could easily serve on the newly renamed council. It would give greater power and influence to certain regional groupings. These nations would hold 55 percent of the votes, therefore marginalizing the influence of Western democracy while heightening the collective power of despotic regimes.

It also makes it easier to call for special sessions of the council. Due to the new composition of the council, democratic nations such as ours and Israel would become targets for these special sessions. It would also require members to rotate off every two terms, which means that every 6 years the United States would be off the council.

The United States must stand firm against these attempts. I commend John Bolton, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, for doing just that and raising the bar for other democratic nations to do the same. We must make it clear to the United Nations that we will not accept a simple reshuffling of the deck chairs on the Titanic. We will not be pressured into a hasty vote on this Human Rights Council while much needs to be done, much needs to be reconsidered and studied.

Let us recall our promise of ''Never again.'' Let us ask ourselves, does the proposed U.N. Human Rights Council fulfill that promise? If it does not, then let us make every effort to ensure that it does. We must prevent the Human Rights Council from also being hijacked and manipulated into a tool of oppression and tyranny, rather than standing for freedom and democracy.

NICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, the clock is ticking on the 109th Congress and still we have done nothing to stop illegal guns from getting into the hands of criminals.

I am not proposing anything new about laws or a ban on certain weapons, but helping our States enforce the current law that prevents criminals from buying guns.

NICS, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, is the database used to check potential firearms buyers for any criminal record or history of mental illness. In large, NICS has been a success. Since 1994 more than 700,000 individuals were denied a gun for failing a background check. The background check goes back to the 1968 Gun Control Act, and that would basically be what we are enforcing.

However, the NICS system is only as good as the information that the States provide. Twenty-five States have automated less than 60 percent of their felony convictions into the NICS system. That means that 40 percent of people are not in the system that should be denied guns. In these States many felons will not turn up on the NICS system and would be able to purchase guns with no questions asked.

In 13 States domestic violence restraining orders are not necessarily put into the NICS system. Common sense would dictate that you do not sell a gun to someone who has been served with a restraining order.

Thirty-three States have not automated or do not share mental health records that would disqualify certain individuals from purchasing a gun. Sadly, this particular loophole in the NICS system cost two of my constituents their lives.

On March 8, 2002, Peter Troy purchased a .22 caliber semi-automatic rifle. He had a history of mental health problems, and his own mother had a restraining order against him as a result of his violence. It was illegal for him to purchase a gun, but like so many others, he simply slipped through the cracks in the NICS system. Four days later Peter Troy walked into our Lady of Peace Church in Lynbrook, New York, opened fire and killed Reverend Lawrence Penzes and Eileen Tosner.

Peter Troy had no business buying a gun, and the system created to prevent him from doing so failed.

□ 1945

It is only a matter of time before the system's failings provide larger tragedies. We must fix the NICS system. While we lay the responsibility for the NICS system on the States, many of our States' budgets are already overburdened and will have even fewer resources if the President's budget passes as is intact, which is why I introduced H.R. 1415, the NICS Improvement Act.

This legislation will provide grants to States to update the NICS system. States would be able to update their NICS database to include felons, people with certain mental and emotional disabilities, and domestic abusers. We need the NICS Improvement Act to become law, and we need more bills like this to pass. These are ideas that impose no new restrictions open gun owners, but give the government the tools to ensure existing laws are enforced. In fact, the NICS Improvement Act already passed this House in the 107th Congress by a voice vote. It came through the Judiciary Committee with no dissenting votes. The bill had the endorsement of the National Rifle Association. Unfortunately, the other body never acted upon the bill.

This is commonsense gun legislation we can all agree on. This bill will save lives while not infringing on anybody's second amendment rights.

Mr. Speaker, I call Congress to act quickly on H.R. 1415. We can prevent tragedies throughout this Nation. Certainly we hear the NRA talking all the time about enforcing the laws on the books. We can do this if we enforce the laws on the books. If we bring up the NICS system the way it is supposed to be, we can save lives.

One thing that people don't talk about, with the injuries and the deaths that we see in this Nation from daily gun violence, it is costing our medical system, our health care system over $2 billion a year. That is money that can certainly be better spent on other health care issues.

Mr. Speaker, I am hoping that the House will see its way to take this important information, bring the NICS system up to where it should be, and let us save lives.

HONORING R. PHILIP HANES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight in honor of one of my constituents, Mr. R. Philip Hanes of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, as we celebrate his 80th birthday.

Mr. Hanes is a truly remarkable man who has accomplished more than most people could if given several lifetimes. He is the former chief executive officer of Hanes Companies, Incorporated. However, despite his tremendous success in the business world, he is best known for his passion, leadership, and support for the arts.

As a leader of the American arts council movement that began in the 1950s, Mr. Hanes has served on the boards of over 50 national, State and local art agencies, most notably as the founding member of the National Council on the Arts and as the founder and first chairman of the North Carolina Arts Council.

He has also served on the boards of many world-renowned organizations, such as the Museum of Modern Art, the New York City Ballet, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Kennedy Center For the Performing Arts, and too many others to list.

Mr. Hanes, who attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and graduated from Yale University, was the founder of the Yale University Committee on Music, a board member at the Brevard School of Music, and an advisory council member at the Cornell University Graduate School of Business in the Arts Administration Division.

He is the recipient of three Presidential appointments from Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Ford, three honorary degrees and 24 art awards. These awards include the National Medal of Arts presented by President Bush in 1991 for Mr. Hanes' role as a founder of community arts programs across the Nation.

Mr. Hanes was instrumental in establishing the North Carolina School of the Arts; the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Arts, SECCA; and the Roger L. Stevens Center for the Performing Arts in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

He was a founder of the North Carolina Governor's Council on Business, Arts and Humanities and a founder of the Winston-Salem Arts Council. In addition, he and his wife, Charlotte, are the namesakes of an art gallery at Wake Forest University.

Mr. Hanes also played a tremendous role in bringing the Sparta Teapot Museum to northwest North Carolina. Sonny and Gloria Kamm of Los Angeles, California, had been collecting unique teapots for over 25 years and had been looking to relocate their collection to a community where it could make a serious economic impact.

Some folks from the Penland School of Craft suggested that they consider northwest North Carolina and advised Mr. and Mrs. Kamm to talk to Philip Hanes. It turns out that on their return flight, a representative from the Penland School was randomly assigned a seat next to none other than Mr. Hanes. Mr. Hanes loved the idea of establishing a teapot museum in northwest North Carolina. He contacted the Kamms, pitched the idea and brought them to Sparta. And the rest is history.

The planned Sparta Teapot Museum will be the permanent home for the Kamms' teapots. Their collection will help revitalize Sparta and the rest of Alleghany County, which saw four of its five largest employers close their doors. The museum will be the only specialty teapot museum in the country and will encourage economic development by drawing in a large number of tourists to Sparta each year.

In addition to his accomplishments in the arts, Mr. Hanes' love for the great outdoors led him to establish three national conservation organizations and serve on the boards of 19 others. When he wasn't busy working on all these projects, Mr. Hanes somehow managed to find time to write a popular novel, ''How to Get Anyone to Do Anything.'' In his book, Mr. Hanes shares the wisdom he has gained throughout many years during his impressive career.

Philip Hanes and his wife, Charlotte, are true treasures in the fifth district. I want to wish him a happy birthday and thank him for all of the wonderful things that he has done to help promote the arts and conservation in the State of North Carolina and throughout the country, and to wish him many, many more.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. DELAURO addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TIME FOR A CHANGE IN POLICY IN IRAQ

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Illinois is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, March 19 will mark the 3-year anniversary of the Iraq war. For 3 years, we have heard the President respond to questions about his handling of the war in Iraq with, ''Who are you going to believe, me or your own eyes?'' Kind of like what Groucho Marx used to say.

For 3 years, we have seen the President and his supporters celebrate milestones in Iraq as an indication that the insurgency was ''in its last throes,'' while the insurgency actually continues to grow and persist.

While the administration keeps trying to spin its way out of Iraq, we keep witnessing the truth. Today, for instance, John Negroponte told the Senate Armed Services Committee, ''Even if a broad and inclusive national government emerges, there will almost certainly be a lag time before we see any dampening effect on the insurgency.'' In other words, even if we establish a functioning government and democracy, the insurgency in Iraq will persist, just the opposite of what the administration has been telling us.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that the President acknowledge what we can all see with our own eyes every night, that the administration's failure to secure the peace early in Iraq has led Iraq to the brink it is in today. Had we secured not just the war, but the first days of the occupation with a plan for that occupation and actually secured the country and had not allowed the first levels of insurgency to grow, to metastasize to what we have today, we would never have what we have now. But we went in with a plan for the war with not a single idea, not an iota of anything to do on the occupation.

Three years ago, brave men and women of the American Armed Forces fought brilliantly until defeating Saddam Hussein and his army. But the President failed to plan for the peace, and he failed to work quickly to establish order in Iraq and left it leaderless. In fact, many of our troops were on the sidelines as looting went rampant throughout Iraq, leading in that stage every way sequentially to what we have today. And why did it fail? Because he didn't listen to what we knew we had to do.

For the past 3 years, the President has maintained that if the American leaders in Iraq needed more troops, all they had to do was ask. Just last week the President said, ''I will determine the troop levels in Iraq based on the recommendations of our commanders, not based only the politics of Washington, D.C.''

Paul Bremer, the Ambassador to Iraq, the President's top man in Iraq, called for more boots on the ground in the days following the invasion and was ignored. On page 10 of Paul Bremer's book, ''My Year in Iraq,'' Paul Bremer writes that he was alarmed by a report stating that we did not have enough troops on the ground to stabilize the country.

The report said: ''The population of Iraq today is nearly 25 million. The population would require 500,000 troops

on the ground to meet a standard of 20 troops per 1,000. This number is more than three times the number of foreign troops now deployed in Iraq.''

Paul Bremer writes: ''I found the conclusions persuasive and troubling. That afternoon, I had a summary of the draft copied and sent down the corridor to Don Rumsfeld. 'I think you should consider this,' I said in my cover memo. I have never heard back from him about the report.''

Now, I am not here to help sell books for Paul Bremer, but the President's top man asked for more troops to succeed in Iraq and never got an answer from either the President of the United States or from the Secretary of Defense. When Secretary Don Rumsfeld completely ignores the man who is in charge of America's most important policy mission, we have a problem.

A few days later, Paul Bremer got a chance to air his concerns to the President: ''There is one other important issue, Mr. President. Troop levels.''

Troop levels never increased. The troop level never got up. In Iraq, Bremer's worst fears were realized, and he writes: ''According to CENTCOM briefings in Qatar, we didn't yet have enough troops in Baghdad to secure key tactical objectives, traffic circles, bridges, power plants, banks and munition dumps, and also patrol the streets.''

We will never know for sure if more troops would have secured Baghdad in time to prevent the insurgency we see today, but we do know that the President's top man had asked for help and the President failed to respond, and the Secretary of Defense failed to respond; and today we are seeing the results of that failure. And we do know that 136,000 men and women who are there now do not have the support that they need.

If you look today in the New York Times in a poll done by Mr. Zogby, the American troops don't think we have enough troops. They also don't think we should continue to stay there at the level that we are there.

Retired Army Lieutenant General Bill Odom, former head of the National Security Agency, said that the invasion of Iraq ''will turn out to be the greatest single strategic disaster in U.S. foreign policy.''

Lawrence Wilkerson, former Secretary of State Colin Powell's chief of staff at the State Department, said President Bush's foreign policy was ''ruinous'' and said that ''we have courted disaster in Iraq, North Korea, and in Iran.''

Mr. Speaker, it is time for a change in policy.

RETAIN BYRNE-JAG GRANTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KENNEDY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, on February 16, while police officers representing law enforcement organizations with over 100,000 members from every congressional district in the country were on Capitol Hill lobbying to save Byrne-JAG formula grants, police officers just outside the town of Monticello in my district in Minnesota were proving why the short-sighted elimination of the Byrne-JAG program must be rejected.

During a mid-afternoon traffic stop involving several individuals from Washington State in a vehicle likely stolen in California, a Minnesota State trooper noticed the smell of meth coming from a car.

After a brief search of the car with a trained drug dog, an elaborate trunk-latch device wired to the car's air conditioning knob was discovered and eight sealed packages and one large ziploc bag of meth were located in the car's passenger-side air bag compartment. In all, more than 11.5 pounds of meth worth over $1 million was taken off our streets, along with several traffickers who profit from dealing this poison.

Mr. Speaker, 11.5 pounds of meth is the equivalent of over 45,000 hits. One hit of meth is enough to form an addiction more difficult to break than even heroin.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the police officers who made this bust and kept this staggering amount of meth out of the community in my district and likely those of many of my colleagues. However, Mr. Speaker, imagine how much meth they were not able to catch because of the devastating cuts to the Byrne-JAG program.

For the second year in a row, the administration has singled out the Byrne-JAG program for elimination, despite the fact that local police and the communities they protect praise the valuable source of crime-fighting grant money it provides.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join Representative LEE TERRY and me in our letter to the Budget Committee urging in the strongest terms that the President's proposal to eliminate Byrne-JAG grants not be followed and that this critical program to protect our communities from drugs and violent crime be funded at no less than $900 million in the fiscal year 2007 budget cycle.

□ 2000

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to my colleague who has been a leader on this issue, Representative DAVIS of Tennessee.

Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Congressman KENNEDY has been a real leader and a fighter for the Brynes-JAG funding and methamphetamine issues in general. I applaud his efforts and his continued concern about our families and our Nation and certainly the States that we represent.

Mr. Speaker, methamphetamine abuse continues to be a growing plague on America's families, communities and our economy. Abuse of this drug has swept across our Nation like a terrible storm that leaves in its wake broken families, endangered children, overcrowded jails, degraded environment and communities begging for help.

I cannot overstate the problems this drug creates. As Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez said in July of 2005, in terms of damage to our children and to our society, methamphetamine is now the most dangerous drug in America. That is why, Mr. Speaker, I was terribly disappointed to see that the President's budget for fiscal year 2007 completely cut funding for the Byrnes Justice Assistance Grants.

This program has been cited by State and local governments across the country as critical in their efforts to combat meth. In essence, it represents the combined effort among Federal, State and local governments to create safer communities. In my State the funding has helped fund the State's drug task force and helped fund local community crime prevention projects.

State officials back home have informed me that eliminating this program could reduce criminal justice funding to Tennessee by a total of $11 million and eliminate 170 much needed individual projects across our State.

That is why I have joined with Representative KENNEDY and many of our other colleagues in urging the House Budget Committee to include at least $900 million for the Edward Byrnes Memorial Justice Assistance Grant program in the budget resolution for fiscal year 2007, which is still $200 million less than the program's authorized level of $1.1 billion.

We must fight this elicit drug head on. Just as we need to give our soldiers serving in Afghanistan and Iraq the tools and resources needed for success, so too must we give our local law enforcement officials the tools they need to fight the war on drugs.

This program is a tool our local law enforcement officers desperately need. Congress must restore the funding. The risk in not doing so is simply too scary and the threat to our children's future is too great.

I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

THE STATE OF BEGGARDOM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, let me ask the ''why'' question tonight. Why would the United States allow itself to be reduced to a state of beggardom in the Dubai ports deal?

The definition of a beggar is a person, in this case a country, that lives by asking others for help or charity. So why would the United States allow itself, a nation that created Social Security, won World War II, landed a man

on the moon, why would our Nation let itself be reduced to beggary and the Nation, to beggardom?

Why would any level of our government seek foreign ownership or leasing of any of America's key assets, our ports, airports, railroads, turnpikes, industrial plants, even endowments to Presidential libraries? Why would we do it, ever? But why would you do it particularly when we are a nation at war?

The answer is simple. It appears our Nation cannot afford to stand on its own two feet anymore. We beg foreign investment because we cannot pay our own way. Our jobs and productive wealth and manufacturing and agriculture are being shipped offshore every day. Our piggy bank is empty.

So our assets are being sold or leased to foreign interests. Our savings are drained. Our national debt is skyrocketing. So our society is selling off, releasing our crown jewels.

I do not agree with this. I have been fighting it ever since our Nation started to sell more and more of our U.S. debt securities to foreign interests, who now own half, half of the debt of this Nation, and we pay them over $300 billion a year in interest and it is skyrocketing.

Some people who get elected, even Presidents, do not think that there are certain fundamentals in accounting that you must follow. They think that you can avoid responsibility in borrow-and-spend abandon. They think you can avoid responsibility. They mix up their love of money, frankly anybody's money, even foreign interests' money, with freedom's discipline. They somehow think it will all work out.

Well, America has been pushed to the edge of its financial resources with over $7 trillion in debt, which is rising. The war in Iraq has cost billions too much. We were told we would be out of there in 6 months.

We are lectured by a President that we should become energy independent, yet during his presidency he has made us more dependent on foreign sources of oil, so we borrow and spend to make up the difference. And we are paying more and more for imported fuel and going deeper into debt with oil imports, now the largest share of our trade gap.

Budget numbers do not lie. Trade statistics do not lie. Who do you think is financing America's beggardom? Foreign interests. The kind of folks who own Dubai Ports World. Trade deficits are exploding as we witness the import deluge into our country. Last year nearly a trillion dollars in trade debt, staggering, hard to find anything made here anymore.

So now we are in the fire sale phase. Rent out the ports, lease the Indiana Turnpike, sell off the auto industry, print the stationery in China. To live so recklessly and to spend so wildly does exact a price. It forces America to be reduced from our birthright of independence and the discipline that that entails to a sorry state of beggardom.

Curious developments happen too. Why did George Bush, Sr. accept a million-dollar contribution to his Presidential library in Texas from the United Arab Emirates? Who was buying favor with whom and for what?

What is so shocking is that the vast majority of Americans oppose beggardom, oppose the leasing of U.S. ports to any foreign interests, surely by those who could not prevent infiltration of their citizens to this country on 9/11.

Americans want to be independent. They love freedom, not beggardom. The World Ports debacle is the latest evidence America's corporate and political elites, sometimes the same people, are selling out America's independence, making deals with undemocratic kingdoms.

Seven sheiks run the United Arab Emirates. It is not a democratic country. Dubai World Ports is a government-owned enterprise. Why should it compete with free enterprise in this country? That country does not recognize Israel, and it does not allow Christian crosses to be erected anywhere inside the borders of that nation. Who could believe that a nation that sent two terrorists into our Trade Towers and whose banks laundered money for 9/11 will now manage some of our major ports. Insanity.

Some people say our intelligence services failed us. I say our elected leaders have failed us, starting in the Oval Office. They fail us time and again because they are blinded by their own beggary. They used to say you could buy people here in Washington for a lunch. Wow, has the bar been raised.

America, awake. Patrick Henry's clarion had it right, give me liberty or give me death, no beggary, no beggardom, no sellout of our Republic.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DREIER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE COMBAT METHAMPHETAMINE EPIDEMIC ELIMINATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, much of what we do here in Congress is very contentious. Our 1-minutes and 5-minutes tend to reflect a lot of those deep divisions. And while we sometimes share basic views, I think that they get carried to extremes sometimes on House debate.

I want talk about something we have actually done in a bipartisan way. We often hear that we do not do anything here in a bipartisan fashion and that all we can agree on are naming post offices. But this week when the PATRIOT Act passes, inside the PATRIOT Act is the Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Elimination Act, the largest and most comprehensive legislation ever done by a United States Congress on methamphetamine.

Nearly 20 years ago there were some attempts to regulate some of what was then called ''crank'' and some variations of methamphetamine that had already started in Asia and had been in Hawaii and had trickled in, even a decade ago or a little longer, into the West Coast, in Oregon and Washington State and California, but had not really hit the United States in full force.

Then over the last several years, Members of Congress have been coming here frustrated with the fact that our administration, from the Republican standpoint and from the Nation's, our present administration had not been responding aggressively enough to the Methamphetamine Act, and how to address the control of pseudoephedrine in the United States, as well as the ephedra and pseudoephedra that was coming into the United States that was making and going into the mom-and-pop meth labs, as well as the crystal meth.

Senators TALENT and FEINSTEIN introduced a bill on the Senate side to do what many States were doing, and that is, put pseudoephedrine behind the counter. Majority Whip BLUNT introduced similar legislation in the House.

In addition, Members from both parties introduced many different bills. Congresswoman HOOLEY and Representative KENNEDY, in particular, led the effort to try to go beyond just putting something behind the counter, but to try to regulate international legislation; and their bills were incorporated in a more comprehensive bill that then also absorbed the Blunt-Talent-Feinstein bill.

This all was attached to the PATRIOT Act. And I would have just as soon had a free debate here on the House floor and dealt with this, but part of the thing is that as we moved this meth bill through, we came under tremendous counterattack from the pharmaceutical industry that did not want any limitations on pseudoephedrine in the United States.

We came under heavy attack from the China lobby and the Mexico lobby that did not want the threat of decertification on them if they did not cooperate on controlling pseudoephedrine.

What this bill will do is limit the daily purchase, it will limit the monthly purchase, require purchasers to show ID and sign in a log book.

Therefore, as Indiana passes a law, people will no longer be able to go to Michigan and Ohio to get their pseudoephedrine and continue to kind of supply the raw material for all of the mom-and-pop labs, 900 last year in the State of Indiana, whereas Ohio only had 300, which, by the way, was a growth from 30.

But we go beyond just the control of pseudoephedrine and the few remaining

States that did not have that control. We closed loopholes in existing import-export and wholesale regulations, not only the main markets, but the spot market. There are basically only nine plants in the entire world that manufacture pseudoephedrine. We need China and India and several of the European countries, and the Czech Republic recently closed down their plant; we need to regulate this, know how many quantities are coming through. We need to do better control on the southwest border, where much of what pours in from other nations in the world, Mexico basically puts a minimum of 40 tons of raw pseudoephedrine beyond what they use in the United States that is used in mom-and-pop labs.

We also try to address not only the precursors for the mom-and-pop labs, but what immediately moves in behind. As we have seen in Oklahoma, as we have seen in many other States, and even in my State where the mom-and-pop labs go down, the crystal meth comes in behind.

The crystal meth is even more potent to the individuals. It is not as dangerous to the environment. It is not as dangerous to our local law enforcement people. You do not see explosions in homes that kill and maim little kids. But to the individual user, crystal meth is even more damaging than the homemade meth, because it is pure and even more addictive. And this often moves in behind.

So then the treatment programs are stressed, the highways still have people on it, that is why in addition to the behind-the-counter, we have got to go to the raw pseudoephedrine that is going into the crystal meth labs in Mexico and some of the super labs that are still left in the West.

We have increased and toughened penalties against meth traffickers and smugglers. We authorized the meth hot spots program, something the administration continues to try to zero out, and we have never had it authorized.

This authorizes that program which makes it much harder for the administration to try to eliminate it, as well as increases funding in the authorizing for drug courts, for the drug endangered children program and programs to assist pregnant women addicted to meth.

This is an historic step. When the Senate passes the PATRIOT Act tomorrow, there will be lots of debate about the PATRIOT Act and all of that. But inside that bill is the most significant bipartisan effort we have ever done in the United States Congress on methamphetamine.

And I am thrilled that it is finally going to become law after languishing and battling and watching all of the different interests try to defeat this. This is a triumph for bipartisanship. It is a triumph for locals who came to us and asked this to be done. It is a triumph to all of our narcotics officers around the United States and all of the drug treatment people around the United States and prevention people who have been saying, when are you going to do something on meth? Well, this week we are.

OPERATIONS IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, one cannot doubt that the American objective in Iraq has failed. Those are not my words. They were written last week by William F. Buckley, the godfather of modern American conservatism.

In a column entitled, It Did Not Work, Mr. Buckley urges an acknowledgment of defeat in Iraq. If President Bush has lost William F. Buckley, then his Iraq policy is in a heap of trouble.

By the way, I am eager to see if Mr. Buckley is labeled a treasonous coward, as my friend and colleague Mr. MURTHA was when he made similar points a few months ago.

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Who could blame Mr. Buckley, or anyone else with a pulse, for that matter, at arriving at this conclusion?

While we were away for our district work period, the bombing of a Shiite shrine ignited the most gruesome carnage that Iraq has ever seen since the war began nearly 3 years ago. The Washington Post reported on its front page this morning that a staggering 1,300 people died in last week's sectarian violence.

''Hundreds of unclaimed dead lay at the morgue at midday Monday,'' The Post reported, ''blood-caked men who had been shot, knifed, garroted or apparently suffocated by the plastic bags still over their heads. Many of the bodies were sprawled with their hands still bound.''

Is this what ''freedom on the march'' looks like, Mr. Speaker?

But we should not be surprised. It is not as if no one saw this coming. Those of us who opposed the Iraq war before it even started warned that an invasion would open up a Pandora's Box of ethnic strife that we would be unable to tame, that could lead to full-blown civil war.

The administration's Iraq policy is a tragic blunder of historic proportions. I can hardly believe that we have sacrificed 2,300 Americans and spent a quarter of a trillion dollars all so Iraq could slip into chaos and lawlessness, with the political process now hanging by the flimsiest of threads.

My heart weeps for our soldiers who have been put in this impossible situation. Various news reports describe some of our troops as hanging back during last week's violence. Why? Because rather than being able to calm the uprisings, they know that their very presence is actually one of the main catalysts for the violence in the first place. No wonder a new poll shows that our servicemen and -women in Iraq believe we should leave and we should leave soon, with less than a quarter agreeing with President Bush that we should stay as long as it takes.

Here you see a complete folly that is our policy. Our preemptive occupation lit the original match that grew into this uncontainable inferno. We do not have a hose to put it out. In fact, we pour gasoline on the fire every single day, a fire that is destroying Iraq, killing our soldiers, sending them home wounded almost beyond repair. And for what reason? If we are doing more harm than good, if we are a force for resentment and divisiveness, rather than peace and stability, what are we doing there?

Mr. Speaker, it has never been clearer that it is time to bring our troops home.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

STUCK IN THE MIDDLE OF A CIVIL WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, we are engaged in a great civil war. However, not our civil war but the Iraqis' civil war. We are caught in the middle of it. And there are some people who say that we do not have a plan, the Democrats have no plan.

Well, today JACK MURTHA sent around again to us a Dear Colleague. That is a method by which we in the House talk to one another; we let our colleagues know what we think or what is going on. JACK sent one around with his plan to pull the troops out of Iraq. Nobody is paying any attention to JACK MURTHA. They make fun of him as not being a patriot or something but they are missing the point. We are deeper and deeper and deeper in this war and there is no end.

Now, the American people have no excuse, nor does the Congress have any excuse for not knowing what we are into, because they put out from the Pentagon every year something called the ''Quadrennial Defense Review.'' That is to tell us what we are going to do for the next 4 years. They have changed the language. They are not going to call it the war on terror anymore. It is now called ''The Long War.'' And the one just put out and presented to the Congress outlines plans for 20 years into the future.

This administration has no intention whatsoever to pull out of Iraq or to pull the bases out of Iraq, or to do anything as sensible as what JACK MURTHA

has laid in front of the President. Worse than that, they are going to increase this. They are looking beyond Afghanistan and Iraq.

It is in the editorial today in The Guardian, which is a newspaper from England: ''Looking beyond Iraq and Iran battlefields, U.S. commanders envisage a war unlimited in time and space against global Islamic extremism. 'The struggle may well be fought in dozens of other countries simultaneously and for many years to come.' ''

How are they going to do that? Very simply. They are going to continue to spend us into debt. There will not be a dime to fix what is going on in New Orleans or the health care system or the educational system or anything else.

Listen to what is in that report. They want 15 percent more special forces, an extra 3,700 people in black operations, in PsyOps and civil affairs units. That is an increase of 33 percent. They will have people to run in and go and run these countries. They want nearly double the number of unmanned aerial drones.

Now, consider what an aerial drone is. That is something you take off in this country or take off somewhere, you fly over a country and somebody thousands of miles away says, drop the bomb over there at Seventh and Vine.

Now, consider what we are planning. We are planning to invade countries from the air without even being there. It will be like war games, like kids sitting in the front room with their little board games. That is what we are talking about. We are talking about taking our Trident nuclear submarines and refitting them, not to shoot up nuclear missiles, but to send up regular missiles. So they will pull alongside a country and fire a bunch of rockets into the country and they will fix them. This is what is going on. And America is sitting quietly by and watching this happen.

We are allowing the President and a very small number of people, Mr. Speaker, to make decisions. We have a Vice President who says he can now leak secret material anytime he figures he can use it. Use it to get us into another war. There are an awful lot of people on this floor, Mr. Speaker, who are very worried about the next 6 months in Iran because there is an election coming. And the only way you can get the people to vote the Republicans back in is by making them afraid. This is a vote of confidence on George Bush. And the people will have to vote ''no'' to get rid of them.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PAUL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to address the deteriorating situation in Iraq. Over the past 10 days, we have seen a country on the brink of civil war slide into civil war.

On February 22, a bomb exploded at the Golden Mosque causing significant damage to one of Shiite Islam's holiest shrines and setting off the latest and most violent sectarian violence since the war began in 2003.

Since the war began, we have witnessed almost daily bombings in Iraq. Thousands of IEDs have been exploded. Hundreds of suicide bombings have been staged. Tragically, the number of such attacks has grown each year, a stark contrast to the Vice President's prewar assessment that we would be greeted as liberators.

According to the U.S. Department of Defense, the number of insurgent attacks on our soldiers, Iraqi security forces, and civilians increased 29 percent in 2005 when compared to 2004. Specifically, the number of car bombs increased to 873 in 2005, more than twice of the number of car bombs in 2004, and the number of suicide car bombs went to 411 from 133.

Conservative estimates suggest that more than 30,000 Iraqi men, women and children have been killed since the war began. Unfortunately, Iraqis are not the only ones caught up in these attacks. More than 2,296 U.S. soldiers have died in Iraq and more than 16,825 have been injured. And I am sorry, I do not have the number of amputees or suicides tonight. But they are serious.

Our very presence in Iraq fuels the death, destruction and has helped create the civil war which now endangers millions of lives. These are not just my words. The same thoughts and sentiments are being echoed throughout conservative America.

It was said here earlier tonight, William F. Buckley, Jr., the founder of ''The National Review'' recently wrote, ''One cannot doubt that the American objective in Iraq has failed.''

Bill Kristol, one of the war's staunchest defenders recently said, ''We have not had a serious 3-year effort to fight a war in Iraq.''

Even columnist George Will recently described Iraq in this manner. ''This is a civil war,'' he said.

The bombing of the Golden Mosque pushed Iraq over the edge. Thousands of Iraqis are in the streets protesting and others are attacking their historical enemies in retaliation to the bombing of the Golden Mosque.

According to today's Washington Post, more than 1,300 individuals have been killed, and more than 1,000 Sunni mosques have been attacked since last week's bombing of the Golden Mosque. Instead of putting a stop to the violence, Iraq's security forces are contributing to the murders. It is clear that some Iraqis have joined the Iraq Army to continue family or tribal feuds under the protection of the Iraqi military uniform and that many Iraqis do not trust the military because of ethnic divisions.

This is a stark difference from the President's words that the Iraqis are successfully assuming the role of protecting their fellow countrymen. It is very interesting to note that the very week that Iraq has seen the most violent sectarian violence in years, the Defense Department announced that the number of Iraqi Army battalions capable of fighting the insurgency without U.S. help had fallen from one to none since September 2005.

Last summer, a defense official claimed that there were three battalions ready to take on the insurgency. However, in September 2005, General George Casey, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, told the Senate Armed Services Committee that the number of Iraqi battalions capable of fighting independently of U.S. troops had dropped from three to one. Therefore, despite 3 years and more than $260 billion, we find that the number continues to decrease.

Now, the President is asking Congress to pass a supplemental appropriations request of $75 billion for the Iraq war, the war on terrorism, and the gulf coast recovery efforts. The lion's share of this money, about $63 billion, is for the Iraq war. If this bill passes, the total amount we will have spent on the war will be over $350 billion.

The President is asking us to spend $350 billion a war that his Administration claimed would be of minimal cost to American taxpayers.

Perhaps worse, the President wants to spend hundreds of billions of dollars on this war at a time when the Congress is pushing through tens of billions of dollars in cuts to Medicare, education, Community Development Block Grants and other important programs.

Mr. Speaker, the Administration has failed. It is long past time for our troops to come home. Civil war has broken out—we can not expect our soldiers to try to sort out which side is which in this civil war and we should not take sides. I urge the President to conclude this war and bring our troops home.

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MARKING THE 18TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SUMGAIT MASSACRES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, today marks a tragic anniversary for Armenians around the world. In late February of 1988, in the town of Sumgait, Azerbaijan, an organized attack on the Armenians of the town was carried out by Azerbaijani nationals. This 3-day rampage left dozens dead and hundreds injured.

Mr. Speaker, I stand today to recognize the massacres in Sumgait, Azerbaijan, and the continued Turkish and Azeri aggression against the Armenian people.

This massacre left dozens of Armenians dead, a majority of whom were set on fire alive after being beaten and tortured. Hundreds of innocent people received injuries of different severity and became physically impaired. Women, among them minors, were abused. More than 200 apartments were robbed, dozens of cars were destroyed and burned, dozens of art and crafts studios, shops and kiosks were demolished, and thousands of people became refugees.

Mr. Speaker, these crimes were never adequately prosecuted by the Government of Azerbaijan, and most of its organizers and executors were simply set free. Despite the attempt by the Government of Azerbaijan to cover up these crimes, enough brave witnesses came forward to give an accurate account of the offenses.

The Sumgait massacres are just another in a long line of Azerbaijan's aggressions against the Armenian people. The events in Sumgait were preceded by a wave of Anti-Armenian rallies that shook the city in February 1988. Almost the entire territory of the city, with a population of 250,000, became an arena for mass violence against its Armenian population.

The attacks also marked the beginning of the violent Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, which claimed nearly 30,000 lives and left over 1 million refugees. The continued hostilities in Azerbaijan and the military aggression against the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh in 1992 through 1994 led to the disappearance of a 450,000-strong Armenian community in Azerbaijan within a span of just a few years.

Mr. Speaker, today many Armenians marked the anniversary of the Sumgait massacre by organizing a march here in Washington from the embassy of Turkey to the embassy of Azerbaijan in order to highlight the continued Turkish and Azeri aggression toward the Armenian people.

The aggression I speak of, however, is still happening in a number of ways even today. There continues to be an organized effort to destroy historically sacred Armenian sites by the Government of Azerbaijan. Recently, there has been a documented video, evidencing the systematic destruction of a more than 1,000-year-old cemetery and historic carved stone crosses in the southern Nakhichevan region of Djulfa.

There are also continued attempts by Turkey and Azerbaijan to strangle Armenia's economy and its people's ability to survive through economic aggressions. The over 10-year blockade of Armenia by Turkey and Azerbaijan cuts off a valuable trade route through the country and further isolates Armenia. These blockades have been denounced by the United States, the United Nations and the European Union, but they still exist as a way to starve the Armenian economy. The United States should do more to encourage the Turkish and Azerbaijani Governments to stop their illegal blockade of Armenia.

Mr. Speaker, today, as the protesters walk the cold route from the Turkish embassy to the Azerbaijani embassy, the message should be heard loud and clear. It is time for the United States to do all that it can and to flex its geopolitical muscle in order to send a message that ethnically charged genocides, illegal blockades of sovereign nations and the constant harassment of the Armenian people will not be tolerated.

This anniversary reminds us yet again of the historical injustice the Armenian people have faced, unfortunately, throughout their history.

THE TRANSEA ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the Bush administration recently approved a deal, as we all know, that allowed the operation of six U.S. ports to be taken over by Dubai Ports World, a state-owned company controlled by the Government of the United Arab Emirates, a $6.8 billion contract.

The administration's handling of this deal has drawn criticism from Republicans and Democrats alike, and rightly so.

The 9/11 Commission's final report warns of the United Arab Emirates' record of support for terrorism and its links to September 11, both strategic and financial.

The Congressional Research Service noted the UAE was named as a point of shipment for illegal nuclear components sold by Pakistan.

The U.S. Coast Guard told the administration, referring to the United Arab Emirates-controlled ports, that, ''There are many intelligence gaps, concerning the potential for DPW or PNO assets to support terrorist operations.''

These and other more serious concerns may have been overlooked, as the administration rushed its review of this deal, but what this instance really highlights is a much broader and longer-term concern, the lack of a systematic process for the review of homeland security issues associated with America's international trade policy.

In a post-9/11 world, trade agreements are no longer just vehicles for economic development. Trade agreements, to be sure, lower tariffs in open markets, but they also can lower our defenses as they open our ports and open our infrastructure and open our transportation and supply lines.

In the post-9/11 world, America's trade policies and America's homeland security policies cannot exist separate from each other and in isolation. The risk is simply too great.

For example, the United States Trade Representative right now is currently negotiating a trade deal with the United Arab Emirates. That trade deal would already have been in effect if it had been negotiated, passed by the Senate, passed by the House and signed by the President. It would likely have been declared illegal and unfair trade practice for us to cancel that $6.8 billion deal.

The administration has it exactly backwards. Security needs to go in these trade agreements before they are signed, not pass a trade agreement and then hope for the best to protect the homeland.

Other trade pacts negotiated by the Bush administration have given foreign governments, and even foreign companies, the right to sue the U.S. for government actions that cost the company money. There is no reason to believe that such suits could not be filed in some cases to block homeland security policies. Those suits would be heard by an international tribunal meaning that the U.S. would no longer have independent control over our own national security decisions.

Before we implement the UAE agreement, the one that the U.S.T.R. is negotiating today or any other free trade agreement, we should have a full understanding of homeland security consequences.

That is why I introduced today the Trade-Related America National Security Enhancement and Accountability Act, the TRANSEA bill. My bill would do several things: require a systematic homeland security review of trade agreements, with sign-off from the U.S. Trade Representative, the Homeland Security Department and other responsible agencies, and with reporting to Congress.

Second, it would require that all future agreements include a national security waiver, allowing the President to suspend an agreement or any provision of an agreement if the President determines that the agreement creates a homeland security vulnerability.

Third, it would create an independent trade security commission to watchdog trade policy from a homeland security perspective and report to Congress on potential threats.

Last, it would to allow Congress to force action if the administration fails to respond to a homeland security warning from the commission.

It is absurd to require that our constituents remove their shoes at the airport, but not require that multibillion dollar trade agreements undergo systematic homeland security review.

The TRANSEA Act is an important step toward a policy that reflects the realities of a post-9/11 world. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WYNN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, very shortly now the juvenile diabetes people will be coming through the Congress. They do this every year, I believe.

I look forward to this visit with really mixed emotions. These children come in with this disease that has and will change their lives. Many of them are so brittle that they have to have a pump embedded under their skin that pumps insulin, because the sugar may go violently up or down with potentially disastrous effects on the person. Many times a day they may have to get a droplet of blood to determine the sugar level.

They will appeal to us, as they have every year for the past 5 years, please vote for Federal funds for embryonic stem cell research because they believe, like the loved ones of many other types of patients, that there could truly be miracle cures from embryonic stem cells. They will tell us that there are several hundred thousand embryos out there that are frozen in fertility clinics.

I have a daughter-in-law who is going through that process now. They harvest eggs. They fertilize the eggs. First, they have to give a hormone treatment to the prospective mother so that there will be the production of more than just the one egg that is produced normally per month. They will harvest a number of eggs, 8, 10, 12 eggs. Then they will fertilize those eggs, and they will watch their growth in the laboratory, and they will choose two or three of what look like the strongest fertilized eggs, and then they will implant those in the prospective mother.

The remaining eggs are frozen. It costs money to keep them there. The family may pay for that process because these little embryos that are implanted may not take, and they may need to do it again, and frozen, they could last quite a while, and they may want to have another child. So they will pay to keep them frozen for a while; but by and by, time and changes in the family, they will see no further need to keep them frozen. When they cease doing that, then the laboratory must either dispose of the embryos or bear the expense of keeping them frozen.

So each year a number of these embryos are discarded, and there has been an appeal, which has been bought into by some of my very good friends in the Congress, that from a ethical perspective, why should we not get some medical use from these embryos that are going to be discarded anyhow.

That is a tough position to put pro-life people in, and the reason that most, but not all, pro-life advocates are opposed to this is because they view this as the beginning of a slippery slope. Today, you are permitting the use of surplus embryos that are going to be discarded anyhow; tomorrow, you might be producing embryos. They may be stronger, younger. You may be producing embryos just so you can discard them so you could use them for medical research.

I remembered the juvenile diabetes groups that come through, the children and their parents when, in 2000, I went to the National Institutes of Health when they had a briefing for Members of Congress and staff on embryonic stem cell research, the potentials and the challenge. There were a number of staff there. I think that I was the only Member of Congress who was there.

I went there from a somewhat unusual background, a different background than the average Member of Congress, because in a former life, I went to school and got a doctorate in human physiology. I got it not in a medical school but at an arts and sciences campus, and so we had to take a great variety of courses.

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Things like limnology and ichthyology and cytology and protozoology and advanced genetics. And one of the courses I took was advanced embryology. And in that course I had an opportunity to study and learn something about the process which is so familiar to anybody who has studied biology in life, that is, the development of the embryo and how this process goes.

I recognized that occasionally in humans in the early embryo, sometimes at the two-cell stage and sometimes later, and you can tell by how the babies present whether they share an amnion or simply share the chorion; how they present at birth you can tell at roughly what time in the development of the embryo did it split. And each of those halves of the original embryo, either one cell if it was a two-cell stage, or multiple cells if it was further along in the development before it split, each half produces what appears to be a perfectly normal baby. We call them identical twins. And there are tens of thousands of them out there and a great deal of scientific interest is in these twins.

And a lot of research has been done, because when you are looking at two genetically identical people, you have an opportunity to make some studies and observations that you would have to use a great many more subjects to make using the usual genetic different subjects.

And so recognizing that you could take half of the cells away from the original embryo and each half produced a perfectly normal baby, I rationalized, gee, it ought to be possible to take a cell from the early embryo and it would not even know it. And that is because all the cells in the early embryo are what we call totipotent or at least pluripotent. Totipotent means they can produce another embryo if you take the cell out, and pluripotent means they can produce all of the cell types that make up the body. By the time they are pluripotent, they have lost the ability to coordinate all of the different kind of cells into an integrated individual, so they could not produce an embryo.

I asked the researchers at NIH, should it not be possible to take a cell from an early embryo without killing the embryo, probably without hurting the embryo, since in every set of identical twins half of the cells have been taken away from the embryo.

And by the way, Mr. Speaker, one of those is a clone. I guess you can decide which one of those identical twins you would identify as the clone, but clearly one of them is a clone, and both of them develop into what appears to be, by observations over hundreds of years and more recently many years of intensive physiological and medical observation, what appear to be perfectly normal human beings.

And so I asked the researcher at NIH, shouldn't it be possible to take a cell from an early embryo without killing the embryo, probably without hurting it? And they said, yes, they thought that should be possible. So a few days after that I happened to be at an event when the President was there, and I knew that he was laboring with a decision, a very difficult decision, of whether he was going to permit Federal dollars to be used in embryonic stem cell research when presently at that time the only source of embryonic stem cells resulted from the destruction of an embryo.

So I told the President about the meeting at NIH and about my discussion with the researchers there, and a few days later I got a call from Karl Rove. The President had remembered that conversation and turned the follow-up over to Karl Rove, and Mr. Rove told me that he had gone to NIH and had spoken with the investigators there, and they had told him that that was not possible. I said, Karl, either they are funning you or they misunderstood your question, because these are the same people that can go into an individual cell and take out the nucleus and put another nucleus in that cell. And they are telling you they cannot take a cell or two out of a big embryo?

So he went back and asked them again and came back and called me a second time and said, Roscoe, they tell me that they cannot do that. I wondered at the time what had happened. And a couple of years later, when the researchers at NIH were in my office, they somewhat sheepishly admitted that they had permitted Mr. Rove to believe something that wasn't quite true. Because what they had told him

was that they weren't sure that they could produce a stem cell line from a single cell taken from an early embryo.

That is exactly what my bill had proposed to do, was to determine, with animals, whether in fact that was possible or not. They had not meant for him to believe that it was not possible to take a cell from an early embryo.

Now, I cannot get inside their head to tell you, Mr. Speaker, why they permitted Mr. Rove to go away with this misconception, I can only tell you that I think that if I were in their place, I would have judged that the President might very well make the decision that it was okay to use these discarded embryos. Because, after all, they were going to be discarded anyhow, and the potential for life-saving medical applications was so great that I think that they may have rationalized that the President was going to issue an executive order which would make possible the use of Federal funds in the study of embryonic stem cells taken from these surplus embryos. That, of course, is not what the President did.

I am happy to be joined this evening by Dr. GINGREY, and I wanted to engage him in a dialogue, because I think that the same kind of an emotional response that might have permitted the researchers at NIH to permit this discussion to result in a misconception by Mr. Rove, that an analogous emotional response on the part of many pro-life advocates makes it very difficult for them to even talk about the potential of any form of embryonic stem cell research because they are so conditioned that the only way in the past that we have been able to get embryonic stem cells was by destroying an embryo, and so they equate any discussion of embryonic stem cell research as requiring the destruction of an embryo.

The President has a bioethics council that published a white paper in which they talked about four different techniques, potentially bioethically acceptable that could produce embryonic stem cells without destroying an embryo. And I wonder what is the best approach, because we want to carry everybody along with us. I want no one to be offended that what we are proposing, what has been proposed as a matter of fact by the President's council on bioethics is a violation of our fundamental belief that life is sacred. Every life is sacred, and particularly the least of these, this totally defenseless embryo. Their life is sacred, and we must protect that.

So the research that I am proposing, that my colleague has been supporting, does exactly that. And I am wondering what is the best way to bring this community along with us so that they understand that there are potential techniques that could be used for producing embryonic stem cells that will not consist of destroying or even hurting the embryo. What do you think is the best way to approach this?

Mr. GINGREY. Well, first of all, let me thank the gentleman from Maryland for his legislation, H.R. 3144, and for allowing me to spend a little time with him this evening as we try to explain to our colleagues what we are talking about here and what is the essence of the Bartlett bill.

I think the gentleman is correct that the perception among those of us who are strongly pro-life, and I think most of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle sort of know each other's former profession before we came to this august body, and I practiced medicine, not just an M.D., but specializing in obstetrics and gynecology; and so over a 26-year period, doing the average number of deliveries a doctor would do in a year, that amounts to over 5,000; and very proudly I can stand here tonight and say that I am pro-life and have never performed an abortion.

But I think that in response to the gentleman's question, people that are pro-life know that embryonic stem cell research that was ongoing before President Bush made his decision 2 or 3 years ago, that those stem cell lines were indeed obtained from this so-called excess. Really not excess. Cannot tell that to the Snowflake babies that have been adopted, those embryos, and there are close to 100 of those precious children alive today, but the pro-life community, indeed, everybody understood that the stem cell lines that were created were created from the destruction of embryos that were produced utilizing artificial reproductive technology that the gentleman from Maryland so adequately explained.

And of course those children, and I say children, they are embryos, but they certainly become children. They become fetuses, and they become children, and they become young adults, and they become middle-aged and senior citizens. They are human life. And, basically, what the President said is those that have already been destroyed to create these cell lines, we will allow researchers, our scientists, to apply for grants to conduct the research on those cell lines, those embryonic stem cells, but not to destroy any more life; to put a moratorium on that and to absolutely not continue to destroy life.

In fact, in 1999, President Clinton's National Bioethics Advisory Commission, NBAC, acknowledged broad agreement in our society that early human embryos ''deserve respect as a form of human life.'' They recommended funding of embryonic stem cell research only if there were no alternatives. But what Congressman BARTLETT is talking about tonight, of course, is an alternative, a viable, if I can use that term, a viable alternative. And that is what he has outlined for us in this legislation, and I know he will talk about that.

But the important point is that people who are pro-life understand this, that taking a cell or two from an embryo, once it has gotten to the point where those cells are not totipotent, that you are not literally taking maybe something that in itself could divide and become an embryo; you get beyond that stage to what he describes as pluripotent.

And the difference in those two capabilities in those embryonic cells is hugely important to the pro-life community. And he, of course, has done such a great job tonight, and I commend him for that, of explaining how in nature this occurs with the division of a multi-cell embryo to become identical twins; and it is, I think, a good explanation. And I think that is probably what is important, in response to your question, my good friend from Maryland, is this educational process.

And I know you have worked on this. I do not know how many times you have done this Special Order, but you have honored me in giving me an opportunity to participate with you and get into a colloquy and discuss some of these issues. This is the way to do it. This is the seed corn. This is what gets it started. It is a matter of understanding that there is an alternative to destruction of human life for the betterment of other lives.

□ 2100

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Dr. GINGREY, thank you very much.

There is another consequence of this understandable emotional reaction on the part of the pro-life community, and that is the statement that is made over and over again that we have, I think it is up to 70-some now, treatments or cures from adult stem cells and none from embryonic stem cells; therefore, why would you want to bother looking at embryonic stem cells?

The reason we have 70-some treatments from adult stem cells is we have been working with them for about 3 decades and we have been working with embryonic stem cells for just a little over 6 years. A newborn baby cannot run a marathon, and there just has not been time for the medical community to develop the potential from embryonic stem cells.

I will be the first to tell you that this research may be very disappointing. I hope that it will not be, because these cells really want to divide, and like an obstreperous teenager, they may be very difficult to control. But the hope is that since embryonic stem cells can certainly make any and every tissue and, potentially, organ in the body, they ought to have the greatest potential.

And I wonder what we need to do so that the statement is not repeated that it is really silly to talk about embryonic stem cell research because we have 70-some treatments or cures from adult stem cells and none yet from embryonic stem cells. That is, of course, a true statement, but you need to put it in context. The reason for it is we have been working for more than 3 decades with adult stem cells and just a little over 6 years with embryonic stem cells. And I want our community to have credibility at the end of the day.

How do we meet this emotional challenge?

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I think it really is a good point that you are making that we have been utilizing adult stem cells for a long time, for many years, and whether we are talking about cells that are obtained from bone marrow or from blood, even, of course, some umbilical cells. But as the gentleman points out, there have been some real great success stories reported: cancers, including ovarian and testicular cancer; leukemia; Hodgkin's disease; stroke; heart disease; Parkinson's disease; as the gentleman mentioned, juvenile diabetes; Crohn's disease, an inflammatory disease of the bowel which can be so devastating.

And I think ROSCOE BARTLETT, the gentleman from Maryland, mentioned maybe 58, in total, success stories. But the earliest cell, I think, has the greatest potential, and that is basically the point that the congressman is making and why his bill, H.R. 3144, to provide funding, very necessary funding, to do the basic and applied research starting in animal models to show that you indeed can take these, again, not totipotential but pluripotential, so not another embryo, but something that has gone beyond that stage that does not have the capability in and of itself of becoming a human being. That is what we want to say to the pro-life community.

So we are taking, though, the very earliest beyond that stage cell, and there is no telling what tissue it can develop into, whether we are talking about brain tissue and trying to treat people, God rest his soul, like Christopher Reeves or other people with spinal cord injuries, or someone with severe Parkinson's disease or Alzheimer's or juvenile diabetes where you create islet cells that you can transplant into a person's pancreas that, because of a genetic defect, has no islet cells.

So that is really, I think, the answer, to say why it is worth the effort, why it is absolutely worth the effort. First and foremost, you do not have to take human life for the betterment of other human lives, and we want to build on the success of utilization of adult stem cells and go that extra mile, and this is what this bill will do, allow us to do the basic research, fund it with Federal dollars so we can get to that point.

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Thank you very much. I appreciate your mentioning the diabetes, particularly juvenile diabetes.

The deficiency, of course, is in the Islet of Langerhan cells, named after the German scientist who first saw them. They are like little islands scattered through the pancreas. I have no idea why they are in the pancreas. They have no relationship to the physiology of the pancreas; they just happen to be there, and they are not producing enough insulin. But replacing the insulin does not cure diabetes because the person who has diabetes will end up with eye problems, circulatory problems, toes that they lose, gangrene, and so forth.

And these children now are starting out with the absolute certainty that they are not going to have the quality of life of other children because just replacing the insulin does not cure diabetes. It controls many of the effects, but there will still be consequences to the diabetic.

And as you mentioned, there is the hope that with embryonic stem cells we could grow Islet of Langerhan tissues. And you would not have to put those back into the pancreas. You could, as a matter of fact, put them in the groin or under the arm or under the skin, anywhere. They just have to have access to circulation. They will produce the insulin. The circulation will pick up the insulin, and then it flows to the liver and the cells of the body where it does its miracle work.

But this is the reason that they are so enthusiastic about embryonic stem cell research, because of all of the diseases out there. And we spend more money on diabetes than any other disease in the country, and there is probably more debility and suffering from diabetes than any other disease in the country. And that is why they are so adamant in their desire that we permit Federal dollars to be spent, because with the power of NIH and the peer review, and they have created miracles in the past, they hope they can do another one.

I would like to just look for a moment at the physiology, and the chart, boy, this is really abbreviated. I will show you a little more expanded one in a moment.

But the two gametes come together and produce what is called a zygote, and this is the fertilized cell. It now has half the genes from the mother and half the genes from the father. And then that fertilized cell grows through several stages, and they have skipped the morula stage here and they go right to the blastula and then to the gastrula. And here you start the differentiation into the three germ layers.

Every tissue of our body develops from one of the three germ layers: the endoderm, that is what is inside; and the mesoderm, that is what is in the middle; and the ectoderm. Very interestingly, the parts of the adult body that develop from ectoderm is our skin and our nervous tissue. Most of this, by weight, develops from mesoderm. All the muscles, all the bones develop from mesoderm. And here you see at the bottom are derivatives of the ectoderm and the mesoderm and the endoderm, and then the unique cells, the germ cells, the sperm in the male and the egg in the female.

Now, adult stem cells, when you hear people talk about adult stem cells, what they are talking about is a cell down here, and one of the easiest ones to talk about are adult stem cells that have to do with making blood, and these stem cells found in the bone marrow primarily can produce a variety of cells. The polymorpho-nuclear leukocytes, the erythrocytes, the thrombocytes, all of those can be produced.

Now, you can take an adult stem cell and trick it into believing that it has not gone through all of this differentiation, that it is somewhere back here so that it can now make tissues other than just the ones that it was destined to make and the organ from which you took it. And these are the techniques that are used in adult stem cell research and treatment.

The next chart shows a little more detail in this development process, and this shows it in the reproductive tract of the female. Here is the ovary from which the egg is released. And the egg now starts a long journey down through the fallopian tube. It will be 7 to 10 days before it finally implants in the uterus. The sperm, of course, makes its way from the vagina up through the uterus and through the fallopian tube, and it fertilizes the egg. It shows it very correctly here. Fertilization occurs well up in the fallopian tube. A little later down and it cannot be fertilized.

And this shows the production of the zygote. It shows the first cleavage to produce a two-cell mass. At this point these two cells could separate to produce two embryos, two babies. We know them as identical twins. Or it can go on to split into four cells and eight cells, and I will come back to the eight cell in just a moment because that is the one medically that is of considerable interest.

Then it becomes a morula. You see it there, the compacted morula. And then you get the inner-cell mass, which you saw a pretty good picture of in the previous slide. And, of course, what we are talking about is what goes on in the laboratory now in a petri dish. You fertilize it there rather than in the reproductive tract, but the same sequence of development occurs. And they simply take the inner-cell mass out of the embryo and squash it and kill it and take the cells out to produce a stem cell line.

In the laboratory, in in vitro fertilization, they grow the embryos up to the eight-cell stage, and it is at that stage that they have the most luck in implanting them in the uterus of the female. Several years ago in England, a clinic there began taking a cell, and sometimes they got two, from the eight-cell stage, and they did a preimplantation genetic diagnosis on it because if you had the option of making sure that your baby was not going to have a genetic defect like trisomy 21, mongolism, for instance, you certainly would want to avoid that if you could.

They do a preimplantation genetic diagnosis, and if there is no genetic defect, they then take the remaining six or seven cells and implant them, and now worldwide I suspect there have been more than 2,000 babies born.

There is a clinic just outside Washington, in Virginia, and a year ago I spent more than a half hour talking

with two of the physicians there who have been doing this technique. So we now are producing babies with this technique, with the assurance that there will not be any genetic defects.

Another really good use of that cell that you take from that, and I have to credit Mr. Dorflinger with this, the spokesman for the Conference of Catholic Bishops, and he suggested that the most ethical reason for taking a cell from the early embryo, even more ethically defensible than doing a preimplantation genetic diagnosis, would be making a repair kit. That is sort of the goal when you freeze the cord blood, and we had a bill that everybody but one voted for that gave Federal dollars for freezing cord blood.

Those will not be embryonic stem cells. They will be adult stem cells, but at least they are closer to the genetic identity of that person than other cells would be. And more than 2,000 times worldwide now we have had a perfectly normal baby from that process.

So what I had proposed to the people has, in fact, been done. And what I envision at the end of the day in our bill, H.R. 3144, does not support experimentation in humans. It is only animal experimentations to verify that these procedures are, in fact, doable and efficacious and that the embryo is not harmed.

□ 2115

This technique and three other techniques are included in the white paper prepared by the President's council on bioethics, alternative sources of human pluripotent stem cells.

Dr. Gingrey mentioned totipotent and pluripotent, and I would like to spend a moment talking about that. Totipotent means that the cell you take could produce another embryo. Pluripotent means that it could produce all the cells, tissues, organs of the body; but it does not have the capability to organize them into a person. Ethically, if you took a cell that was totipotent, you would simply be creating a new embryo, and so the argument starts all over again. So you need to take a cell from a stage where it is just pluripotent, not totipotent.

I am assured by the research community that no one has ever been successful in developing an embryo with a cell taken from the eighth stage. You see, these cells know, and I use that term advisedly, know that ultimately they are going to differentiate, and apparently that differentiation problem has started well before you see the three germ layers developing, because between the fourth stage and the eight-cell stage, they have lost their ability to be totipotent. They can now only be pluripotent. As Dr. Gingrey pointed out, it is very essential that ethically you take cells that could only be pluripotent.

I have two quick slides here that look at the development of twins. This is the two intercell masses. These are when the twins develop, the identical twins develop later, when it splits later. You can see that because they each have their own amnion. They share a chorion, of course, but they each have their own amnion.

Let me see the next one, which shows how you have what are called fraternal twins. Here you have two eggs produced by the mother, ordinarily only one, sometimes two, sometimes three, but ordinarily only one egg, unless you are giving some hormone treatment. Then those are now presented in separate chorions. They, of course, have their own amnion, which is the tissues around the baby which contains the fluid in which the baby floats, and the tissue around that is called the amnion.

There are four techniques in the white paper. I would like to look at the technique that I have been looking about. Number two in the white paper.

They credit me with suggesting that. There is a little footnote: ''A similar idea was proposed by Representative ROSCOE BARTLETT of Maryland as far back as 2001,'' and I think I actually talked to the President before that. They say it may be some time before stem cell lines can be reliably derived from single cells. We have two investigators, Landry and Verlinsky, who claim that they have done that.

You see, these cells love company, and they don't behave well if they are alone and they don't have company, so that is why there was the concern that maybe you could not develop an embryonic stem cell line from a single cell. But these two investigators have done it in a very clever way. They provide company for the cells, and then they separate the company, these are other types of cells, they separate the embryonic cells from the other cells that provided company for them to encourage them to continue the division process.

A second technique, as a matter of fact it was number one, mine was number two, the first technique that they talked about is a really interesting one. What this does is to propose the use of cells from an embryo much like we use organs from a cadaver. Everybody is familiar with that, and there are many people that have a will that say you can harvest their organs to benefit somebody if that would be useful.

When you create these embryos in the laboratory, not all of them are robust. A fair percentage of them never make it. They divide through a few stages for a few days and then just die. This proposal is if you determine that the embryo is moribund, and there is pretty good scientific evidence that you can do that with quite some certainty, kind of equivalent to determining a person is brain dead and therefore there is no chance that they can go on with life as we know it, and his proposal is that if you determine that the embryo is not going to make it, that it will die, but before it dies, you then take a cell or cells from the embryo to create an embryonic stem cell line. This is very equivalent to taking organs from a cadaver.

There may be some question as to whether you can get a really good strong cell from an embryo that is in a day or two going to be dead, but it is possible that you could do that. My bill actually asks for Federal dollars to explore all of these techniques with animal models.

I was talking to one of the researchers, Dr. Hurlbut, the other day. This is Dr. Landry's proposal. I noted that I would be enormously surprised if what we found in the great apes was not going to be what we found in humans, and he agreed that he too would be enormously surprised.

It may be somewhat humbling, but we share a vast majority of our organs with the great apes, the chimpanzees and orangutans and gorillas. You have to look to see genetic differences. They have the same number of chromosomes, and we share many, many, most, 90-odd percent of all the chromosomes. So it would be very unlikely that what we found in animals would not occur in humans.

We have a couple more charts that address this. There has been a lot of thought given to this, and I think that we have one; let's look at the one that actually shows the depiction, yes, that one. Let us look at that one.

That shows what happens in these cells, these embryos, in just a couple of days. They go from a perfectly normal looking embryo to a dead embryo, but there are clues that that is a certain result that the experts can see in these cells.

So this is a potentially viable, I believe ethically acceptable technique, very analogous to taking organs from a cadaver. This is simply taking cells from what would be the equivalent in an embryo of a cadaver, an embryo that will not live, that will die.

There is another technique, and I would like to submit two papers here for the RECORD, and these are papers describing another technique, a very interesting one. This is Dr. Hurlbut's contribution.

Researchers can take an oocyte, that is the egg from a mother, and they can take the nucleus out of that oocyte and place a nucleus from an ordinary cell, like a skin cell, inside the cell, and then with a little shock treatment you can trick the cell into believing that it was fertilized, and it will go on to develop into an individual. That is how we got Dolly the Sheep. It is called cloning.

Dr. Hurlbut's suggestion is, and this is called epigenetic nuclear transfer, that he alters that. The nucleus that you place in the cell has an induced genetic defect. They alter one of the genes so that the result cannot produce an embryo.

There are things that happen in some mothers where you have growths and they will have teeth and hair, but it certainly is not a baby. It is not coordinated. You can turn off this gene so

that what you have produced is not an embryo, could not be a baby.

It is very interesting that the way you turn that off is by RNA, ribonucleic acid, rather than deoxy ribonucleic acid, which is what is in the nucleus and what makes up the genes and chromosomes. The RNA is out in the cytoplasm, and I am not so sure that a clone is going to be that identical to the original because the RNA, the cytoplasmic RNA, is going to be different; and the cytoplasmic RNA has a big influence because it can turn on and turn off genes. This is the technique used for doing this.

This, I think, is from Nature Magazine, one of the premier scientific journals. It is the British equivalent to our Science Magazine. It is really multidisciplinary and very discriminating in the articles that it prints.

The bottom sequence here shows what he would do. He is producing something that cannot be a baby because the gene that is responsible for the organization of these various types of cells into a coherent human being is turned off. By the way, whether he turns that off in the cymatic nucleus before he puts it in the cell so you avoid the argument that you are altering an embryo, because it is not an embryo, it is just a nucleus from a skin cell and he turns off the gene there, and then he takes the cell out of an oocyte and places this nucleus from the skin cell with the genetic alteration, places it in there. This is also a potentially viable technique.

All of these, by the way, you can argue that you may have some ethical problem with it. You may argue that you are intentionally creating a freak here just so you can harvest the cells from it. But since you are doing this before you place the nucleus in the oocyte, you are simply altering the nucleus in a skin cell, I think you can get by the ethical arguments.

Let us go back for a moment to the ethical arguments, because they are very important. I want to make sure that sensitivities of nobody in the prolife community are violated.

The technique that I suggested to the President and the one that is described in our bill, we would not get the stem cells until several things had happened over which we have no control and no influence. The first thing is that a couple has decided that they are going to do in vitro fertilization. In addition, they have decided that they want to create a repair kit for their baby. They may or may not decide that they want to do a pre-implantation genetic diagnosis.

By the way, you can do both of those in the same cell. You simply culture the cell and you have now more than one, ultimately many, so you can take a cell for pre-implantation genetic diagnosis. They will have made the decision they want a repair kit. All we are asking for is a few surplus cells, one will do, a few would be better, a few surplus cells from their repair kit.

What this would do is provide for that baby, then a child, then an adult, throughout its life the potential that if it had diabetes, you could develop other Langerhans cells from its repair kit that are genetically absolutely identical to the person so there would now be no threat of rejection. This would clearly, clearly be miracle medicine.

I think we have gotten by the ethical objections, because whether or not you believe that parents ought to use in vitro fertilization, these parents have decided to do that. Whether or not you believe they should take a cell to produce a repair kit, these parents have decided to do that. So they have already made those two decisions, both of which I think are ethical.

□ 2130

Parents really want a child when they will go to the extent of in vitro fertilization. As I mentioned, my daughter-in-law is going through that. And after the surgery for harvesting of the cells, she cannot even drive a car for quite a while. This is not a casual procedure.

So these are loving parents who want a child. And I think it would be very rational that they would want that child to have a repair kit if they could, and we are simply asking for a few surplus cells from the repair kit.

I should mention the fourth procedure that is in this white paper, and that is the dedifferentiation of the adult cells. This dedifferentiation is a play on differentiation, and what happens is that the single cell produced by the union of two gametes, called the zygote, this cell now differentiates. It produces tissues that are endoderm, from which the lining of your intestinal tract and lungs and the lining of your blood vessels will come, the mesoderm and so forth. So they have differentiated.

You can now potentially get the equivalent of an embryonic stem cell if you can simply take one of these adult cells and trick it into believing that it has not differentiated. What you will do is dedifferentiate it.

I do not know how consistently you can do that, but that is why we need to do the research. On occasion you can do that, and I do not know how consistently you can do it. I do not know how viable the tissues will be once you have done it, but that is the reason that you do research.

I would just like to again mention that our bill, 3144, does not provide any Federal funds for any work on humans. It is only animal experimentation. And it would provide Federal money for working on all of the techniques that the President's Council on Bioethics indicated might be ethically acceptable under the right circumstances.

Of course, one of the things that is very much involved in whether it is ethical or not is, does it do harm to the baby? And that is why the animal experimentation first. We want to make sure that in fact these techniques can occur. We want to make sure that there is no negative effect on the embryo.

There should not be, Mr. Speaker, unless you think that identical twins are somehow deficient, there should not be any medical effect, because we have, over hundreds of years, tens of thousands of identical twins, all of which appear to be perfectly normal human beings.

The potential for healing, medical applications in embryonic stem cells is just incredibly great, which is why the big interest in this. It is why the people at NIH would really like funding for this. It is why the groups that will come to see us, the juvenile diabetic groups that come to see us, will be advocating so strongly for research with embryonic stem cells, because this really could be a big, big breakthrough.

It could provide miracle cures that we can only dream of today. We need to make very sure that we are not crossing ethical bounds, that we are purely ethical.

Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned that none of my friends in the pro-life community be offended by any of this research, which is why the animal experimentation first, with a clear bioethical look at this.

I appreciate very much this opportunity to discuss this. Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the articles I referenced earlier.

PRODUCTION OF PLURIPOTENT STEM CELLS BY OOCYTE ASSISTED REPROGRAMMING

As described in the President's Council on Bioethics' recent White Paper, altered nuclear transfer (ANT) is a broad conceptual proposal for producing pluripotent stem cells without creating and destroying embryos. In the description set forth below, we outline a research program for a form of ANT that should allow us to produce pluripotent stem cells without creating or destroying human embryos and without producing an entity that undergoes or mimics embryonic development. The method of alteration here proposed (oocyte assisted reprogramming) would immediately produce a cell with positive characteristics and a type of organization that from the beginning would be clearly and unambiguously distinct from, and incompatible with, those of an embryo. Incapable of being or becoming an embryo, the cell produced would itself be a pluripotent cell that could be cultured to establish a pluripotent stem cell line. Significantly, this cell would not be totipotent, as a zygote is.

Our proposal is for initial research using only nonhuman animal cells. If, but only if, such research establishes beyond a reasonable doubt that oocyte assisted reprogramming can reliably be used to produce pluripotent stem cells without creating embryos, would we support research on human cells.

With few exceptions all human cells contain a complete human genome, i.e. the complete DNA sequence characteristic of the human species. Specifically, one-celled human embryos, pluripotent human embryonic stem (or ES) cells, multipotent human adult stem cells, and differentiated (specialized) adult human cells such as neurons all contain a complete human genome. Thus, possession of a human genome is a necessary but not sufficient condition for defining a

human embryo with its inherent dignity. Rather the nature of each cell depends on its epigenetic state, i.e. which subset of the approximately thirty thousand human genes is switched on or off and, if on, at what level. For example, the gene for albumin, a liver specific protein, is found both in human embryos and in adult human liver cells called hepatocytes. However, neither the messenger RNA (mRNA) for albumin nor the protein itself is found in single-celled embryos because in them the gene is silenced.

This fundamental observation has given rise to the concepts of cell fate plasticity and epigenetic ''reprogramming.'' If successful, reprogramming converts a cell from one kind to another by changing its epigenetic state. The ability to clone animals, such as Dolly the sheep, by transfer of a specialized adult nucleus to an enucleated oocyte demonstrates the power of epigenetic reprogramming: the oocyte cytoplasm is sufficient to reprogram the somatic nucleus to a totipotent state. Human cloning has been proposed as a means of generating human embryos whose pluripotent stem cells would be used in scientific and medical research. Here, through a form of altered nuclear transfer, we propose to utilize the power of epigenetic reprogramming in combination with controlled alterations in gene expression to directly produce pluripotent cells using adult somatic nuclei, without generating and subsequently destroying embryos.

How do pluripotent stem cells differ from totipotent single-celled embryos? Several key transcription factors essential for establishing and maintaining the pluripotent behavior of ES cells have been identified. Importantly, some of these are specifically expressed only in pluripotent cells, such as embryonic stem cells or the cells found in the inner-cell-mass (ICM) of the week-old embryo or blastocyst. They are not expressed in oocytes or single-celled embryos. Expression of these factors therefore positively defines and distinguishes mere pluripotent cells from embryos. These factors instruct a cell to have the identity of a pluripotent cell. Currently, the best studied example is the homeodomain transcription factor called nanog (Mitsui, Tokuzawa et al. 2003*). Nanog is not present in oocytes or single-celled embryos, but first becomes expressed weakly in the morula and then highly in the ICM (Mitsui, Tokuzawa et al. 2003; Hatano, Tada et al. 2005). Deletion of nanog does not prevent early cleavage stages of embryogenesis including formation of the ICM but does prevent the formation of an epiblast (Mitsui, Tokuzawa et al. 2003). ES cells in which nanog is blocked lose their pluripotency—which clearly shows that nanog is a positive factor instructing cells to be pluripotent, i.e. to behave like an ES cell. Furthermore, ES cells which constitutively express nanog can no longer be differentiated, i.e. are forced to remain in their undifferentiated state (Mitsui, Tokuzawa et al. 2003).

We propose a procedure that combines epigenetic reprogramming of a somatic nucleus with forced expression of transcription factors characteristic of embryonic stem cells, to produce a pluripotent stem cell. As a result of this procedure, nanog and/or other, similar factors, would be expressed at high levels in somatic cells prior to nuclear transfer, to bias the somatic nucleus towards a pluripotent stem cell state. Such altered nuclei would then be epigenetically reprogrammed by transplantation into enucleated oocytes. Alternatively or concomitantly, the mRNA for these same factors could be introduced into the oocyte prior to nuclear transfer. This procedure could ensure that the epigenetic state of the resulting single cell would immediately be different from that of an embryo and like that of a pluripotent stem cell: the somatic-cell nucleus would be formed into a pluripotent stem-cell nucleus and never pass through an embryonic stage. Therefore, unlike some other proposed methods of ANT, this method would achieve its objective not by a gene deletion that precludes embryonic organization in the cell produced, but rather by a positive transformation that generates, ab initio, a cell with the distinctive molecular characteristics and developmental behavior of a pluripotent cell, not a totipotent embryo. This should allow us to produce a pluripotent stem cell line with controlled genetic characteristics.

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Institutional affiliations are provided for purposes of identification only and do not necessarily represent the views of organizations with which endorsers are affiliated. Endorsers who are not themselves specialists in biomedical science do not put themselves forward as experts in that field. Their endorsement of the proposal pertains to the ethics of ANT-OAR, assuming its technical feasibility.

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John Collins Harvey, M.D., Ph.D., Senior Research Scholar and Professor Emeritus of Medicine, Center for Clinical Bioethics, Georgetown University Medical Center, Washington, D.C.

Paul J. Hoehner, M.D., M.A., FAHA, Harvey Fellow in Theology, Ethics and Culture, The University of Virginia Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Associate Professor of Anesthesiology, The University of Virginia Health Sciences Center, Charlottesville, Virginia.

William B. Hurlbut, M.D., Consulting Professor in the Program in Human Biology, Stanford University, Palo Alto, California.

John F. Kilner, Ph.D., President, The Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity, 2065 Half Day Road, Bannockburn, Illinois.

Patrick Lee, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy, Franciscan University of Steubenville, Steubenville, Ohio.

William E. May, Ph.D., Michael J. McGivney Professor of Moral Theology, John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family at The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

Rev. Gonzalo Miranda, L.C., Ph.L., S.T.D., Dean of Bioethics, Regina Apostolorum Pontifical Athenaeum, Rome, Italy.

C. Ben Mitchell, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Bioethics & Contemporary Culture, Trinity International University, Bannockburn, Illinois.

Most Reverend John J. Myers, J.C.D., D.D., Roman Catholic Archbishop of Newark, New Jersey.

Chris Oleson, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Philosophy, Center for Higher Studies, Thornwood, New York.

Rev. Tad Pacholczyk, Ph.D., Director of Education, The National Catholic Bioethics Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Rev. Peter F. Ryan, S.J., S.T.D., Associate Professor of Moral Theology, Mount St. Mary's University, Emmitsburg, Maryland.

William L. Saunders, J.D., Senior Fellow and Director, The Center for Human Life & Bioethics, The Family Research Council, Washington, DC.

David Stevens, M.D., M.A., Executive Director, Christian Medical & Dental Associations, Bristol, Tennessee.

Rev. Msgr. Stuart W. Swetland, S.T.D., Director, The Newman Foundation, Adjunct Associate Professor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, Illinois.

M. Edward Whelan III, J.D., President, Ethics and Public Policy Center, Washington, DC.

Rev. Thomas Williams, L.C., Ph.L., S.T.D., Dean of Theology, Regina Apostolorum Pontifical Athenaeum, Rome, Italy.

RESEARCHERS OFFER PROOF-OF-CONCEPT FOR ALTERED NUCLEAR TRANSFER

CAMBRIDGE, MA, Oct. 17, 2005.—Scientists at Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research have successfully demonstrated that a theoretical—and controversial—technique for generating embryonic stem cells is indeed possible, at least in mice.

The theory, called altered nuclear transfer (ANT), proposes that researchers first create genetically altered embryos that are unable to implant in a uterus, and then extract stem cells from these embryos. Because the embryos cannot implant, they are by definition not ''potential'' human lives. Some suggest that this would quell the protests of critics who claim that embryonic stem cell research necessitates the destruction of human life. Scientists and ethicists have debated the merits of this approach, but so far it has not been achieved.

''The purpose of our study was to provide a scientific basis for the ethical debate,'' says Whitehead Member Rudolf Jaenisch, lead author on the paper that will be published in the October 16 online edition of the journal

Nature. ''Our work is the first proof-of-principle study to show that altered nuclear transfer not only works but is extremely efficient.''

First proposed by William Hurlbut, Stanford University professor and member of the President's Council on Bioethics, ANT has been described as an ethical alternative to somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT), also known as therapeutic cloning.

For SCNT, a donor nucleus, for example one taken from a skin cell, is implanted into a donor egg cell from which the nucleus had been removed. This egg cell is then tricked into thinking it has been fertilized. That causes it to grow into a blastocyst—a mass of about 100 cells—from which stem cells are removed. These embryonic stem cells can divide and replicate themselves indefinitely, and they can also form any type of tissue in the human body. However, to cull these stem cells, the blastocyst must be destroyed, which some critics insist is tantamount to destroying a human life.

The procedure theorized by Hurlbut is similar to SCNT, but with one crucial twist: Before the donor nucleus is transferred into the egg cell, its DNA is altered so that the resulting blastocyst has no chance of ever becoming a viable embryo. As a result, a ''potential human being'' is not destroyed once stem cells have been extracted.

Jaenisch—a firm supporter of all forms of human embryonic stem cell research—has shown that technical concerns about this approach can be overcome.

Jaenisch and Alexander Meissner, a graduate student in his lab, focused on a gene called Cdx2, which enables an embryo to grow a placenta. In order to create a blastocyst that cannot implant in a uterus, the researchers disabled Cdx2 in mouse cells.

They accomplished this with a technique called RNA interference, or RNAi. Here, short interfering RNA (siRNA) molecules are designed to target an individual gene and disrupt its ability to produce protein. In effect, the gene is shut off. Jaenisch and Meissner designed a particular form of siRNA that shut off this gene in the donor nucleus and then incorporated itself into all the cells comprising the blastocyst. As a result, all of the resulting mouse blastocysts were incapable of implantation.

However, once the stem cells had been extracted from the blastocysts, Cdx2 was still disabled in each of these new cells, something that needed to be repaired in order for these cells to be useful. To correct this, Meissner deleted the siRNA molecule by transferring a plasmid into each cell. (A plasmid is a unit of DNA that can replicate in a cell apart from the nucleus. Plasmids are usually found in bacteria, and they are a staple for recombinant DNA techniques.) The stem cells resulting from this procedure proved to be just as robust and versatile as stem cells procured in the more traditional fashion.

''The success of this procedure in no way precludes the need to pursue all forms of human embryonic stem cell research,'' says Jaenisch, who is also a professor of biology at MIT. ''Human embryonic stem cells are extraordinarily complicated. If we are ever to realize their therapeutic potential, we must use all known tools and techniques in order to explore the mechanisms that give these cells such startling characteristics. ''

ANT, Jaenisch emphasizes, is a modification, but not an alternative, to nuclear transfer, since the approach requires additional manipulations of the donor cells. He hopes that this modification may help resolve some of the issues surrounding work with embryonic stem cells and allow federal funding.

This research was supported by the National Institutes of Health/National Cancer Institute.

BLUE DOG COALITION AND THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to talk about our budget, to talk about our debt, to talk about our deficit.

As a member of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, a group of 37 fiscally conservative Democrats, we are here as a group to hold our government accountable for the reckless spending, the record deficits, and the lack of fiscal discipline that we see in our Nation's government these days.

A good example of that, Mr. Speaker, can be found in my district, in fact, in my hometown where I grew up and finished high school, Hope, Arkansas. As you may know, we had the most costly natural disaster ever in our Nation's history hit us about 6 months ago, that of course being Hurricane Katrina.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you that my heart goes out for the victims of Hurricane Katrina, many who remain homeless today. I am real proud of the people of my congressional district, the 4th District of Arkansas, who opened up their arms and their homes and their communities. Some people referred to them as evacuees. We called them our neighbors, our neighbors from Louisiana and Mississippi who came to Arkansas to seek refuge.

A few weeks, perhaps a couple of months, after Hurricane Katrina, FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, showed up at city hall in Hope, Arkansas, and explained that they were aware that Hope owned an old World War II airport, airfield and accompanying pasture, and they understood that many of those runways were now inactive. And they proceeded to explain how they were buying some 20,000 manufactured homes, and they wanted to use the old World War II airport, the inactive runways at the airport there in Hope, Arkansas, as what they called a FEMA staging area, and that manufactured homes and they would be coming and they would be going, going to the people who lost their homes and everything they owned in Louisiana and Mississippi.

Well, Mr. Speaker, they did come. Here is an aerial photo of what has come to Hope, Arkansas. According to FEMA's most recent count, 10,777 manufactured homes have come to this so-called FEMA staging area in my hometown where I grew up, Hope, Arkansas. I now live some 16 miles from there in Prescott.

I have been there, Mr. Speaker. I have seen these 10,777 manufactured homes. They came. But not a single one left, not one. Not one home left for the people they were intended for. To put it another way, it is $431 million worth of manufactured homes sitting in a cow pasture in Hope, Arkansas.

Now, originally what FEMA had intended to do was use this as a staging area and homes would be coming and homes would be going. They would have room for them on these inactive runways. But today only 25 percent of them sit on these inactive runways. As you can see, many of them, in fact 75 percent of them, are sitting in cow pastures around the airport.

If you were to stack these manufactured homes, a few of them are 80 feet long, most of them are 60 feet, if you were to stack them end to end, they would stretch 172 miles. They would stretch from the Texas-Arkansas border at the Red River all of the way to the Arkansas-Mississippi border at the Mississippi River.

These manufactured homes, every single one of them, are fully furnished, beds, mattresses, box springs, dining room, sofa, end tables, coffee tables, fully furnished. Yet at the same time, FEMA has announced that they are planning on March 1 to evict, or in early March, they plan to evict some 12,000 people from hotel rooms, and yet FEMA is sitting, sitting on 10,777 brand-new, fully furnished manufactured homes. They are just sitting on them at the Hope airport in Hope, Arkansas, some 450 miles from the eye of the storm.

Stanley McKenzie is from the New Orleans area. I have been talking with Stanley. Stanley is one of the victims of Hurricane Katrina who, some 6 months after the storm, remains in a hotel room in Monticello, Arkansas. Stanley and I talked this evening. Stanley explained to me that he did not want to be in a hotel room. He wanted to be in a manufactured home and has a location in Monticello to put one of these manufactured homes which are being stored about 2 hours west of Monticello.

And yet FEMA says he cannot have one. FEMA says he cannot borrow one for the next 18 months, as the program calls for.

They do not give these things away. They let people use them for up to 18 months, which is a whole other issue; that being, FEMA says the 18 months start from the date of the Federal declaration, not the date that the people actually receive the home. So every one of those 10,777 homes have an expiration date on them. The date does not begin, the 18-month window for people to live in them while they try to sort through their life and find a place to live after losing everything they own in Hurricane Katrina, does not start from the time they receive a home, it starts from the time of the Federal declaration.

So each day those homes sit at the airport and at the pasture in Hope is a day that no one can ever live in them. So I am calling on FEMA to revise their policy for the 18 months to begin at the time in which people are able to actually obtain one of these homes.

Now, what they tell Stanley is, he cannot have one, even though he has

got a place to put it, because he has got a place to put it in Arkansas, that he would have to move back to Louisiana in order to be able to use one of these manufactured homes for 18 months. And they say that they will not put them in Louisiana because FEMA refuses to put these manufactured homes in a flood zone.

Well, you know, I have got news for FEMA. Everybody that lost their home and everything they own, there is a reason for it. They lived in a flood zone. And so they are saying, if you want to get a manufactured home, FEMA says we will let you use one for up to 18 months, but you have got to provide land. And people who own land own land in what? A flood zone.

And FEMA refuses to place these temporarily in a flood zone for 18 months, and yet they have amassed 10,777 of them just sitting in a pasture in Hope, an area that is prone and will probably be under a tornado warning about once every 10 days for the next 3 months.

It is time for FEMA to get their act together. And they are now saying that they are going to move some of these, some 300 to 400 as I understand will be moved from Hope, some 450 miles from the eye of the storm, to Louisiana. That is good. But they also announced they are getting ready to move another 2,200 homes into Hope on top of the 10,777 we already have.

I am asking FEMA to move all 10,777 of those homes out of Hope and to the people who need them, people who lost everything they owned in Louisiana and Mississippi as a result of Hurricane Katrina.

The last response I got from FEMA was, the travel trailers work great. They put out 72,000 travel trailers and are getting ready to put out 10,000 more. They have purchased another 10,000 travel trailers.

If that is not enough, they are now accepting bids. They are getting ready to spend between $6 and $8 million laying gravel, on up to 290 acres at the airport in this cow pasture at Hope, Arkansas. There have been reports that these manufactured homes are damaged, that they are sinking. Not yet, but it is true that they are literally sitting in a pasture, or at least 75 percent of them are sitting in a pasture.

And that is what they look like. You can see the fence, the cow pasture. They are just sitting there in a pasture, some 10,777 manufactured homes sitting in a pasture, when we have got 12,000 families about to be evicted from hotel rooms all across this country by FEMA.

It is time for FEMA to get its act together. And my response and my plea to FEMA is, you know, do not spend $6 or $8 million laying gravel in a cow pasture. Let us get these manufactured homes to the people who need them, to the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Now, I raise this issue because as a member of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition, we have a 12-point plan for budget reform. One of those plans is to require agencies to put their fiscal house in order.

□ 2145

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is time for FEMA to put their fiscal house in order. There is a lot of talk about the President's budget. As you may know, Mr. Speaker, the President has submitted to Congress a $2.8 trillion budget. This budget provides us with the largest budget deficit ever in our Nation's history for the 6th year in a row. $423 billion in red ink; $423 billion in deficit spending. Compare that to fiscal year 2006 when the budget deficit was $318 billion.

The current national debt today, just a few moments ago, was $8,251,355,000,000. For every man, woman, and child in America, including those who have been born since I got up here this evening, each person's share of the national debt is $27,674.

With each passing year this President and this administration and this Republican Congress have given us the largest budget deficit ever in our Nation's history.

It is hard to believe now, but in 1998 through 2001, President Clinton gave this Nation its first balanced budget in about 40 years. In 2001, we had a surplus and every year since we have had a deficit, not only a deficit but the largest deficit ever in our Nation's history.

Mr. Speaker, the total national debt from 1789 to 2000 was $5.63 trillion. But by 2010 the total national debt will have increased to $10.98 trillion. This is a doubling of the 2011 year debt in just 10 years.

Interest payments, this administration, this Congress is borrowing nearly $1 billion every single day; $260 million every day going into Iraq; $33 million every day is going to Afghanistan. Other money that we are borrowing is going to pay for tax cuts for those earning over $400,000 a year. But if that is not enough that we are borrowing some $1 billion a day, we are also spending about a half a billion dollars a day simply paying interest on the national debt. That is what we call the debt tax, D-E-B-T; and it is one tax that cannot go away until we get our Nation's fiscal house in order.

A half a billion dollars a day going to pay interest on the national debt. Give me 3 days' interest on the national debt and I can build I–49 through Arkansas. Give me another 3 days' interest and I can build I–69 through Arkansas. I could build 200 brand-new elementary schools every day in America just with the interest that we are paying on the national debt.

Mr. Speaker, if that is not enough, if that is not enough, this President, this administration, this Republican Congress in 5 short year has borrowed more money from foreign central banks and foreign investors than the previous 42 Presidents combined.

At this time I would like to recognize the co-chair of the Blue Dog Coalition, Congressman DENNIS CARDOZA of California, who just happened to have been on the trip with me to Hope, Arkansas, to see those 10,707 manufactured homes just sitting in that cow pasture and 450 miles from the people that really need them in Louisiana and Mississippi.

Mr. CARDOZA. Thank you very much for recognizing me, Congressman ROSS. It is truly an honor to be your friend and to have traveled with you to your district recently. It was a shame that we had to witness what we did when we witnessed those trailers sitting there, a government expenditure of nearly half a billion dollars with no person in America being benefited by that. It was really an outrage.

I am so pleased that I serve with you as a member of the Blue Dog Coalition. I am very pleased I am one of the Blue Dog co-chairs.

The Blue Dogs are a group of 37 conservative Democrats who are committed to fiscal responsibility and reforming the broken budget process in Washington. Our top priority is fixing the gross mismanagement of our Nation's finances. As moderates and fiscal hawks, the Blue Dogs have tried to reach across the aisle and engage in a real debate for fiscal responsibility.

The 2006 budget is something of a sham. We need to return to honesty and accountability in this budget. I am deeply concerned with the continued deficit spending, the complete disregard for fiscally responsible policies and a fundamentally dishonest budget process.

The President proposed, as you said, Mr. ROSS, a $2.7 trillion budget which will decrease domestic spending a bit, yet leave massive $355 billion deficits. This $355 billion is not the whole story, though.

The President's figures deliberately leave out the cost of our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan and the potential future cost of rebuilding this gulf region that we have talked about tonight that is in so dire need of our work. It also leaves out a growing problem for Americans and that is the alternative minimum tax. All these costs are going to drive up the deficit even further.

The President's budget is a nice break from reality TV, but it is a harsh reality for our Nation; and it does nothing to make the Federal Government more accountable to taxpayer dollars.

Mr. ROSS, I just want to thank you again for your leadership and taking us down there and for having the gumption to bring camera crews down there and expose this national tragedy of these trailers in your district. I just hope that FEMA will listen to our pleas from that day when we talked about what needed to be done, what should be done. I applaud your efforts in this area and thank you for being such a worthy advocate for our Nation's fiscal policies.

Mr. ROSS. I appreciate the gentleman from California for his leadership as co-chair of the Blue Dog Coalition for joining us this evening for this

discussion of the budget, the debt, and the deficit. I appreciate your traveling to my district and witnessing something that is absolutely reprehensible. To have 10,777 brand-new manufactured homes, fully furnished, sitting in a cow pasture in Hope, Arkansas, when FEMA is getting ready to evict 12,000 people from hotel rooms in this country and their only response is, well, we are not going to put them in flood zones and everybody that needs them lives in a flood zone so we will spend 6 to $8 million putting gravel on the cow pasture so we can store them for a future natural disaster.

That is the craziest thing I have ever heard of, and that is the kind of example of how we must require agencies to put their fiscal house in order and to get their act together. That is part of the 12-point plan for meaningful budget reform that is being offered up by the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition.

I recognize the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT), a fellow Blue Dog, my friend.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Thank you so much, Mr. ROSS. It is always a pleasure to come and be a party to our efforts here on behalf of the Blue Dog Coalition as we work very hard to try to bring some reason and sanity to this whole issue of our budget, our obligations, our responsibilities to the people of this country, and our allies and partners around the world.

I have just returned from Iraq and Afghanistan and Pakistan on an extraordinary trip. And I went firsthand so that I could see exactly what it was like on the ground, where I could talk to our soldiers, where I could be there with them, where I could also talk to the generals and see what was going on.

As I got there, it was very interesting for me to have one extraordinary experience. We went into Camp Victory, and I ate dinner with our soldiers. And this solder grabbed me and hugged me so tight. It is a moment I will never forget as long as I live. As he was hugging me, we both were in tears and he said to me, Congressman SCOTT, when I am hugging you, it is like hugging a piece of home.

I can tell you I will never forget that.

Mr. ROSS, do you know what crosses my mind as we look at that situation with the debt? It is that that soldier that hugged me, those soldiers that are going out and giving their lives every day on the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq, their salaries are being paid for by borrowed money from Communist China, from Japan, from foreign countries. As a matter of fact, 90 percent of every dime that we are spending in this country today for our government to carry on its business is being borrowed from foreign countries.

Mr. ROSS. If the gentleman would yield, you make a very valid point. I have a chart here to demonstrate the fact that I mentioned earlier, this administration, this Republican Congress has borrowed more money from foreign central banks, from foreign investors in the past 5 years than the previous 42 Presidents combined.

You want to talk about something that is critical to our national security, you let these foreign countries like China and Japan and OPEC, you wonder why gas prices are so high. If we let these countries continue to buy our debt, they are going to have a huge influence on our monetary policy. There you can see Japan, this is as of November 2005, it has gone up since then. Japan, $682.8 billion of our loans that they own. China, $249.8 billion; United Kingdom, $223.2 billion; Caribbean, $115.3 billion; Taiwan, $71.3 billion; OPEC, $67.8 billion; Korea, $66.5 billion; Germany, $65.7 billion; Canada $53.8 billion.

To put it another way, if China decides, as my friend and founding member of the Blue Dog Coalition says so eloquently, we are in such a mess right now that if China which is loaning us money, if China decides to invade Taiwan, we will have to borrow even more money from China to defend Taiwan. That is the situation our Nation is in today as we continue to borrow about half the debt, which is running about a billion a day which means we are borrowing about a half a billion dollars a day from foreign central banks and from foreign investors to fund tax cuts in this country for those who earn over $400,000 a year.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. And when you mention those tax cuts, the other terrible stab at the American people is that to make these tax cuts permanent means to borrow more money from these countries on top of what we are borrowing. And to offset those tax cuts in the Federal budget, the President and the Republican administration is advocating cutting the very programs that the people of America need and are hurting for.

You mention Katrina in your district. I am from Georgia. We are the third largest recipient of evacuees from this terrible, terrible, terrible tragedy. But the fact of the matter is that we are not responding to the needs of the American people when we look at this budget and the cuts: $19 billion cuts to student loan programs; over $200 million just from the first phase to child care programs, for the seniors. On top of that, the cuts that hurt the most to me at a time of war is the cut to our veterans to offset for the tax cuts.

The point that I think we want to bring home to the American people tonight is that we have a terrible situation that is ratcheting at the foundations of our country and that is a lack of financial security and a lack of financial responsibility. The architect of our financial system was none other than Alexander Hamilton, and Alexander Hamilton it was who laid out the credit system, laid out the debtor system. He said, woe it will be to us in the future if we become dependent on foreign sources to finance our government. He was adamant about that.

□ 2200

Here we are in the 21st century, rocking and reeling from this unfortunate situation we find ourselves in of borrowing this exorbitant amount of money from foreign governments.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Georgia and welcome him to stay and join us in a conversation about the budget and the debt and the deficit as the evening goes on.

As I mentioned earlier, the Blue Dog Coalition is a group of 37 fiscally conservative Democrats. What we are all about is trying to restore some common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government.

For those who have questions or comments for the Blue Dog Coalition, we are here every Tuesday night. It is not always the same time, but every Tuesday night, we are here. I am here with different members of the Blue Dog Coalition. If you have got a question or a comment for us relating to the budget, the debt, the deficit or my manufactured homes stacked up in a cow pasture in Hope, Arkansas, you can e-mail us at bluedog@mail.house.gov.

At this time, it is with great pleasure that I recognize a new Member of Congress, a real leader in Congress, a member of the Blue Dog Coalition, someone who came to Congress and said our budget, our debt, our deficit is out of control; I want to help restore some common sense and fiscal discipline. She is someone that has recently become an outspoken advocate for restoring common sense to our government, a new member of our fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition, Congresswoman MELISSA BEAN from Illinois.

Ms. BEAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) so much for recognizing me and letting me join my colleagues on the important issue of the rampant fiscal irresponsibility in this Congress.

When I came to Congress, I came to bring what I thought was a real-world business perspective to government because, in the business world, I spent over 20 years in the high-tech industry, but it certainly was not unique. In that industry, accountability is more than just a word. Business leaders expect to be held accountable to their shareholders, their customers, their employees and to their communities. But in this Congress, accountability is just a catch phrase, usually directed elsewhere. Demands to personal responsibility or corporate accountability abound, but rarely congressional accountability or fiscal responsibility.

Instead of sticking to the motto, ''If it is worth doing, it is worth paying for,'' this administration and this Congress has turned the largest budget surplus in history into the largest deficit in history, with a reckless borrow-and-spend profligacy.

For the last 4 years, our Federal Government has produced the four biggest deficits in history, and the estimated 2006 deficit of $423 billion is projected

to be the largest of all. As our colleague, DENNIS CARDOZA, just mentioned, we are even leaving out some of the facts.

It would be a considerably bigger deficit if we considered an AMT fix, which is one that is important and will affect the constituents in my district who do not want to pay the higher taxes without that fix. It is also not including the realistic costs for ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The American people expect more from Congress. They expect fiscal responsibility and common sense. They expect us to return to the pay-as-you-go budget rules that we had enacted in the past that helped us establish a surplus, however briefly. It is a simple concept with a proven track record.

The budget enforcement rules of the 1990s were an important part of getting the budget back into balance. It was done on a bipartisan basis. Those pay-as-you-go rules were tested and they worked. We are now in a one-party system, and we have thrown them out.

Accountability in government should be more than a catch phrase, particularly when the national debt is now at $8.2 trillion, which, by the way, computes to roughly $27,000 of national debt per American.

I spoke to some seventh graders in my district the other day, and they were astounded to find that each of them, their personal share of our national debt is $27,000. They were ready for us to do something about it. We need to do something about it and let them know that the buck stops here.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Illinois for joining our discussion and debate this evening.

As we look toward the fiscal year 2007 budget that the President recently submitted to Congress, and this is what we are referring to here, the ''Fiscal Year 2007 Budget of the United States Government,'' I cannot help but think about the fact that over the last 4 years this administration has produced the four largest deficits ever in our Nation's history.

The 2006 deficit of $423 billion is projected to be the largest of all, $105 billion larger than the 2005 deficit. The 2006 deficit, without the Social Security surplus, is over $600 billion. They always like to count the Social Security trust fund to make it look like the deficit is really less than it really is. No wonder that I could not get a vote or a hearing on the first bill I filed as a Member of Congress, a bill to tell the politicians in Washington to keep their hands off the Social Security trust fund.

When this administration took office, it inherited a projected 10-year surplus of $5.6 trillion. This surplus has become a $3.3 trillion deficit, which now brings this to a total of $8.2 trillion in deficit, an embarrassing reversal of some $8.9 trillion. If that is not enough, the fiscal year 2007 proposed budget includes cuts to education, Medicare, Medicaid, transportation, justice, law enforcement, housing, urban development, health and human services, while increasing fees paid by veterans and Medicare premiums paid by seniors.

The President said in his State of the Union that he was committed to providing affordable health care for Americans. However, this budget includes increases in Medicare premiums, cuts to Medicaid and Medicare, and a misguided plan for health savings accounts that will shift more of the cost of health care onto beneficiaries.

The fiscal year 2007 budget includes tax cuts for those earning over $400,000 a year, but it fails to include a repair to the alternative minimum tax, which affects way too many middle-income people year after year after year after year, and should be addressed by this Congress.

In fact, the only good news I can find in the budget is, according to the President's budget, we will have won the peace and brought the troops home from Iraq and Afghanistan by October 1. What I mean by that is, the President, according to his budget, has not provided for a single dime in funding for our operations in Afghanistan or Iraq beginning October 1, which obviously means one of two things: that he has provided us with a phony budget, one that is not meaningful; or that he really believes that we are going to actually have brought all the men and women in uniform home and completed our mission and won the battle and created peace and democracies in those regions in Afghanistan and Iraq between now and October 1.

The Blue Dog Coalition used to offer up a budget every year. It is difficult for us to do that now because we refuse to provide a budget that is not meaningful; and it also does not make sense for us to provide a budget that compares apples with oranges. If this administration and this President would give us a meaningful budget, one that accounts for the cost of Iraq and Afghanistan, one that addresses Medicare and all the other pressing issues in this Nation, then we could do the same.

But what we believe must happen as fiscally conservative Democrats, we are tired of all the partisan bickering that goes on in this place. It does not matter if it is a Democratic idea or a Republican idea. I want it to be a common-sense idea, and I ask myself does it make sense for the people that send me here to be their voice and to represent them.

What we believe must happen, before either party can offer up a meaningful budget, is, we have got to have budget reform, and that is what the Blue Dogs are offering up, 12 points to budget reform. We have discussed them in the past. If time permits, I will discuss them even more here this evening, but I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Absolutely, and just responding to your very eloquent description of the status quo, of the situation and the landscape that the American people are faced with today with a budget that is squarely not responsive nor responsible to the needs of the American people, with an administration that, quite frankly, on so many important issues, has demonstrated that they are completely out to lunch and out of touch.

The point is that the American people deserve better. There is a day of reckoning coming, and I assure you that that reckoning is coming this year, in the year 2006. I think this is going to be one of the most important elections that we have had in a long, long time, because all of the facts that you have just pointed out, in terms of FEMA, in terms of what is happening in the Middle East and here lately in terms of those who were asleep at the switch when the deal was cut, in terms of the port security, all show a considerable lack of judgment and a lack of responsibility to the American people.

That has been a characteristic within this administration, especially in the area dealing with one of the most precious responsibilities we have, which is determining and being responsible for how we spend the taxpayers' money. For this administration in the last 5 years to have squandered a surplus, the facts are there. They are plain as one can see.

When the Clinton administration left office, there was a surplus of billions and billions of dollars, and now in this last year the deficit has been shot up over $4 trillion. There is a reckoning for that, and I am here to tell you that as a Member of Congress, the American people are looking for Members of Congress to stand up for them and to do what it is we need to do, that we were elected to do. It is Congress that is charged with the responsibility of oversight. It is Congress whose decision it is, by the Constitution, to determine how the tax dollars are spent. That is our responsibility.

I am here to tell you that collectively, as a body, we have not done our job. We need to correct that, and under the leadership of the Blue Dogs, we are asserting that leadership, to say bring it home to us.

We have got the plan, pay-as-you-go. Parents, families, all across this country, they cannot go out here. We tell them all the time, be responsible. Mom and dads that are sitting at the kitchen table tonight scratching their heads, how are we going to pay this without money, they do not have the luxury of putting out a debt ceiling. They do not have the luxury of going and borrowing unlimited amounts from foreign governments for our most basic services.

When you combine that with the trade deficit and you combine that with our willingness to turn our security for our ports over to foreign countries, and especially countries with Arab and Islamic roots and connections, when we are in a terrorist war with Islamic and Arabic countries, let it be said and let it be plain, we do not

wish to discriminate against anybody because you are Arab or Islamic.

But does it make good judgment to turn our security over to a country that has had a record of financial transactions supporting terrorists or a country where two of the terrorists came from that attacked this country? That is sort of like after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, turning over the security of Pearl Harbor to the Japanese.

The only reason I am mentioning that is to show that the same mind-set that allowed this to happen for our ports, the same mind-set that allowed the FEMA to happen, to have those trailers setting up unused in Hope, Arkansas, at Fort Gillem in Georgia, failure after failure of judgment, it is the same mind-set that has gotten us into this record deficit and debt. There is a reckoning.

America's looking for leadership on this, and that leadership must come from us, Blue Dogs, and the Democratic Party.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia.

I might mention part of our 12-point plan for meaningful budget reform, and we are still waiting for the first Republican Member of Congress to sign on to our bills that address these issues, but point number one is real simple: Require a balanced budget.

I spent 10 years in the State Senate. Forty-nine States in this Nation require a balanced budget.

□ 2215

I know in our home in Prescott, Arkansas, my family and I, we sit around the kitchen table and work out our family budget. My wife and I own a family pharmacy and home medical equipment business in our hometown, and our banker requires us to have a balanced budget. I don't believe it is asking too much for our Nation and its leaders here in Congress to do what 49 States do, what most companies and businesses, large and small, in America do, and what most families sitting around the kitchen table struggle to do but must do and do, and that is have a balanced budget. That would address a lot of our problems.

Another is don't let Congress buy on credit. The gentleman from Georgia mentioned earlier PAYGO. That is Pay As You Go. If you want to create a new program that is going to cost money, you have to show us at the same time where you are going to cut spending somewhere else. If you are going to cut taxes, you have to show us in times when we don't have a surplus where you are going to cut programs to pay for those tax cuts. It is called Pay As You Go.

And you can see here we did not have PAYGO rules in place in this body, in this United States House of Representatives Chamber; those rules were not in place during the Reagan years. You see the red. We had deficits ranging from $128 billion in 1992. They hit $221 billion in fiscal year 1986. It was $290 billion under former President Bush in fiscal year 1992. And then under President Clinton we started seeing the debt, the deficit, come down. Finally, in fiscal year 1998, we had the first balanced budget in about 40 years, $69 billion in the black. In 1999, $125 billion in the black. The year 2000, $236 billion in the black. Fiscal year 2001, $128.2 billion in the black.

Then, under this Republican-led Congress, this administration, $157.8 billion in the red, $377.6 billion in the red, $412.1 billion in the red, $319 billion in the red, $323 billion in the red; and, of course, for fiscal year 2007, we all know that unfortunately the deficit is projected to be $423 billion. And that is not counting what it would be if they counted the Social Security trust fund. If they were to count the Social Security trust fund, it would be well in excess, well in excess of $600 billion.

It is time to restore some fiscal discipline to our Nation's government. We have a 12-point plan that will accomplish that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois.

Ms. BEAN. I thank my colleague, Mr. Speaker. It is interesting, I mentioned earlier that I spent some time with some seventh graders in my district; and when we are with these young students, as my colleague mentioned, they are looking to us to demonstrate leadership and to also act like the adults they would expect us to act like and demonstrate some fiscal sense.

When I talked to them about the $27,674 of the national debt that they each share, they were saying, well, then, how come you guys keep spending more than you have? And I said, because we are not adhering to the rules we once did before that forced us to do that, that forced us to make tough decisions. And we talked about how in their family budgets they have to make those decisions. Sometimes going to the movies fits in the budget and sometimes it doesn't. But Mom and Dad try to make sure that they are not spending more than they have personally so as to avoid getting into debt. They understood what that meant in their families, and they were, frankly, pretty shocked.

But it is not just the kids that are worried. I talk to businesses in my district, and they are very concerned. They understand that deficits matter. Not everybody understands it, but business people understand that access to capital fuels their growth; and that while at this moment interest rates have been kept down, that can't last forever while we become even more dependent on foreign capital to float our spending habits. So business people have concerns.

My colleague also mentioned the debt tax, and I think that is an important issue that most people don't appreciate. I have one chart here, and I don't know if my colleague has this up there, but I don't think people realize that net interest is projected to be at such a higher rate than education spending, than homeland security spending, and than veterans benefits in the President's 2007 budget. And when they realize those are the priorities that we are making and those are the decisions we are making, and as more people understand this, they are going to become even more frustrated.

Mr. ROSS. Very good points, and I thank the gentlewoman for sharing that with us.

In this new budget the President has given us, domestic non-homeland discretionary spending is cut by $5.3 billion below the 2006 level and $16.8 billion below the level needed to maintain the purchasing power at the 2006 level.

Over 5 years this budget includes reductions or eliminations in 141 Federal programs, 91 of which are eliminated in their entirety, and 42 programs in the Department of Education alone. That is 42 programs within the Department of Education that are eliminated under the President's budget for fiscal year 2007.

The budget includes $77 billion in gross mandatory spending cuts over 5 years through a combination of service reductions and fee increases, as we talked about, increasing deductibles and copayments and premiums for our Medicare beneficiaries, and increasing prescription drug copayments and enrollment fees for America's veterans. For America's veterans.

I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that it is time for this Nation to keep its promises to our veterans, especially at a time when we are creating a new generation of veterans that are coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan, veterans that we should embrace and support and provide them the health care that they deserve and that they were promised when they signed up to serve and protect and defend our Nation.

I mentioned Medicare. The President's budget calls for cuts to Medicare to the tune of $36 billion over 5 years and $105 billion over 10 years. Meanwhile, Medicare part D, as we all know, is failing our seniors and has serious flaws in the system that must be ironed out. And Medicaid, in addition to last year's budget reconciliation package that just passed this body, budget cuts to Medicaid include $17 billion more over 5 years and $42 billion over 10 years. That is in the President's budget for fiscal year 2007.

In my home State of Arkansas, half of the children are on Medicaid. Eight out of 10 seniors in a nursing home are on Medicaid. One in five people in my home State of Arkansas, at some point during the past 12 months, have been on Medicaid. Medicare and Medicaid are the very programs we should be funding, not cutting.

And I submit to folks that if you think Medicaid is something that provides health insurance for folks on welfare and that it will never apply to you, think again. If you have a quarter million dollars in the bank the day you retire, and most people where I come

from don't, and if you go in the nursing home the day you retire, not 10, 20, or 30 years later, in less than 8 years you are on Medicaid, the health insurance program for the poor, the disabled, and the elderly. That is wrong.

It is wrong to cut taxes for those earning over $400,000 a year when you have to cut Medicaid, whereas eight out of 10 seniors in my State are on Medicaid if they are in a nursing home. It is wrong to cut health care for the poor, the disabled, and the elderly to pay for tax cuts for those earning over $400,000 a year.

And, look, back in times of surplus, when we had a surplus before 9/11, before Iraq, and before Afghanistan, I voted for the largest tax cut in over 20 years. We had a surplus. We really were giving people some of their money back. But we no longer have a surplus. We have had 9/11, we have had Iraq, and we have had Afghanistan. It may make for good politics, but it makes for horrible fiscal policy to borrow money from China to give those earning over $400,000 a year a tax cut and leave our children with the bill.

No Child Left Behind is funded at $15.4 billion below the authorized level. And you know how things work in this town. If it were a Democratic idea, I would understand the President cutting it; but this is his plan. He came to Washington on this idea of No Child Left Behind and reforming education. It is his plan. He told us what it would cost, and now he has even cut his own program by $15.4 billion below the authorized level.

Schoolteachers, parents, students, every weekend when I'm home, talk to me about how No Child Left Behind has failed them and failed their school. It is time for this Congress to properly and adequately fund education. Because I can tell you, as we continue to lose these muscle jobs to places like Mexico and China, it is the brain jobs, the jobs that are going to require our children to be competitive, that are the jobs of the future in this Nation, and we've got to better prepare our children for them.

I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. What a great challenge and what a great opportunity we have at this time in history in this country to move us forward to the next phase, to a higher calling, to a more significant meaning of the greatness of this country, to build on that foundation that we have. But before we can do that, I agree with my colleague, we have got to balance our books.

We cannot go on this way, running our government and running our Nation on borrowed money from these foreign governments. That has to stop, especially at a point when we are in the shape that we are in in the rest of the world. Double that with our trade deficit. Double that with our war on terror. Double that with our fight for petroleum and energy costs, which we are so dependent on foreign countries for as well.

Now, you mentioned a couple of points that I think the American people need to perhaps home in on. One you mentioned was the veterans. It is so important for us to point out that these budget cuts that the President is offering to offset tax cuts, which he is going to have to borrow most of the money for, are not offset by these budget cuts. But the one that hurts me so much is the veterans. You pointed it out.

Another issue that the administration is standing and blocking the door of is this: I was over in Iraq and Afghanistan, hugging the soldiers, looking at them facing death every day, sent in harm's way. If those soldiers get hurt, if they get a wound, shrapnel, a bullet and they get disability and then they have to resign from the Army and retire, do you know that they have to go and make a choice between whether they get their retirement pay or their disability? That is wrong. That is shameful.

Our veterans should not have to choose. We should pass this concurrent receipts bill. And I might add that we have both Democrats and Republicans, over 300 signatures. Why hasn't that bill passed?

Mr. ROSS. If the gentleman will yield. Let me make sure I understand this correctly. If you serve your country and earn a pension, but you also are injured while you are serving your country, then you have to choose one or the other? You cannot receive both?

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. That is what it is right now, yes.

Mr. ROSS. So the gentleman is telling me that over 300 Members of this body have signed onto legislation to fix that?

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Yes, both Democrats and Republicans.

Mr. ROSS. And it only takes 218 to pass a bill?

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Yes, sir.

Mr. ROSS. And yet the Republican leadership fails to bring the bill to the floor for a vote?

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Absolutely. And the President of this country has not lifted a finger to move it. If they did, it would move. At a time when we are depending so strongly on these veterans, on our military.

And let me just add, these are men and women who have braved this opportunity by volunteering. And these are men and women that we have to set a standard for in the future to get other young men and women to volunteer. Not only in terms of benefits such as this and putting their lives in harm's way, but our military is becoming so sophisticated, so technologically savvy. Our instruments, our equipment, our weapons systems require trained computer savvy, technically trained and equipped, skilled personnel that are in high commands elsewhere. So the least we have got to begin to pay close attention to is how we are treating our resources right here at home.

The other point that you mentioned that I want to bring attention to is the children. And my colleague just mentioned it about our children, those children that you talked with in school. And I know when you looked in the eyes of those children, I know you had to say, what a shame it is that this deficit, that this budget, that this bill is going to have to be paid for by them. Somebody has to pay this, and it is our children that have to pay it.

Ms. BEAN. It is so true. And essentially what they were saying and what we talked about is much like if I were to go get a credit card in my children's name and go out and spend money on things for myself and my husband but say to my kids, my daughters, when you are 18 and you get a job, you get to pay for what I have spent on the credit card. That is what we are doing with these future generations.

□ 2230

And kids understand the injustice of that. They expect better from us, absolutely. And they were wishing they were old enough to vote so they could do something about it.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. I will tell you one thing. I have just come back from my district and I have talked and had town hall meetings, and I have had opportunities to meet people at our churches, and people are in tune. They are tuned in to what is happening in this capital.

I am here to tell you they are very concerned about the port security situation. They are very concerned about this deficit. They are very concerned about the failure and inaction in Katrina. This is a whole region of this great country that has been devastated, and the response has been extremely wanting. And the American people are expecting us to respond to that.

Now, President Bush does not have to run again. He does not have to face the voters. But you do, Mr. ROSS, and I do, and you, Ms. BEAN. We have to do that. The Framers of the Constitution made it clear. That is one of the reasons why we in this House are, in my estimation, the most powerful body, because we have to go out every other year and reget our contract. That gives us an awesome power. That is why this Chamber is more directly in touch with the American people, because we have to go out there every other year.

Mr. ROSS. Every weekend.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Every year, but we are on the ballot every other year where they have to give their verdict.

And, finally, Mr. ROSS, you made the point concerning the deficit, the debt, the money we are borrowing from foreign countries. But I think it is important for the American people to understand that just the interest, just the interest that we are paying Japan and China and Germany and other countries in the Middle East, just the interest we are paying them is more than

what we are paying for our own homeland security. And that is a very unfortunate situation, but it drives home the point of the very dangerous position that we are in. Should any of these countries feel that they could get us, they can get us because of our lack of financial responsibility and fiscal security.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for joining us this evening, and I thank the gentlewoman from Illinois for joining us.

As members of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition, we are 37 strong. There are 37 of us in this town that are committed to trying to get our fiscal house in order, to once again have a nation that knows how to live within its means.

If you have questions or comments that you want us to answer next Tuesday night, you can e-mail them to us at bluedog@mail.house.gov.

At the beginning of our hour, I pointed out that the debt as of today is $8,251,355,000,000. That is $8,251,355,000,000. Every man, woman, and child in America, their share of the national debt is $27,674. And it continues to grow. It continues to grow. In fact, just in this last hour our Nation's debt has increased by $41.666 million. So, obviously, you see when we started an hour ago it was $8,251,355,000,000, and, unfortunately, it has increased to $8.293 trillion. Just another example of how our Nation must get its fiscal house in order.

I think it is very appropriate that we spend a little bit of time changing these numbers and letting people see that in the hour that we have stood here talking about our Nation's debt and deficit and getting our fiscal house in order, we have seen the Nation's debt go up by $41.666 million. The debt now in our Nation $8,251,293,000,000.

AMERICAN HERITAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for half the time remaining until midnight, approximately 42 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to come and chat with the House and to maybe set the record straight a little bit.

As a freshman Member of the House, we have 24, 25 freshmen on our side of the aisle, and over the past 13 months we have grown a little weary with what we see as the amount of misinformation and disinformation that we so oftentimes see brought by the other side, so we have developed what we call the Official Truth Squad. And so I am here to bring you some messages with some of my colleagues from the Official Truth Squad, which is an effort to try to embrace the American Dream, to embrace the American vision, and to present to the American people and our colleagues the story that Congress is working in a positive manner, that we are optimistic about the Nation's future in spite of some things that you hear from some of our friends on the other side of the aisle.

When I go home and I talk to constituents, I oftentimes hear them say, What is going on up there? Why all the negativity? Why all the pessimism? Why all the misinformation that we appear to hear all the time? And I commiserate with them. So this Official Truth Squad is an attempt to try to bring some light to truth, to some of the information that we believe the American people ought to have in contrast to some of the things that you have heard, even here tonight.

I am pleased to hear the Blue Dogs present a proposal or two. They talk about being fiscally conservative. They talk about being fiscal hawks. But my recollection is a little bit to the contrary of that. There is a wonderful quote that I like from Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a former United States Senator from New York, Democrat. And he was such a cogent individual. He was one of those individuals who worked for the truth regardless of where it led. And he had this wonderful quote. He said, ''Everyone is entitled to their own opinion but not their own facts.'' Everyone is entitled to their own opinion but not their own facts. And I really think that that kind of crystallizes what we have heard in this Chamber over the past few minutes.

You have heard the other side talk about deficit spending and how we ought not be spending into the deficit, and they are right. They are right. But when they had an opportunity to decrease spending by nearly $40 billion just a few short weeks ago, not a single one of them, not one of them, voted for it. A $39.8 billion decrease in spending and not a single one voted in favor of it.

You heard them talk about the alternative minimum tax and how it is an unjust tax and it needs to go away, and they are right. They are right. A colleague of mine, Congressman ENGLISH, has a bill, H.R. 1186, that would repeal the alternative minimum tax. Not a single Democrat on that bill, not a single cosponsor from that side of the aisle.

You hear them talk about the need to balance the budget and not spend so much money, and they are right. They are absolutely right. But when the proposals are put on the table to do away with programs that are wasteful or do away with programs that have significant abuse, where are they? Nowhere to be found.

So you are entitled to your own opinions, but you are not entitled to your own facts. And to crystallize that a little more because the disinformation that we heard over and over about budgetary cuts really does a disservice to the debate, does a disservice to the discussion, does a disservice to the American people, because when you look at the numbers, when you look at the truth, that is not what is going on.

And this evening you have heard the other side talk about budgetary cuts in the area of defense spending and spending on veterans. So, at home, if I were sitting there listening, I would say, well, my goodness, they must have addressed the amount of money that was going to the military or decreased the amount of money going to veterans.

Mr. Speaker, is that not what you would think? That is what I would think if I heard that. But here we have the Defense Department appropriation, budgetary authority from Congress from the year 2000 projected through 2007. In 2000 it was $287 billion. In 2001 it was $303 billion. That does not sound like a cut to me. In 2002, $328 billion. That is real money. That does not sound like a cut to me. In 2003, $365 billion.

Remember, down here in 2000 we were at $287 billion.

So these are the actual numbers. Fiscal year 2006, $411 billion of budgetary authority for the Department of Defense. Mr. Speaker, that is not a cut. That is responsible spending on the part of the United States Congress. And I am proud of the support that we have given to our military. And I am proud of the support that we continue to give to veterans.

You have heard this evening that veterans' budgets were cut. Here are the numbers, the actual numbers, from 1984 through 2005, and I want to draw your attention to what has happened in the last 10 years. In 1994 discretionary spending for veterans: $17.2 billion; 1995, $17.6 billion; 2005, $30.7 billion.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know what arithmetic they are using. I do not know where they went to school, but I do know that that is not a cut in anybody's book.

So when we get this kind of misinformation, this kind of disinformation, it does not contribute to the public debate. It is not honest. It is not truthful. So the Official Truth Squad is here to try to bring some truth to the situation.

This is veterans' medical care, and you heard it talked about this evening, how we have these incredible cuts in medical care for veterans. Mr. Speaker, here are the numbers: 1994, $15.6 billion; 2005, $29.9 billion. Mr. Speaker, that is not a cut. It is an appropriate, responsible move by Congress to take care of those who are protecting our freedoms.

So remember what Mr. Moynihan said, You are welcome to your own opinions but you are not welcome to your own facts.

So I would like to highlight this evening what is called the politics of division that seems to be practiced by so many here in Washington, and it is disheartening and it does a disservice to all of us. We are going to talk tonight in a positive way about America. We are going to talk in a positive way about our future. We are going to talk in a positive way about our Founding Fathers and about our history and about our heritage.

And just to identify the destruction of the politics of division that is so often practiced here, I have got a quote from Abraham Lincoln that I would like to share with you and it is kind of his philosophy on the social fabric. He said: ''You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift. You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong. You cannot help the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer. You cannot encourage the brotherhood of man by encouraging class hatred. You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich. You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than you earn. You cannot build character and courage by taking away man's initiative and independence. You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could do for themselves.''

Mr. Speaker, the politics of division has no place in the public arena. It does a disservice to our Nation. It does a disservice to the debate. Frankly, it is an embarrassment for the individuals that practice it.

So I encourage all Members of Congress, Republican, Democrat, all of my colleagues, to go about our debates and the discussions that we have and the challenges that we face in this Nation in a positive and honest and truthful manner. Then we can get to the right solutions.

As I mentioned, the Official Truth Squad comes almost every evening since we began the first of the year and talks about some positive aspects of America, talks about the importance of honesty and truthfulness in the debate. And tonight we are going to concentrate on our heritage, our American heritage, our wonderful American heritage.

□ 2245

I have been joined by a number of colleagues tonight, and they are going to share a story or two about maybe the Founding Fathers, some heritage that we have. I hope that what that will do is inspire some of our colleagues to remember the principles that brought our Nation about and remember, remember, the ideals that we are bound to uphold.

With that, I am honored to yield to my good friend LOUIE GOHMERT from the great State of Texas. He is a judge by profession and is a member of the freshman class as well, and has just a wealth of knowledge about American history and our heritage. Congressman GOHMERT, please share a few words with us.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my good friend from Georgia, the eminent physician, healing not only bodies in the past, but coming in and healing with the good elixir of truth. We appreciate that tonight, Mr. Speaker, and we appreciate the opportunity to be here.

You are talking about truth, and you have the poster that says the Official Truth Squad. Something that has been neglected for far too long is the truth about our history. You look back, there was a school I read not too long ago that was going to change their name away from George Washington, and I thought how tragic. They do not know history.

You go back, and above the Speaker's head up here, we see ''In God We Trust.'' George Washington, there was a time when he was in desperate need, and he prayed to that God in whom we trust.

Going back to 1755, a young man in his early twenties, Washington was headed up toward Fort Duquesne with about 100 American soldiers and about 1,300 British soldiers. As they proceeded up through Pennsylvania, they had to go through a wooded area, a large wooded area, and there was a ravine that they marched through. There were 85 soldiers on horseback, those were the officers, and that included George Washington.

As they made their way through, the Indians and French were lying in wait, this was the French and Indian War, and here this young man with boldness, gallantry, was on horseback, he led his soldiers. When the ambush started, it was horrible. Bodies were flying everywhere, bullets taking them out.

After about 2 hours, there were over 700 who had died. There were 84 of the 85 officers that had been shot off their horses. Only one remained. That was George Washington. Finally, after a couple of hours, the remaining British and Americans retreated from the woods, and when they got a good distance away, they reformed and retreated, I believe it was back to Maryland.

There was a letter that Washington wrote back to his mother and brother accounting what happened. There are other accounts that seem to all tell the same story. But Washington wrote that when he took off his hat and shook his head, bullet fragments fell out of his hair, but there wasn't a scratch on him. He said when he took off his vest, there were bullet holes in his investigate, but not a scratch on him. As he wrote to his mother and brother, he said, ''Truly God was with me,'' that God in whom we trust.

Fast forward 15 years later. Washington and a friend of his named Dr. Craig were going up through Pennsylvania. Washington was going to go by and show him this place where this horrible thing happened, where so many people died.

As they approached the woods, they were met by a group of Indians, and it turned out an old Indian chief was with them. They had a council fire, and during that time the chief disclosed that 15 years earlier, he too had been in that wood, and that he had heard Washington was coming to that area so he journeyed to meet him.

He said, ''I gave the order to my braves to shoot at you, because we could see you coming from a distance and I knew if we shot you, that your men would flee in fear. We could just tell the way you rode.'' He said, ''I personally shot at you around 17 times. I traveled this distance to meet the man that God would not let die.''

This was a man who was prepared for that. Through it all, through that horror of that event, you look back and see how that was worked together for good. He saw how the British reacted when they were under fire. He saw effective tactics. But, even more so, all those people saw him. They saw his gallantry, his bravery, his courage, his leadership. They knew this was a guy that they could trust, even in his early twenties.

So as we move toward the 1776 time, in the days when he would lead this country, a lot of people don't realize, but he was just the man for just such a time.

Mr. Speaker, I was talking to a group of youth from Grace Community School there in Tyler. Those kids know so much about our history. They know. But not every school teaches the history. I am proud to have a school like that in my city in Tyler where they know those kinds of things.

But after 1776, after the Declaration of Independence was signed, things looked so grim that the signers of the Declaration of Independence knew that if their troops failed, they were all dead people. Their families were dead, everything they owned would be taken, their lives, their fortunes, their sacred honor, everything would be gone. Yet they put their trust in George Washington, along with the God that we trust.

On December 27, 1776, when things looked so bleak and they knew that shortly, just a matter of a week or so, the enlistment of these men would be up, they knew if they headed home as they were intending to do, all was lost. So they passed a resolution as a Continental Congress that basically gave Washington all the power that they had, power to pay money, to make orders, to tell people to do whatever. Then, interestingly, the letter that accompanied that resolution that they sent to Washington included this line. It said, ''Happy it is for this country that the general of their forces could be safely entrusted with the most unlimited power, and neither personal security, liberty nor property be in the least degree endangered thereby.''

Mr. Speaker, I know my good friend from Georgia feels the same way. I trust so many people, but I don't know of a single person in this country right now I would trust with that kind of power. But that is what George Washington had.

One of my favorite paintings, as I was telling the group from Tyler earlier today, from Grace Community Church, is the painting of Washington coming back in to the Continental Congress saying here is all the power back. Nobody had ever done that before.

This was a guy that had won the war. He had won the day. He was entitled to be called czar, emperor, dictator, pharaoh, whatever he wanted to be called.

Yet he came back in and, just as the resolution and the cover letter said, they knew he could be trusted. He came back in and said here is all the power back. It is yours. I am going back to Mount Vernon, and he did.

Some people don't realize just how brave he was. At the battle of Princeton, January 3, 1777, a young soldier wrote, and it is a recorded part of our history, ''The sight of Washington set an example of courage such as I have never seen. I shall never forget what I felt when I saw him brave all the dangers of the field and his important life hanging as if it were by a single hair with a thousand deaths flying around him. Believe me, I thought not of myself.'' That is not a picture we see much these days.

Nathaniel Green wrote, ''He will be the deliverer of his own country.''

The Pennsylvania Journal wrote of Washington in 1777 as the revolution went on, ''If Washington had been born in the days of idolatry, he would be worshipped as a god. If there are spots on his character, they are like the spots on the sun, only discernible by the magnifying powers of a telescope.''

As David McCollough wrote, ''Without Washington's leadership and unrelenting persistence, the Revolution almost certainly would have failed.''

That is the kind of heritage we have. That is the kind of truthful, honest, courageous man that helped start this country and to whom we owe so much.

In conclusion, as our good friend and fellow Republican, we didn't know him personally, but God rest his soul, what a legacy, Abraham Lincoln, said in his second inaugural, ''With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the Nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.''

God has blessed America. Mr. Speaker, it is my prayer that will continue.

I thank my good friend from Georgia for yielding to allow me to address those comments.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Thank you so much, Congressman GOHMERT, for bringing us those words and the inspiring stories of American history. You have highlighted one of my absolute favorites with Washington withstanding the onslaught of the attack and then meeting the Indian chief years later and the Indian chief telling him that he understood and knew and it was clear that Washington had been touched by the hand of God. That just is so inspiring when we hear those words.

Washington himself talked a lot about our Nation. He talked a lot about what it took to preserve the Nation. He was concerned that the Nation might have difficulty in the future, and he felt that the only way to keep our Nation strong was on what he called teaching the science of government. He said a primary object should be the education of our youth in the science of government. By that he meant learning about government, learning about our republic.

He went on to say, ''In a republic, what species of knowledge can be equally important and what duty more pressing than communicating or teaching it to those who are to be the future guardians of the liberties of our country?''

That is why it is important that I think we come here this evening and talk about our heritage, talk about our history, talk about the wonder of America.

It has been said if you want to see the future of a nation and what it will be, look at what the children are being taught. So we hope by some small measure to assist in the education of all of us and to remind us about the wonder and the beauty and the awe of our Nation and its heritage.

I am joined now by Congresswoman JEAN SCHMIDT. Congresswoman SCHMIDT is a fellow freshman and an active participant in the Official Truth Squad. We are so pleased to have her join us this evening and bring some comments about our heritage and about the principles of our wonderful Republic.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Thank you so much.

Tonight, I really want to talk about what I believe freedom is all about. As we sit in this beautiful Chamber, we must be mindful that we are the luckiest people in the world to live in the greatest Nation in the universe.

So I stand here tonight on the floor of this great Chamber like thousands of Representatives before me as living proof that democracy works. I share the same love for my country as my 37 predecessors from the Ohio Second Congressional District. I am the 38th Member of Congress from my district and the first woman. And I may be the first to wear high heels, but I am not alone in my support of this great country and for all that it stands.

Our country was founded on the principles of freedom: freedom to pursue life, liberty and happiness; freedom to bear arms; freedom to voice your opinion in the market square, or in this very Chamber; freedom to print what you decide to be printed is fit to be printed.

Freedom is a wonderful thing. It is an infectious thing. Millions of the oppressed around the world yearn for this very thing called freedom: free from oppression, free from terror, free from tyranny. Freedom is a powerful drink. It spills 1 million people into the streets of downtown Beirut demanding to be free from the rule of Syria and its dictator. It causes men to take up arms against their oppressors on the streets of Baghdad and Kabul. Just the dream of freedom caused men and women to risk their lives by organizing opposition in places like Beijing and Havana.

□ 2300

Far too often we Americans take our freedom for granted. We forget about the heroes before us that gave us this right, this privilege, this ability.

Thomas Jefferson said, ''The price of freedom is eternal vigilance.'' He knew, even as freedom was being brought to our new country, that our very freedom would be constantly at risk.

''Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must, like men, undergo the fatigue of supporting it,'' said Thomas Paine. As we stand here tonight, the Official Truth Squad, surrounded by the glorious testament of our democracy and freedom, we must be mindful, mindful that democracy is on the march, mindful that 50 million people are newly free thanks to our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Let me repeat that. Fifty million people have the same opportunity that we have to taste and drink freedom, but most importantly, mindful that much more needs to be done. Tonight, the oppressed are dying at the hands of evil in far too many places around the world, in the camps of Darfur, in the jails of Havana, in political prisons in Asia.

Dwight David Eisenhower once said, ''History does not long entrust the care of freedom to the weak or the timid. We did not chose to lead this fight, history has chosen us. Only we have the power needed to spread freedom. We indeed have been given the responsibility.''

Our forefathers knew that when they were participating in this grand experiment so many years ago. We have been handed that torch. History will judge not what we say, but what we do.

I am honored to be here tonight to speak about this very important principle, because if we do not continue to lead this march, someone will come and take that torch from us.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak my mind in the greatest Nation, in the greatest chamber.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Thank you, Congresswoman SCHMIDT. It is just a pleasure to hear your words and the very inspiring words.

You talk about freedom being infectious. It truly is. But you also talked about freedom not being free, and that the price of freedom, the price of liberty, is eternal vigilance.

I am proud to stand with you this evening and continue, continue to try to assist others to appreciate the fact that that eternal vigilance is necessary now, as never before frankly.

So we appreciate so much your words this evening and your participation.

Mr. Speaker, I am also joined this evening by another fellow freshman, Congresswoman FOXX from North Carolina, just a great, great member of the freshman class, an individual whom I respect highly, who spent a number of years in the education community, understands what it means to impart the importance of our heritage, of American principles and fundamentals.

I welcome you this evening and look forward to your words.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Congressman PRICE. It is a real pleasure to be here tonight. I am grateful for the words of our colleagues earlier, Congressman GOHMERT and Congresswoman SCHMIDT. I appreciate what they have said, and you. I am really proud to be a part of the Official Truth Squad.

And while I did not hear all of the comments that were made just prior to our beginning our session here, I did want to respond to one thing that you said. That is that we all are entitled to our opinions, but the facts are the facts. And it is important that we get the facts straight here. And I think many of the things that we are responding to are things that have been purported to be facts which are not facts at all. And I think it is important that we set the record straight.

I also noted tonight in the presentation by the Blue Dog Coalition that they are very concerned about the deficit, but they want to do away with the tax cuts and spend more money.

The problem with the deficit is that we are spending too much, and we need to cut back on the spending. And that is a fundamental issue. I think it is pretty much a fundamental law of economics, which I do not think can be done away with simply by talking about it. I think that we are going to have to come to grips with it.

As our colleague from Ohio was saying, it is such a great honor to be able to serve in this House. And I want to say that I grew up in a house in western North Carolina with no electricity, no running water, about as poor as anybody you will ever meet. And it is a true miracle that someone with my background could come here and represent the 5th District of North Carolina. And I am in awe every day of the fact that I have this great opportunity and am grateful for it.

And I think about the way this country was formed, and I think it is important that we talk a little bit about that.

I am troubled that so few people even know the basis of our government. People do not know the Constitution. They do not know the basis of our laws. They do not know the history of this country. And I want to talk some more about that, but I know we are not going to have as much time tonight as we had thought we would originally, so I am going to make a recommendation of a couple of books which I think are wonderful books to read.

Anything by David McCullough is great. I know that he was being quoted earlier. I had a chance to read 1776 recently, which is the story of the first year of the revolution, and it is wonderful.

And tonight I was reviewing the Founding Brothers by Joseph Ellis. And he talks a lot about the things that came together to make the United States possible, to make the Revolution possible. And I do want to quote one piece from Ellis, or maybe a couple of pieces from the book Founding Brothers. I do highly recommend it as something so easy to read.

But he said, No one had ever established a republican government on the scale of the United States. And the overwhelming judgment of the most respected authorities was that it could not be done.

Well, here we are over 200 years later proving that it can be done. But it is our job as representatives of the people to make sure that this wonderful experiment in liberty is sustained. And as, again, our colleague from Ohio said, it is a great honor to serve here.

And some people may not know this, and I think it is important to know, that the only way anybody can serve in the United States House of Representatives is to be elected. People can be appointed to every other office in the United States, but they cannot be appointed to serve in the United States House of Representatives. One must be elected, and we are elected every 2 years.

And I hope in this course of time, as we talk about the principles of this country, that we will do something that I do not think people do often enough, that is read the Constitution. I think it is helpful for us to reflect on the Constitution. And as we talk about the Truth Squad, I want to read two pieces from the Constitution tonight, and then turn it back to you, Mr. PRICE, to conclude our time here.

But I think so often even the Constitution itself is not quoted accurately. And I think that part of our job should be to remind the people what the Constitution says, and how it is the basis for everything else that we do.

Now I am going to read just the Preamble to the Constitution. And by the way, I borrowed this from the Parliamentarian. And I find it interesting that we tie back to Mr. Jefferson and the Founding Fathers. This is, in one manual, the Constitution, Jefferson's Manual, and the Rules of the House of Representatives.

As I understand it, in almost every elected body in the United States, they go back to Jefferson's Manual when there is any dispute on whether the rules apply or not. And so I think the fact that we do that is a great tribute to again our Founding Fathers and particularly Mr. Jefferson and the care he took with these things.

Let me read the Preamble:

''We the people of the United States in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.''

I think that the key words for me here are ''provide for the common defense.'' That is the role of the Federal government. That is the number one role of the Federal government. We do want to promote the general welfare, but that is not the primary goal of the Federal government. It is to provide for the common defense.

Promoting the general welfare can be done in lots of different ways. And I have heard some people on the other side say we should change those words around and say, provide for the general welfare and promote the common defense. I think that that is one of the problems that we are having in our country these days.

And the other piece of the Constitution that I want to read tonight that I think is a part of tying back into our being the Official Truth Squad is amendment 1 to the Constitution:

''Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press or the right of the people peaceably to assembly and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.''

I find that in most days, when people want to quote the first amendment, they often quote that first phrase and leave out the second phrase. And I think that that is so important; I think it is a part of tying back again to the Truth Squad.

Many times you hear people quote, ''Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion,'' that says we should take the words ''In God We Trust'' off of our money, the words ''Under God'' out of our pledge. But what is so important is the second half of that sentence, ''or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.''

Unfortunately, those who would take away our freedoms are the ones who so often leave off the second half of that phrase. And it is extremely important that we not distort the words of the Constitution. And it is important I think that our Truth Squad remind people of those words so often, and I think we need to do that.

I hope we will in our sharing things with the people talk more about the Constitution and how the truth of the Constitution itself has been distorted by some of our colleagues.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Thank you so much, Congresswoman FOXX. I tell you, it does my heart good to listen to your comments about the Constitution, about our Founding Fathers, and the kinds of things that they held dear.

I want to just highlight again that Preamble, the first line of the Preamble, ''We the people of the United States in order to form a more perfect union.''

The Founding Fathers used these words to remind us that preserving the Constitution that they created is as difficult, maybe even more so, as writing and ratifying it in the late 1780s.

The words remind us that it is we the people that educate ourselves on the issues, become involved in choosing our leaders, and committed, those leaders, make sure the leaders are committed to governing by constitutional principles. And again the issues that we

face today are equally as dangerous as those that the Founders faced.

I wanted to highlight very briefly another document that is one of our founding documents, that is the Declaration of Independence. One of the early paragraphs in the Declaration I think crystallizes something that is incredibly important, we all know those words, but I think it is important to repeat them:

''We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness,'' and ''that to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.''

Incredible, powerful words.

But the message here that I always harken back to is that the power that government has is derived from the people, because the people derive their power from the Almighty, and the power that people have they then cede to government. It is not the other way around.

□ 2315

We do not believe that government has power and gives it to people. We believe that people, because of the inherent power from the Almighty and because of the inherent quality of life, have that power and cede it to the Federal Government and to the State government to bring about the kind of things that Congresswoman FOXX talked about.

The founding of our Nation truly is tied to a reliance on a higher authority and everyone at the time knew that. We have gotten a bit away from that, and I think one of the things that is incumbent upon us as leaders is to make certain that we remember that and that we remind people of that and that we talk about it freely and openly make certain that everyone understands and appreciates the importance of the Almighty.

One of the items that I will close with that moves me so every time I read it is Lincoln's Proclamation for a National Day of Fasting and Prayer. There are a couple of portions of that that I find incredibly eloquent. I quote from the proclamation:

''It is the duty of nations, as well as of men, to own their dependence on the overruling power of God, and to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon, and to recognize the sublime truth announced in the holy scriptures and proven by all history that those nations only are blessed whose God is Lord.

''We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which has preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us. And we have vainly imagined in the deceitfulness of our hearts that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own.

''Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us. It behooves us then to humble ourselves before the offended power and to confess our national sins and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.''

Mr. Speaker, we live in a wonderful and a wondrous Nation, a Nation that has blessed more individuals on the face of the Earth than any nation in the history of mankind. It is our privilege to serve in the United States House of Representatives and to bring this message of hope and optimism and positive speaking to the American people.

HONORING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT) is recognized for the time remaining before midnight, approximately 42 minutes.

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, as chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, it is a great pleasure for me to lead this annual Special Order of the Congressional Black Caucus in honor of Black History Month. The theme for this year's African American history month is ''Celebrating community, a tribute to black fraternal, social and civic institutions.'' And it is dedicated to exploring the impact that these civic organizations have had on the evolution of African American life and history.

A word or two about the history of Black History Month. The celebration of Black History Month started in 1926 as the vision of Dr. Carter G. Woodson who, out of frustration from not finding references to black history in any of our history books, launched an initiative to highlight the many outstanding contributions of African American people throughout the history of the United States. This year we are celebrating the 80th anniversary of Black History Month.

Initially, black history started off as a 1-week event during the second week of February because it marked the birthdays of two men who greatly influenced black people in this country, Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. However, as time passed, it was clear that one week was not sufficient to highlight the achievements of black people and eventually the celebration became known as Black History Month.

Mr. Speaker, this year during Black History Month, we are celebrating the institutions, fraternal, social, civic and religious, that have been so vital in our progress, the many national organizations and the community and grassroots organizations around the country that have been and continue to be the backbone of the African American community. Often times these organizations have stepped in when the Federal, State, and local governments have failed to provide the necessary services, and for that they are to be commended, most recently in the aftermath of the Hurricane Katrina disaster.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I have often said that Black History Month is about the future, a time to assess and acknowledge that there is no place for complacency and no time to rest. For that reason, the Congressional Black Caucus continues to focus its agenda and our efforts on closing and eliminating disparities that continue to exist in every aspect of our lives.

It is now my pleasure to recognize some of my colleagues to help us celebrate this Black History Month celebration. I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, let me just commend Mr. WATT as chairman of our Congressional Black Caucus for providing leadership in this important celebration and observance of the great and extraordinary contributions that African Americans have made and continue to make in America and throughout the world.

No race of people has come through the ordeal and the circumstances of slavery, of Jim Crowism, of racism, of de facto segregation, and in spite of all these obstacles made extraordinary contributions in every field of endeavor: business, medicine, the arts, sports, politics, business.

Today we are here to highlight especially the role of fraternities in our community. Nowhere is that more particular than within the African American community, for the African American fraternities were brought about not as a result or a need for social edification or for frivolity; but those fraternities that came about in the African American community came about because of great need at a time of extraordinary struggle and circumstance within the African American community.

Such was the case with all of our fraternities and certainly with the fraternity that I am a member of, which is the first fraternity and the oldest fraternity, the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity. I would like to spend just a few moments talking about this fraternity because this was the first fraternity, and its development exemplifies all fraternities and the importance of their contribution.

In 1905 in Ithica, New York, a group of African American students at Cornell were so devastated with the racism and prejudice at that institution that they found themselves in, that half of the six refused to come back in 1906;

but three did and others joined them in 1906 and they came together to form the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity. Seven African American men, seven African American men that we affectionately refer to as the 7 Jewels: Brother Callis and Brother Chapman and Brother Jones and Brother Kelley, Brother Murray, Brother Ogle, and Brother Tandy. Seven.

There is something about that number seven. That is God's number, the number of completeness. As we know, we had to march around the walls of Jericho 70 times. The Bible says you must forgive your neighbor 70 times 7. There are 7 days in the week; 7 holes in our head: nose, two eyes, two nostrils, two ears. Seven is completeness. And that is why I believe that these fraternities were God's gift at an important time that they came on the scene. Before the civil rights movement, before the others, these men formed the organization and came to produce some of the outstanding leaders in all fields. Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. DuBois and Thurgood Marshall were all members, as were Duke Ellington and Adam Clayton Powell and Martin Luther King, Jr. Scores and hundreds of leaders in every sphere and activity of life were there.

So as we celebrate Black History Month, let us celebrate it where it means the most. And if these members of our fraternity were here, they would say to us in their words, those very precious words that, well, my brothers and my sisters, you see, life for me ain't been no crystal stair. It's had tacks in it and splinters, boards torn up. No carpet on the floor, bare. But all the while, I's been a climbing on and reaching landings and turning corners, and sometimes going in the dark where there ain't been no light. So, boy, don't you stop. Don't you sit down on the steps because you finds it's kinda hard. Don't you fall now while I still going. I still climbing on, honey. And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

Life was no crystal stair for those who started our African American Greek fraternities and sororities. But because they had that vision to keep going, they made an impact on the lives of African Americans, on the lives of the people of the United States of America, and on the lives of the people of the world. On this Black History Month we are say thank you to our Greek letter organizations, the African American fraternities and sororities who have helped us so greatly.

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BOBBY SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from North Carolina for organizing this Special Order so that we can give appropriate recognition to black fraternal, social, and civic organizations.

African Americans have been in the forefront of significant change in American society, and many of those leading the fight were members of very distinguished organizations with the support of those organizations.

I share membership in Alpha Phi Alpha with my distinguished colleague from Georgia and six other Members of Congress. As my colleague mentioned, Alpha Phi Alpha was the first collegiate black fraternity. I am proud to be a long-time and life member of Alpha Phi Alpha. And since its founding in 1906, Alpha Phi Alpha and all black fraternities and sororities have supplied a voice and vision to the struggle of African Americans and people of color around the world.

For example, one of the long-standing programs sponsored by Alpha Phi Alpha is ''Go to high school, go to college.'' Another is ''A voteless people is a hopeless people.'' They encouraged education and voter registration. More recent projects for Alpha Phi Alpha is Project Alpha, promoting responsibility among African American males in all aspects of health care.

Before the formation of college fraternities, the very first African American fraternity, Sigma Pi Phi, was formed in 1904 in Philadelphia by a group of physicians and dentists. This organization was created for college and professionally educated African Americans including college presidents, Congressmen, cabinet members, and nationally prominent figures such as W.E.B. DuBois and Martin Luther King, Jr. I am also a member of Sigma Pi Phi.

□ 2330

There are countless other organizations that have existed for the purpose of improving economic status, spiritual well-being, and civil rights of all Americans. The Free African Society was founded in 1787; the National Negro Business League was founded in 1900; the National Afro-American Council in 1903; the Niagara Movement, the forerunner of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP, was well under way by 1905.

The members of these and many other organizations have addressed the most serious moral challenges facing Americans today. The contribution of African American social and civic organizations has included everything from scholarships to social reconstruction. The members of these organizations have confronted the handicaps, the restrictions, the persecutions, the prejudices, the inequities in the opportunities faced by people of color.

Thanks to the relentless efforts of African American member organizations, there are more people of color today in corporate, Federal, State and municipal offices than ever before. The work of members of Alpha Phi Alpha, Sigma Pi Phi and other organizations has had a huge impact over the last 100 years, but our work is far from over.

In the 21st century, we will continue to work for political, economic and social change. It is imperative that all fraternal, social and civic organizations in the African American community continue to provide service to African Americans as a whole and the United States in general.

Carter G. Woodson, known as the father of Black History, was born in Buckingham County, Virginia, to former slaves. He reminded us of the importance of commemorating African American contributions when he stated, ''If a race has no history, if it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated.''

As we celebrate African American History Month, let us recognize the achievement and traditions of African Americans and let us never forget the members of black fraternal, social, and civic organizations that pursued unchartered paths and paid for the freedom that we hold so dear.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from North Carolina for organizing this Special Order so that we can recognize these organizations appropriately.

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia for his eloquence, and let me just add a few comments while we are waiting for one other Member to come and join in this Special Order.

I actually tend to agree with one of our recent actors who started to question the whole concept of Black History Month, not because it is not important to all of us, but because the accomplishments of African Americans are so profound and so diffuse in every aspect of our lives that it is quite obvious that the same thing that happened with Black History Week, that we found that there just was not sufficient to do justice to those accomplishments, is now happening to Black History Month. A month is not sufficient to do justice to a discussion and an emphasis and a highlighting of those accomplishments.

So, as we continue to celebrate Black History Month, we should continue to recognize that Black History Week, which became Black History Month, in and of itself is a recognition that we simply have not done what we should be doing throughout our history to acknowledge the important contributions that African Americans have made.

We could spend hours here on the floor, had we the time, on any of the subjects which are the title of this Black History Month: black fraternities, African American sororities, social organizations, civic institutions, religious institutions. We could spend days talking about the sororities, Alpha Kappa Alpha, which my wife happens to be a member of; Delta Sigma Theta; the Zetas. The whole list of sororities, they go on and on. Most of them sprang out of a need for service, a recognition that there were not social responsibilities, but civic and important unfinished business that needed to be attended to. Organizations of various kinds, headed by powerful women in our country, the Council of

Negro Women, I mean we could go on and on and on with the list of organizations, social and civic organizations, that have grown out of a need to emphasize and uplift the community so that perhaps what was previously referred to in the prior Special Order here, about the Preamble to the Constitution, really would be made a living, viable document, equality and justice for all. Many of these organizations sprang out of that.

We could spend a week, a month or two talking about the churches, the religious denominations, the AMEs, the AME, African Methodist Episcopal Zion denomination or the African Methodist Episcopal denomination, which formed because African American people either were not welcome in the white religious institutions or because those religious institutions were not providing the kind of freedom of expression or the level of equality. Even though they were talking the talk, they were not necessarily walking the walk throughout our history.

So all of these things are extremely important. Perhaps we do not do justice to any of them in the short period of time we have this evening, but we should never forget that all of them are extremely important.

Again, Black History Month is not only about reflecting on the past, it is about the challenges, the lack of equality that exists today that we must continue to confront going into the future. We should never lose sight of that.

With that, I see that my colleague from the great State of Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) has arrived, and so I will now yield to her for her expressions in this Black History Month Special Order.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus for being enormously astute to ensure that there is a marker in the history pages of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD that Members of Congress, and particularly Members of the Congressional Black Caucus, rose to ensure that we commemorated African American History.

There has been some controversy on this month over the years. Most recently, one of our more respected actors made mention of a very valuable point, that black history, African American history need not be commemorated in one month. In fact, it is American history, and I frankly agree with those words. I think it is important, however, that we take the opportunity to let others know that we have not forgotten.

In the course of reading and reviewing what remarks I might make this evening, I came across a very interesting book entitled, ''The African American Bookshelf,'' that categorizes or catalogs, ''50 Must Reads From Before the Civil War Through Today,'' and I wish to share briefly some of the words and stories in this book, but the first I would go to is of more recent vintage, which talks about COINTELPRO.

One would argue, how does that relate to the issue of African American history. The COINTEL was the counter-intelligence program, and it was the program utilized in the early parts of the civil rights movement, moving into the black student movement, the Black Panthers, and frankly, it was an effort focused on black activists who were perceived to be agitators, a small piece of African American history that was rarely focused on. In fact, Martin Luther King was the target of COINTELPRO, and rather than understand the movement and understand the voice of Dr. King, who spoke eloquently about nonviolence, this program was a program that ignored the value of the movement and viewed them as threats to America's security and democracy.

The COINTELPRO's treatment of Martin Luther King described, and detailed in the COINTELPRO paper, is the most egregious example in what was attempted in his case. It belongs in television fiction, where shadowy government forces are at work, that no one can discover ironically a conspiracy theory had been used all too often in such drama. In essence, Dr. King, in this instance, was considered an enemy of the State.

The issue of lynching as well plays a very large part in our history. I know that today we pay tribute to many of our civic organizations, sororities and fraternities and our organizations that captured the sentiment of African Americans, such as the NAACP, the Urban League, the many fraternities and sororities, 100 Black Men, the National Council of Negro Women, the Congress of Black Political Women, many organizations that have created a pathway for African Americans to walk across very troubled waters.

But we must also weed in and out of those very great historical perspectives of those organizations to know that they, too, lived alongside challenges like lynchings in the early 1900's, and in this book, it recounts the stories of what lynching actually meant. In fact, we have heard some people call it an act of terror. Why? Because it was an effort to terrorize southern blacks on plantations and in the rural south right after Reconstruction in order to stop the progress that had been made through reconstruction and in moving into the 20th century.

So, as we reflect on black history, it is important to look forward and then, of course, to travel down memory lane.

What I most want to say about our civic and civil and fraternities and sororities as organizations, I pay tribute to you because you are primarily the infrastructure of our community. When there is a need, these organizations are called upon. When there is a fight for social justice, these organizations are called upon. When, for example, we engage in a legislative strategy, such as the reauthorization of the Voter Rights Act, we call upon these civil and civil rights organizations to help formulate the strategy and begin to ignite the excitement among the community to draw them together.

□ 2345

Most recently, we have discovered a new phenomenon called the State of the Black Union, which was established by Tavis Smiley and is in its 7th year, another vehicle to capture the intellectual thought and the practices of not only the civil and civic organizations but also individual philosophers, academicians, physicians, and emerging leaders. I am very grateful that this last one was held in Houston, Texas.

I cite this because I believe more and more we must confront the theory that black history should not be relegated to one month; but, frankly, we should be engaged in the thinkings of our history all throughout the year and continue to press the envelope, if you will, that more and more curricula should be including black history.

And let me just say to you that what I have discovered over the recent years is that black history in our schools' curricula around America, African American history, is not moving up; it is being dumbed down. Some would say it is because of the cost cuts that many school districts have to make, that they are cutting music and cutting the arts and many times cutting athletics and that the teaching of black history has taken a back seat. We must be more than sensitized to the fact that there are young people today, no matter what their race or color, creed or religion, that are being educated in America's schools with no iota, no understanding whatsoever of this rich history of African Americans, not even the sense of our early slave history and how we first came to this country in bondage.

Many of the freedom fighters at that time, from Harriet Tubman to Nat Turner to Sojourner Truth, and the list of abolitionists, including Frederick Douglass, who established the framework of freedom, our children today are not learning about that particular history. That is much cause for pause. So I hope as Members of Congress rise to the floor of the House to commemorate the African American history here in America that we will also have a consciousness, as we have in the past, and that our voices will be heard that it is unacceptable that the teaching of black history is not on the upsurge, on the rise, but yet on the decline.

One of the issues, of course, that we hope will come out of the fact that we are commemorating African American history, is that respectively we will all be challenging our school districts and making an assessment of what children are learning because of the value, the importance, if you will, of learning that kind of history.

The idea of freedom also is an early idea, and I want to cite again some of the early freedom fighters, like Harriet Tubman. I have a little silver pin that is an F that stands for freedom. Harriet

Tubman was the conductor on the Underground Railroad. She has an enormously important story, and she is an exciting personality because she helped to free any number of escaped slaves. In fact, she escaped in the summer of 1849.

This was a time when America sold its soul for a cross of gold, even though William Jennings Bryan didn't make the expression famous for half a century later. True, there were white conductors of the Underground Railroad who gave their lives to see to it that black people were able to trickle out of slavery, but Harriet Tubman took this to heart. She became the general, General Tubman, who guided frightened slaves into freedom in the North. She did this continuously over and over and over again.

I have read previously that when a slave was too frightened to go forward, she threatened that slave with his or her life: you die here or you go to freedom. So she was a strong personality that really captured the spirit of African Americans. Through all kinds of trials and tribulations, we have overcome the obstacles that have faced us.

We now come upon the 21st century, and we have two important struggles right before us. One of those struggles includes the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and I think it is imperative that we energize the populace, all walks of life, to begin to raise their voices in support of the work of this Congress, the good work of this Congress to move forward and reauthorize the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Then we have, in conclusion, one of the most challenging mountains to climb: to be able to heal and to bring back to normalcy the gulf region. That will be a smear on the pages of America's history in how that community and those communities were treated and how they are being treated. So it will go down in the pages of black history, because as we know, the faces of the individuals being shown during Hurricane Katrina were African Americans.

We have challenges to go forward; but as we go forward in our challenges to make their lives better, to pass omnibus bill H.R. 4197, work done by the Congressional Black Caucus to make the Katrina survivors whole with housing, education, the environment, compensation and the right to return, we must do it in the backdrop of the history of a people who never turned away from suffering, never turned away from trials and tribulations, and never turned away from challenges.

We have a history to stand upon. It is a history that America should cherish, and we should continue to honor it at the same time that we teach our children. And, frankly, I believe that if we are to embrace the history of all people, we will make America a better place to live.

With that, I yield back to the distinguished gentleman.

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, Representative DAVID SCOTT from Georgia, Representative BOBBY SCOTT from Virginia, and Representative JACKSON-Lee from Texas. There were a number of our Members who would have loved to have participated in this Special Order this evening. Unfortunately, it turned out that we were the fourth Special Order of the evening, and it is approaching midnight so they are not here.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to honor the memory of all of our great heroes and sheroes that have gone before, our organizations, our civic fraternities, sororities, churches who have contributed so much to our progress, but also recognize that there are many miles to go before we sleep.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, our nation's history is interwoven with the accomplishments and contributions of African Americans—from Hank Aaron, Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong to George Washington Carver, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Maya Angelou—and because of their efforts our nation is stronger. The African American community recently lost two of its leaders and as we mourn the passing of Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King, we should be reminded that we must continue the civil rights work they devoted their lives to. What better way to celebrate the legacy of these leaders and all of those who have worked to ensure racial justice than by reauthorizing the expiring portions of the Voting Rights Act. The struggle for civil rights continues today and we must make certain that all citizens not only have the right to vote, but that their ability to vote is protected.

Although the Voting Rights Act has been essential in protecting the voting rights of minorities, additional safeguards are necessary to ensure that every citizen is included in the election process. I remain committed to furthering the causes of the Civil Rights Movement and will work hard in the coming months to guarantee the right to vote for every citizen. I hope that this month we will celebrate the lives of all of the strong and determined men and women who have worked to ensure equality for all Americans.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, celebrating Black History Month is an opportunity to reflect upon the innumerable contributions that Blacks have made to the advancement of American society and culture. People of color whether from the homeland in Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America or North America, they have been more than instrumental in shaping the social complexion of America and humanity.

It was Carter G. Woodson in 1926 who initiated "Negro History Week" in the United States to promote "a better understanding of the contributions" of Blacks to human civilization. This noble effort 80 years ago has been successful in informing people all over the world about the numerous contributions of Blacks. It has also aided in reshaping and negating distortions that historians have in many cases intentionally promulgated. Black History Month continues to amplify accurate depictions and narratives about a myriad of global endeavors. These undertakings have drastically improved the daily lives and landscape of the world.

Individuals such as Pianky, the military genius and Black King of Nubia who conquered Egypt around 700 BC; Antar, the African-Arabian poet and story teller; and Abram Hannibal, the soldier and commander of 18th century Russia to Chaka who led South Africa until his assassination in 1828 all exemplify and indicate historic contributions to society. "Their presence and deeds underscore an essential reality: Blacks have been part and parcel of world history, from exploration and revolution to scientific and other achievements."

Other notable achievements encompass pioneering the making of iron, valuable works of art, carved stones into historic ornaments and statues, the conversion of oil-bearing plants for both medical and dietary purposes. Early contributions also include developing cereal and transformation of a wild plant into cotton which led to the art of weaving. Additionally, people of color are among the earliest farmers who produced wheat, groundnuts, yams and watermelon.

Other accomplishments within the past 150 years, include performing the first open heart surgery, produced scientific evidence of cell life and metabolism, pioneered in blood plasma preservation, invented the inhalers used by rescue workers at disaster sites, created communication devices that allowed conversations between fast moving trains, invented machines that allowed for the mass production of shoes and improved the efficiency of lubricating systems used in large industry today.

This impressive list is not exhaustive of all the global contributions of people of color. However, it illustrates the vital contributions to America and the world. As we think about democracy in this country, people of color have been at the fore in pursuing "A more perfect Union." Consider Rosa Parks who refused to give up her seat on a bus, which sparked the Montgomery County Bus Boycott and the Civil Rights Movement. Also, it would be hard to think about American Democracy without Martin Luther King Jr. and his leadership and dream to bring the ideals of democracy into reality for all Americans.

In his 1970 essay, "What America Would Be Like Without Blacks," Ralph Ellison argued that "Whatever else the true American is, he is somehow Black."

[CaribEditorial, Feb. 7, 2006]

IMPORTANT ROLE OF PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT

The name Dr. G. Carter Woodson means little to most Americans, West Indians or Africans. Indeed, only a minority of people in Virginia, Woodson's birthplace, ever heard of the former coal miner who graduated high school at the age of 21 years, but later earned a Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1912, around the time when thousands of West Indians, especially Jamaicans and Barbadians, were immigrating to Panama to help build the world-famous canal.

But, as more and more people, Black and White in the United States, the Caribbean, Canada, Africa, and elsewhere observe Black History Month, they are learning that it was Dr. Woodson who initiated "Negro History Week" in 1926 in the U.S. to promote "a better understanding of the contributions" of Blacks to human civilization.

Woodson's fledgling effort 80 years ago has since become an international phenomenon, one in which millions of people, Black and White, observe Black History Month. Caribbean and African nations may have joined the observances a bit late, but we believe in the old adage better late than never.

For, in the process, Black History Month is helping to shape our thinking and negate the

destructive effects of historiographies, which either deliberately distorted or ignored the positive roles of Black people in almost every aspect of life on the planet.

Clearly, time has proven Dr. Woodson right.

Undoubtedly, Black History Month is bringing to the fore important and accurate narratives about the multifaceted chapters Blacks have written in advancing global human development.

From their ancestral homeland in Africa to North America, the Caribbean, Latin America, and other parts of the world, people of color have been instrumental in improving the daily lives of human beings everywhere.

Names that run the gamut from Pianky, the military genius and Black King of Nubia who conquered Egypt around 700 BC; Antar, the African-Arabian poet and storyteller; and Abram Hannibal, the soldier and commander of 18th century Russia to Chaka who led and forged the proud Black nation of South Africa until his assassination in 1828 dot the pages of history.

Their presence and deeds underscore an essential reality: Blacks have been part and parcel of world history and were present from exploration and revolution to scientific and other achievements.

Blacks from Africa pioneered in the making of iron, fashioned precious stones into historic ornaments, statues, and valuable works of art; and used oil-bearing plants for both medicinal and dietary purposes. The developed cereal and transformed a wild plant into cotton, thus opening up the world to the art of weaving. They were among the world's first farmers, producing wheat, groundnuts, yams, watermelons, and possibly coffee.

In the past 150 years, Black inventors and pioneers created the key devices that perfected the overall lubrication systems used in large industry today; invented the lasting machine that revolutionized the mass production of shoes; created the means to communicate between fast-moving trains; came up with the inhalators used by rescuers at sites where disasters have occurred; performed the first successful open-heart surgery; produced scientific evidence of cell life and metabolism; and pioneered in blood plasma preservation, more commonly called blood banks.

These are but a handful of the exploits of Blacks, deeds which were previously shunted aside but have since been recognized through the study of history by and of Blacks. Along the way that historical record gained prominence in books, scholarly papers and presentations in classrooms, libraries, newspaper and magazine columns, and in special radio and television programs.

If knowledge is power, then it stands to reason that we in the United States, the Caribbean and Africa have much to gain from the information and the results of academic and scientific inquiry, which Black History Month and other observances inspire.

People everywhere owe Woodson a debt a gratitude for his pioneering action that effectively promoted the institutionalization of Black History as an academic discipline and as a vehicle that has made us all aware of the truth of the valuable contributions of Blacks to international development.

He was driven to act because he complained in the 1930s that while white historians used textbooks to persuade students and others that Blacks couldn't ''subject passion to reason,'' they failed to teach them the authentic stories of African achievement.

Dr. Woodson argued, quite correctly, that the knowledge of ''real history'' would liberate people of African descent from mental slavery and inspire to demand social equality while upsetting the ''oppressor in America and the colonizer in Africa.'' Add the Caribbean to that equation and the international scope of his efforts would become clear.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, every February, Americans celebrate Black History Month. This tribute dates back to 1926 and is credited to a Harvard scholar named Carter G. Woodson. The son of former slaves, Woodson dedicated his life to ensuring that black history was accurately documented and disseminated. In an effort to bring national attention to the contributions of black Americans, Woodson organized the first annual Negro History Week in 1926. He chose the second week of February in honor of the birthdays of pivotal black supporters Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. From Jackie Robinson to Tiger Woods, Harriet Tubman to Barack Obama, Black History Month pays tribute to inspirational African Americans from the past, as well as those who will continue to make history well into the future.

For 1 month, people of African descent in America are recognized for their contributions. The irony of recognizing and paying tribute to people of African descent in America is that we are recognizing all people of the Earth. Africa represents all people of the world. Every person born since creation, every person alive today, and every person born in the future was, is, and will be of African descent. The gift Africa has provided the world is humanity and civilization.

Be that as it may, Black History has been presented and accepted as a fragmented afterthought. It is celebrated for 1 month and/or mentioned with a couple of lines in a text or Social Studies course outline. In most instances, the references begin with slavery and end with the Civil Rights Era and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. A question I ask high school students is, "What were slaves before they became slaves?" Their response, 90 percent of the time, is "nothing." It appears many of our youth believe their ancestors fell out of the sky as slaves.

Black History is world history. Old and new research on Africa and its place in human history has proved that Africa is the birthplace of mankind and was, for many centuries, in the forefront of human progress. African or Black History must be looked at anew and seen in its relationship to world history as only the history of the first and second rise of Europe. Yet, the history of Africa was already old when Europe was born. Until quite recently, it was rather generally assumed, even among well-educated persons in the West, that the continent of Africa was a great expanse of land, mostly jungle, inhabited by savages and fierce beasts. It was not realized that great civilizations could have existed there, or that great kings could have ruled there in might and wisdom over vast empires. Today, many of us, as the descendants of queens and kings of Africa, refuse to identify with the Motherland of all people. We begin with 1619 and slavery. We identify with 370 years of physical and mental bondage as opposed to three thousands years of uninterrupted civilizations. Our story is everyone's story. Our story begins with the worshipping of one God, builders of the pyramids, and builders of the first cities and universities.

To reverse our fall from being builders of pyramids to project dwellers; to reverse our fall from being controllers of our own destiny to caretakers of someone else's destiny; and to reverse our unraveling as a whole people will necessitate knowing who we are and what we represent. Our future as a people, community, and world is related to the past. Back to the future—Black History not for a month, but for a lifetime!

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order today related to Black History Month.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. ABERCROMBIE (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of illness.

Mr. HINCHEY (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and March 1 on account of illness.

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of illness.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of official business in the district.

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of illness.

Mrs. BIGGERT (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of illness.

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today and the balance of the week on account of illness.

Mr. OSBORNE (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of business in the district.

Mr. ROHRABACHER (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of illness.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. DEFAZIO) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MCCARTHY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. DELAURO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WATERS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCDERMOTT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WYNN, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. OSBORNE, for 5 minutes, March 1.

Mr. RAMSTAD, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, for 5 minutes, March 1.

Mr. KING of Iowa, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, March 1 and 2.

Ms. FOXX, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, for 5 minutes, March 1.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today and March 1 and 2.

Mr. DREIER, for 5 minutes, today and March 1 and 2.

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for 5 minutes, today and March 1.

Mr. PAUL, for 5 minutes, today and March 1 and 2.

Mr. SOUDER, for 5 minutes, today and March 1 and 2.

Mr. WELDON of Florida, for 5 minutes, March 1.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Mrs. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker pro tempore, Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia:

H.R. 4745. An act making supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 2006 for the Small Business Administration's disaster loans program, and for other purposes.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House reports that on February 17, 2006, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill.

H.R. 4745. Making supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 2006 for the Small Business Administration's disaster loans program, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 54 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, March 1, 2006, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

6290. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting requests for FY 2006 supplemental appropriations for the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce. Defense, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Justice, Veterans Affairs, the Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency, the General Services Administration and the Small Business Administration; (H. Doc. No. 109–89); to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

6291. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting a request for FY 2006 supplemental appropriations for ongoing military and intelligence operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and selected other international activities; (H. Doc. No. 109–90); to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

6292. A letter from the Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, Department of Defense, transmitting the required report on the Warranty Claims Recovery Pilot Program, pursuant to Public Law 105–85, section 391; to the Committee on Armed Services.

6293. A letter from the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting authorization of the enclosed list of officers to wear the insignia of the grade of brigadier general accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

6294. A letter from the Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, Department of Defense, transmitting notification that the T700-GE-401 and -401C Turboshaft engines are commercial items and, therefore, are excluded from core logistics capability requirements, as well as the justification for such a decision, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2464(c); to the Committee on Armed Services.

6295. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General David W. Barno, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

6296. A letter from the Chairman, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting the Board's semiannual Monetary Policy Report pursuant to Pub. L. 106–569; to the Committee on Financial Services.

6297. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Commerce, transmitting the annual report on the Emergency Steel Loan Guarantee Program, as required by Section 101(i) of Chapter 1 of Pub. L. 106-51; to the Committee on Financial Services.

6298. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Commerce, transmitting the annual report on the Emergency Oil and Gas Guaranteed Loan Program as required by Section 201(h) of Chapter 2 of Pub. L. 106-51; to the Committee on Financial Services.

6299. A letter from the Acting Chairman and President, Export-Import Bank, transmitting a draft of the legislation necessary to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank of the United States; to the Committee on Financial Services.

6300. A letter from the Deputy Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting reports in accordance with Section 36(a) of the Arms Export Control Act, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2776(a); to the Committee on International Relations.

6301. A letter from the Deputy Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting reports in accordance with Section 36(a) of the Arms Export Control Act, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2776(a); to the Committee on International Relations.

6302. A letter from the Principal Deputy for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting a report on the audit of the American Red Cross for the financial year ending June 30, 2005, pursuant to 36 U.S.C. 300110; to the Committee on International Relations.

6303. A letter from the Assistant Sectrary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting notification that effective December 11, 2005, the 15% Danger Pay Allowance for Dushanbe, Tajikistan was terminated based on improved security conditions, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 5928; to the Committee on International Relations.

6304. A letter from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Copies of international agreements, other than treaties, entered into by the United States, pursuant to 1 U.S.C. 112b(a); to the Committee on International Relations.

6305. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting a report including matters relating to the interdiction of aircraft engaged in illicit drug trafficking, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2291–4; (H. Doc. No. 109–91); to the Committee on International Relations and ordered to be printed.

6306. A letter from the Deputy Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting the FY 2005 annual report on Military Assistance, Military Exports, and Military Imports for Fiscal Year 2005, as required by Section 655 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FAA), as enacted 10 February 1996, by Section 1324 of Pub. L. 104-106, and 21 July 1996, by Section 148 of Pub. L. 104-164; to the Committee on International Relations.

6307. A letter from the Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, Department of Defense, transmitting in accordance with Section 647(b) of Division F of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, FY 2004, Pub. L. 108-199, the Department's report on competitive sourcing efforts for FY 2005; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6308. A letter from the General Counsel, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6309. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting a copy of the Government National Mortgage Association (Ginnie Mae) management report for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2005, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 9106; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6310. A letter from the Director, Office of Management and Budget, transmitting the 2006 Federal Financial Management Report as required by the Chief Financial Officers (CFO) Act of 1990, marking the 14th report submitted by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on the government-wide status of financial management, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3512; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6311. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior, transmitting a draft of a joint resolution entitled, ''Approving the location of a Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial in the Nation's Capital.''; to the Committee on Resources.

6312. A letter from the Director, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Implementation of the Equal Access to Justice Act in Agency Proceedings (RIN: 1094-AA49) received February 8, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

6313. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management, Department of the Interior, transmitting a copy of the report entitled, ''Comprehensive Inventory of U.S. OCS Oil and Natural Gas Resources'' as required by Section 357 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005; to the Committee on Resources.

6314. A letter from the Deputy Chief for National Forest System, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the 2004 Report to Congress for Granite Watershed Enhancement and Protection Stewardship Project, pursuant to Public Law 105–821; to the Committee on Resources.

6315. A letter from the Director, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the 2005 report on the Apportionment of Membership on the Regional Fishery Management Councils pursuant to section 302 (b)(2)(B) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act; to the Committee on Resources.

6316. A letter from the President and Chief Executive Officer, Little League Baseball, transmitting the Annual Report of Little League Baseball, Incorporated for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, pursuant to 36 U.S.C. 1084(b); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

6317. A letter from the Director, Office of Legislative Affairs, Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting a copy of a draft bill entitled, ''To amend the Railroad Retirement Act to provide for continued payment of railroad retirement annuities by the Department of the Treasury and for other purposes''; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6318. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting notification of his intention to designate Liberia as a beneficiary developing country under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), pursuant to Public Law 104–188, section 1952(a)(110 Stat. 1917); (H. Doc. No. 109–92); to the Committee on Ways and Means and ordered to be printed.

6319. A letter from the United States Trade Representative, Executive Office of the President, transmitting a report on supplementary views from the agricultural policy and technical advisory committees (Grains, Feed and Oilseeds; Processed Foods; Sweeteners; and Tobacco, Cotton and Peanuts) on the United States-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6320. A letter from the United States Trade Representative, Executive Office of the President, transmitting the reports of the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations, and the policy, sectoral and functional trade committees chartered under those Acts, on the United States-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement, pursuant to Section 2104(e) of the Trade Act of 2002 and Section 135(e) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6321. A letter from the Acting Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Weighted Average Interest Rate Update [Notice 2006-8] received January 20, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6322. A letter from the Acting Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Designated Roth contributions to cash or deferred arrangements under section 401(k) [TD 9237] (RIN: 1545-BE05) received January 4, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6323. A letter from the Acting Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Revenue Procedure Updates (Rev. Proc. 2006-7) received January 3, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6324. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Time for Filing Employment Tax Returns and Modifications to the Deposit Rules [TD 9239] (RIN: 1545-BE00) received January 4, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6325. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Revision of Income Tax Regulations under sections 367, 884, and 6038B dealing with statutory mergers or consolidations under section 368(a)(1)(A) involving one or more foreign corporations, and guidance necessary to facilitate business electronic filing under section 6038B [TD 9243] (RIN: 1545-BA65) received January 26, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6326. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Allocation and Apportionment of Expenses Alternative Method for Determining Tax Book Value of Assets [TD 9247] (RIN: 1545-BF23) received January 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6327. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Clarification of Definitions [TD 9246] (RIN: 1545-BD37) received January 30, 3006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6328. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Last-in, First-out Inventories (Rev. Rul. 2006-6) received January 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6329. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Escrow Funds and Other Similar Funds [TD 9249] (RIN: 1545-AR82) received February 6, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6330. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Residence Rules Involving U.S. Possessions [TD 9248] (RIN: 1545-BC86) received February 6, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6331. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Announcement of rules adopting a reasonable cause standard for section 1503(d) filings [Notice 2006-13] received February 6, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6332. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Redemption Bogus Optional Basis Tax Shelter (UIL No: 9300.42-00) received February 6, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6333. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Extension of June 28, 2005, Safe Harbor Date [Notice 2006-15] received February 6, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6334. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Administrative, Procedural, and Miscellaneous (Rev. Proc. 2006-16) received February 6, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6335. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Recomputed Differential Earnings Rate for Mutual Life Insurance Companies [Notice 2006-18] received February 6, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6336. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Weighted Average Interest Rate Update [Notice 2006-19] received February 16, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6337. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Electricity Produced From Certain Renewable Resources (Rev. Rul. 2006-9) received February 8, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6338. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Appeals Settlement Guidelines: Notional Principal Contracts (UIL No. 9300.20-00) received February 16, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6339. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Tax Avoidance Using Notional Principal Contacts [Notice 2006-16] received February 16, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6340. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Postponement of Deadline for Making an Election to Deduct Certain Losses Attributable to Hurricane Katrina, Rita, and Wilma [Notice 2006-17] received February 22, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6341. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Determination of Issue Price in the Case of Certain Debt Instruments Issued for Property (Rev. Rul. 2006-10) received February 22, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6342. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Clean Renewable Energy Bonds [Notice 2006-7] received February 22, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6343. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Application of Section 367 in Cross Border Section 304 Transactions; Certain Transfers of Stock Involving Foreign Corporations [TD 9250] (RIN: 1545-BD46) received February 22, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6344. A letter from the Regulations Officer, Social Security Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Work Activity of Persons Working as Members of Advisory Committees Established Under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) (RIN: 0960-AG07) received January 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6345. A letter from the Regulations Officer, Social Security Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Revised Medical Criteria for Evaluating Cardiovascular Impairments (RIN: 0960-AD48) received January 17, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6346. A letter from the Regulations Officer, Social Security Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Representation of Parties; Recognition, Disqualification, and Reinstatement of Representative (RIN: 0960-AG15) received January 11, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. BARTON of Texas: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 4167. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to provide for uniform food safety warning notification requirements, and for other purposes (Rept. 109–379). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

REPORTED BILLS SEQUENTIALLY REFERRED

Under clause 2 of rule XII, bills and reports were delivered to the Clerk for printing, and bills referred as follows:

Mr. POMBO: Committee on Resources. H.R. 1071. A bill to direct the Secretary of Energy to make incentive payments to the owners or operators of qualified desalination facilities to partially offset the cost of electrical energy required to operate such facilities, and for other purposes; with an amendment, (Rept. 109–380, Pt. 1); Referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce for a period ending not later than March 31, 2006, for consideration of such provisions of the bill and amendment as fall within the jurisdiction of that committee pursuant to clause 1(f), rule X Ordered to be printed.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois (for himself, Mr. HASTERT, Mr. KIRK, Mr. EMANUEL, Mrs. BIGGERT, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. WELLER, Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. MANZULLO, Ms. BEAN, Mr. EVANS, Mr. LAHOOD, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. RUSH, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, and Mr. HYDE):

H.R. 4805. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 105 North Quincy Street in Clinton, Illinois, as the ''Gene Vance Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Mr. ANDREWS:

H.R. 4806. A bill to prohibit defense contractors from requiring licenses or fees for use of military likenesses and designations; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. KING of New York (for himself, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. BACHUS, Mr. BARROW, Mr. BERRY, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. COLE of Oklahoma, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. DAVIS of Florida, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. DICKS, Mr. DOOLITTLE, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, Mr. GIBBONS, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. GORDON, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Ms. HARMAN, Ms. HERSETH, Mr. HOLT, Ms. HOOLEY, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. JINDAL, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MARSHALL, Ms. MATSUI, Mrs. MCCARTHY, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. MEEK of Florida, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. NADLER, Mr. NEY, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. PENCE, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. POMEROY, Mr. RAMSTAD, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. REYNOLDS, Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. SIMMONS, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. SOUDER, Mr. SWEENEY, Mr. TANCREDO, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania, Mr. WESTMORELAND, and Mr. WOLF):

H.R. 4807. A bill to require an investigation under the Defense Production Act of 1950 of the acquisition by Dubai Ports World of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, International Relations, and Homeland Security, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. JONES of North Carolina (for himself and Mr. KILDEE):

H.R. 4808. A bill to prohibit the importation of motor vehicles of the People's Republic of China until the tariff rates that China imposes on motor vehicles of the United States are equal to the rates of duty applicable to motor vehicles of the People's Republic of China under the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. MILLER of Michigan (for herself and Mr. LYNCH):

H.R. 4809. A bill to amend the provisions of chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code, commonly referred to as the Paperwork Reduction Act, to ensure usability and clarity of information disseminated by Federal agencies, and to facilitate compliance with Federal paperwork requirements; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Mr. BISHOP of Utah:

H.R. 4810. A bill to amend the provisions of the Higher Education Act of 1965 relating to Academic Competitiveness Grants to preserve State authority over secondary school curricula; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself, Mr. HASTERT, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. BACHUS, Mr. BAIRD, Mr. BAKER, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. BERRY, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. BOEHLERT, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Ms. CARSON, Mr. CHANDLER, Mr. COBLE, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. DENT, Mr. DICKS, Mr. DINGELL, Mr. DREIER, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. EVANS, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, Mr. FILNER, Mr. FORTUÑO, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. GALLEGLY, Mr. GERLACH, Mr. GILCHREST, Mr. GORDON, Mr. GRAVES, Mr. HALL, Mr. HAYES, Mr. HEFLEY, Mr. HERGER, Ms. HERSETH, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. HOEKSTRA, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. HONDA, Mr. HOYER, Mr. HYDE, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois, Ms. KAPTUR, Mrs. KELLY, Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota, Mr. KOLBE, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. LATOURETTE, Mr. LEACH, Mr. LEWIS of California, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. MCCRERY, Mr. MACK, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. MICA, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. MORAN of Kansas, Mr. NADLER, Mr. NEY, Ms. NORTON, Mr. OBEY, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. OSBORNE, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. PETRI, Mr. PORTER, Mr. REGULA, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mr. ROSS, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. SAXTON, Mrs. SCHMIDT, Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. SHAW, Mr. SHERWOOD, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. SIMMONS, Mr. SKELTON, Mr. SNYDER, Mr. SODREL, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. THOMAS, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. UPTON, Mr. WALSH, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. WEINER, Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. WICKER, Mr. WOLF, and Mr. YOUNG of Florida):

H.R. 4811. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 215 West Industrial Park Road in Harrison, Arkansas, as the ''John Paul Hammerschmidt Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Mr. BROWN of Ohio (for himself, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. STRICKLAND, Ms. LEE, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mr. HOLDEN):

H.R. 4812. A bill to provide greater accountability in reviewing the national security considerations of free trade agreements; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. FOLEY (for himself, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mrs. BONO, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. FOSSELLA, Mr. BERRY, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. WU, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. FEENEY, Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. WOLF, Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin, Mr. WAMP, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. TERRY, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. SIMMONS, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. ROSS, Mrs. EMERSON, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. HARRIS, and Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky):

H.R. 4813. A bill to amend the Defense Production Act of 1950 to improve national security and clarify congressional intent with respect to the review process for certain mergers and acquisitions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, and International Relations, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey:

H.R. 4814. A bill to amend section 721 of the Defense Production Act of 1950 to suspend all proposed mergers, acquisitions, or takeovers

by foreign persons until certain determinations are made; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, and International Relations, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. GILLMOR:

H.R. 4815. A bill to establish a National Sex Offender Risk Classification Task Force to create guidelines for the establishment of a risk-based sex offender classification system for use in sex offender registries; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HAYWORTH:

H.R. 4816. A bill to amend chapter 27 of title 18, United States Code, to prohibit the unauthorized construction of tunnels between the United States and another country; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HAYWORTH:

H.R. 4817. A bill to prohibit entities owned or controlled by foreign governments from carrying out operations at seaports in the United States; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on International Relations, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. HEFLEY:

H.R. 4818. A bill to establish the South Park National Heritage Area in the State of Colorado, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources.

By Mr. LEACH:

H.R. 4819. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to prohibit nonparty multicandidate political committees from making contributions in support of campaigns for election for Federal office, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. MARKEY:

H.R. 4820. A bill to amend the Defense Production Act of 1950 to strengthen the requirements relating to investigations under such Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, International Relations, and Homeland Security, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PALLONE (for himself, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. PAYNE, and Mr. HINCHEY):

H.R. 4821. A bill to amend section 10501 of title 49, United States Code, to exclude solid waste disposal from the jurisdiction of the Surface Transportation Board; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. SESSIONS:

H.R. 4822. A bill to amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to permit development of necessary technology to reduce energy demand through more efficient torchiere lighting; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. VISCLOSKY (for himself and Mr. EMANUEL):

H.R. 4823. A bill to establish a United States-Poland parliamentary youth exchange program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on International Relations.

By Ms. HARMAN:

H.J. Res. 79. A joint resolution disapproving the results of the review conducted by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) into the purchase of Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation (P&O) by Dubai Ports World (DP World); to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, and International Relations, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. THOMPSON of California:

H. Con. Res. 348. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress with respect to accomplishing the mission in Iraq; to the Committee on International Relations, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. HYDE (for himself and Mr. LANTOS):

H. Res. 697. A resolution congratulating the people and Government of Italy, the Torino Olympic Organizing Committee, the International Olympic Committee, the United States Olympic Committee, the 2006 United States Olympic Team, and all international athletes upon the successful completion of the 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Turin, Italy; to the Committee on International Relations.

By Mr. KNOLLENBERG:

H. Res. 698. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that all Americans should participate in a moment of silence to reflect upon the service and sacrifice of members of the United States Armed Forces both at home and abroad; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. PRICE of North Carolina (for himself, Mr. MOLLOHAN, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. OSBORNE, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mr. CHANDLER, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HIGGINS, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. HOLT, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. OTTER, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. MCINTYRE, and Mr. DAVIS of Illinois):

H. Res. 699. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Entrepreneurship Week and encouraging the implementation of entrepreneurship education programs in elementary and secondary schools and institutions of higher education through the United States; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself and Mr. WEXLER):

H. Res. 700. A resolution supporting an upgrade in Israel's relationship with NATO to that of a leading member of NATO's Individual Cooperation Program, as a first step toward Israel's inclusion in NATO as a full member with all corresponding rights, privileges, and responsibilities; to the Committee on International Relations.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 23: Mrs. CAPITO.

H.R. 25: Mr. MORAN of Kansas.

H.R. 30: Mr. NEY and Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.

H.R. 87: Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. Pascrell, and Mr. LOBIONDO.

H.R. 110: Mr. FATTAH.

H.R. 115: Mr. FATTAH.

H.R. 198: Mr. LEWIS of Georgia.

H.R. 282: Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. DEAL of Georgia, and Mr. OLVER.

H.R. 303: Mr. SIMMONS, Mr. SULLIVAN, and Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.

H.R. 363: Mr. WYNN, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, and Mr. REYES.

H.R. 398: Mr. CLAY.

H.R. 500: Mr. ISTOOK and Mr. GOHMERT.

H.R. 515: Mr. KUHL of New York, Mr. MEEK of Florida, and Mr. ROSS.

H.R. 550: Mr. WALDEN of Oregon.

H.R. 552: Mr. JENKINS and Mr. ALEXANDER.

H.R. 561: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H.R. 615: Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota and Ms. HART.

H.R. 633: Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 769: Mr. EVANS, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts.

H.R. 857: Mr. BROWN of South Carolina.

H.R. 865: Mr. TANCREDO.

H.R. 874: Mr. GOODLATTE and Mr. GINGREY.

H.R. 880: Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota and Mr. JEFFERSON.

H.R. 884: Mr. GUTIERREZ and Mr. SALAZAR.

H.R. 898: Mr. FOSSELLA, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. CUELLAR, and Mr. WALSH.

H.R. 986: Mr. CUMMINGS.

H.R. 998: Mr. GOHMERT and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.

H.R. 1002: Mr. CARDIN and Mr. LIPINSKI.

H.R. 1053: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, and Mr. MCKEON.

H.R. 1100: Mr. MCCOTTER.

H.R. 1188: Mr. PAYNE, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. BISHOP of New York, and Ms. MCKINNEY.

H.R. 1249: Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin, Mr. PLATTS, and Mr. WELLER.

H.R. 1258: Mrs. CUBIN.

H.R. 1259: Mr. MURPHY and Mr. DEAL of Georgia.

H.R. 1288: Mrs. BIGGERT.

H.R. 1290: Mr. BISHOP of New York.

H.R. 1322: Mr. WYNN, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. MURTHA, and Mr. PAYNE.

H.R. 1323: Mr. WYNN and Mr. BARROW.

H.R. 1330: Mr. GRIJALVA and Mr. CONYERS.

H.R. 1357: Mr. BEAUPREZ, Mrs. DRAKE, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, Miss MCMORRIS, Mr. BONNER, Mr. CARTER, Mr. COLE of Oklahoma, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. Fortuño, Mr. FLAKE, Ms. HARRIS, and Mr. ISSA.

H.R. 1375: Mr. KUCINICH.

H.R. 1418: Mr. FILNER.

H.R. 1424: Mr. THOMPSON of California.

H.R. 1431: Mr. CONYERS, Mr. RUSH, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H.R. 1462: Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania and Mr. MCCOTTER.

H.R. 1558: Mrs. MCCARTHY.

H.R. 1578: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, Mr. ORTIZ, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. POMEROY, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, and Mr. TANCREDO.

H.R. 1591: Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois.

H.R. 1607: Mrs. MUSGRAVE.

H.R. 1621: Mr. BROWN of Ohio.

H.R. 1690: Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico.

H.R. 1696: Mr. SWEENEY.

H.R. 1704: Ms. HART.

H.R. 1709: Mr. CAPUANO.

H.R. 1951: Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Mr. AKIN, Ms. CARSON, Mr. TURNER, Mr. PAUL, and Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 1955: Mr. BROWN of Ohio.

H.R. 1957: Mr. BASS.

H.R. 2048: Ms. CARSON and Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 2063: Mr. PUTNAM and Mr. SOUDER.

H.R. 2178: Ms. MCKINNEY.

H.R. 2206: Mr. FATTAH, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois, and Ms. BALDWIN.

H.R. 2317: Mr. POE.

H.R. 2369: Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania, Ms. WATSON, Mr. STRICKLAND, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. POE, Mr. JONES of North

Carolina, Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky, Mr. GILCHREST, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. HOSTETTLER, Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. TANNER, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, Mr. FERGUSON, Mr. SPRATT, Mr. GIBBONS, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. KUHL of New York, Mr. FORD, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. MORAN of Kansas, Mrs. LOWEY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. UPTON, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. PUTNAM, Mrs. MUSGRAVE, Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. PETRI, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. BONILLA, Mr. BECERRA, Mr. PICKERING, Ms. PRYCE of Ohio, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. CALVERT, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. SIMMONS, Mr. HIGGINS, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. SCHIFF, of New Mexico, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. ISRAEL, and Mr. GILLMOR.

H.R. 2421: Mr. WYNN, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, and Mrs. MCCARTHY.

H.R. 2471: Mr. FORD.

H.R. 2488: Mr. MOORE of Kansas.

H.R. 2521: Mr. FATTAH and Mr. LATOURETTE.

H.R. 2534: Mr. HEFLEY.

H.R. 2553: Ms. DELAURO.

H.R. 2561: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.

H.R. 2568: Mr. RAHALL.

H.R. 2669: Mr. CASTLE.

H.R. 2679: Mr. PLATTS, Mr. RADANOVICH, Mr. MORAN of Kansas, Mr. RYUN of Kansas, and Mr. TANCREDO.

H.R. 2684: Mr. KUHL of New York, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. CASE, Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mr. SAXTON, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. KUCINICH, and Mr. LAHOOD.

H.R. 2716: Mr. KIND and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H.R. 2717: Mr. GORDON.

H.R. 2719: Mrs. TAUSCHER.

H.R. 2727: Ms. SLAUGHTER.

H.R. 2788: Mr. MURTHA.

H.R. 2872: Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. REHBERG, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. GINGREY, and Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts.

H.R. 3038: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.

H.R. 3063: Ms. DEGETTE.

H.R. 3145: Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida and Mr. SCOTT of Georgia.

H.R. 3189: Mr. PAYNE.

H.R. 3248: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. KIND, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. BONNER, Mr. SOUDER, and Mr. BACHUS.

H.R. 3255: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina and Mr. EHLERS.

H.R. 3307: Mr. RAHALL.

H.R. 3352: Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. ALEXANDER, and Mr. RAHALL.

H.R. 3361: Mr. STRICKLAND.

H.R. 3427: Mr. SAXTON.

H.R. 3476: Mr. PASTOR, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. EVANS, Mr. ALLEN, and Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.

H.R. 3478: Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. ROHRABACHER, and Mr. HOLDEN.

H.R. 3547: Mr. JEFFERSON.

H.R. 3590: Mr. PASTOR.

H.R. 3616: Mr. SESSIONS.

H.R. 3639: Ms. DEGETTE.

H.R. 3658: Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. OWENS, Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. RUSH, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida.

H.R. 3734: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.

H.R. 3762: Ms. Linda T. Sánchez of California and Mr. NADLER.

H.R. 3779: Mr. MOORE of Kansas and Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 3837: Mr. STARK and Mr. MOORE of Kansas.

H.R. 3883: Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Mr. LUCAS, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, and Mr. ABERCROMBIE.

H.R. 3962: Mr. BURGESS, Mr. UPTON, Mr. SANDERS, and Ms. BORDALLO.

H.R. 3964: Ms. MCKINNEY.

H.R. 3973: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H.R. 4005: Mr. PLATTS, Ms. CARSON, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. DENT, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H.R. 4019: Mr. TANNER, Mr. MATHESON, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. SOUDER, and Ms. HART.

H.R. 4023: Ms. HERSETH, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. BAIRD, Mr. MEEK of Florida, Mr. TIERNEY, Mrs. MALONEY, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. RAMSTAD, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. OWENS, Mr. CUMMINGS, Ms. WATSON, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. CLAY, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. FORD, and Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.

H.R. 4025: Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin.

H.R. 4026: Mr. ACKERMAN.

H.R. 4059: Mr. HIGGINS and Mr. SANDERS.

H.R. 4158: Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 4166: Mr. WEXLER.

H.R. 4188: Mr. MICHAUD and Mr. FORD.

H.R. 4197: Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. HOYER, and Ms. SOLIS.

H.R. 4211: Mr. RUSH and Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan.

H.R. 4229: Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. OLVER, and Mrs. TAUSCHER.

H.R. 4259: Mr. REYES.

H.R. 4298: Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. MCCOTTER, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, and Mr. ABERCROMBIE.

H.R. 4341: Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. BONNER, and Mr. RENZI.

H.R. 4384: Mr. VAN HOLLEN and Ms. LEE.

H.R. 4398: Mr. CLAY.

H.R. 4422: Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico.

H.R. 4452: Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan and Ms. MATSUI.

H.R. 4479: Mr. TIERNEY and Ms. LEE.

H.R. 4493: Mr. ORTIZ.

H.R. 4517: Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, and Mr. FEENEY.

H.R. 4542: Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. BECERRA, Mrs. MALONEY, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. SABO, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H.R. 4546: Mr. WALSH.

H.R. 4547: Mr. PICKERING, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. CANNON, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. FEENEY, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. ROSS, Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. WESTMORELAND, and Mr. GINGREY.

H.R. 4597: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. HONDA, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. SULLIVAN, and Mr. ROHRABACHER.

H.R. 4621: Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. BOYD, and Mr. POE.

H.R. 4623: Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin.

H.R. 4672: Mr. GORDON.

H.R. 4673: Mr. LEACH.

H.R. 4677: Mr. DENT.

H.R. 4681: Mr. YOUNG of Florida, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, Mr. KINGSTON, Mr. SHAW, Mr. BONNER, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. DEAL of Georgia, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. STEARNS, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. FORD, and Mr. ALEXANDER.

H.R. 4685: Mr. CUELLAR.

H.R. 4695: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mrs. MCCARTHY, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. MCKINNEY, and Mr. RANGEL.

H.R. 4696: Mr. DENT.

H.R. 4708: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.

H.R. 4725: Mr. PAUL, Mr. CAMP of Michigan, Mr. COBLE, Mr. GUTKNECHT, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. COLE of Oklahoma.

H.R. 4729: Mr. LYNCH, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, Mr. CONYERS, and Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 4736: Mr. SHAYS.

H.R. 4737: Mr. WEXLER.

H.R. 4747: Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. MCNULTY, Mrs. MCCARTHY, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. WAXMAN, and Ms. SOLIS.

H.R. 4749: Mr. SKELTON and Ms. MATSUI.

H.R. 4755: Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. MATHESON, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. POE, Mr. BAIRD, Mr. CLAY, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. PRYCE of Ohio, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mrs. MCCARTHY, Mr. CLEAVER, Mrs. CAPPS, Ms. LEE, Mr. FORTUÑO, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. BOUCHER, Mr. POMEROY, Mr. COSTA, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. KLINE, Mr. DAVIS of Florida, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. CARNAHAN, Mr. WOLF, Mr. DICKS, Ms. HART, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. OWENS, Mr. SABO, Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina, and Mr. CROWLEY.

H.R. 4761: Mr. BACHUS, Mr. COLE of Oklahoma, and Mr. CANTOR.

H.R. 4772: Mr. NEUGEBAUER.

H.R. 4774: Mrs. MILLER of Michigan and Mr. KIRK.

H.R. 4778: Mr. CASE.

H.R. 4793: Mr. BASS, Ms. HERSETH, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. FOSSELLA, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MCHUGH, Mr. WALSH, Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire, Mr. KIND, Mr. SIMMONS, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. SWEENEY, and Mr. KING of New York.

H.R. 4800: Mr. STUPAK.

H.J. Res. 3: Mr. BEAUPREZ.

H.J. Res. 16: Mr. GOHMERT.

H.J. Res. 67: Mr. NORWOOD.

H.J. Res. 78: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina and Mrs. EMERSON.

H. Con. Res. 42: Mr. MARCHANT and Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin.

H. Con. Res. 172: Mr. FORD and Mr. WEXLER.

H. Con. Res. 299: Mr. GRIJALVA and Ms. DEGETTE.

H. Con. Res. 318: Mr. GRIJALVA.

H. Con. Res. 320: Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. LANTOS, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. PITTS, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. ROTHMAN, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, and Mr. WEXLER.

H. Con. Res. 335: Ms. MATSUI, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. DAVIS of Alabama, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. WAXMAN, Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, and Mr. SANDERS.

H. Con. Res. 336: Mr. MCGOVERN and Mr. GORDON.

H. Con. Res. 338: Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. ENGEL, and Mr. WELLER.

H. Con. Res. 340: Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. WU, Mr. LYNCH, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mrs. MALONEY, Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN.

H. Con. Res. 343: Mr. HIGGINS.

H. Con. Res. 346: Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, Mr. WELLER, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. FOSSELLA, and Mr. BONNER.

H. Res. 85: Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, and Mrs. EMERSON.

H. Res. 526: Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, Mr. MCKEON, and Mr. WICKER.

H. Res. 556: Ms. MCKINNEY.

H. Res. 589: Ms. HART.

H. Res. 608: Mr. GORDON and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.

H. Res. 638: Mr. ALLEN, Mr. BECERRA, Mr. BOSWELL, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. CARNAHAN, Mr. COOPER, Mr. DELAHUNT, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. EDWARDS, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. HONDA, Mr. INSLEE, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of

Texas, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Ms. LEE, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. MCKINNEY, Ms. MATSUI, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. OWENS, Mr. PASTOR, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. RUSH, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. SNYDER, Ms. SOLIS, Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. TOWNS, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. WATSON, Mr. WATT, and Ms. WOOLSEY.

H. Res. 641: Mr. OWENS.

H. Res. 643: Mr. WAXMAN and Mr. MICHAUD.

H. Res. 645: Ms. LEE.

H. Res. 647: Ms. BORDALLO.

H. Res. 658: Mr. REYES, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. FARR, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. BAIRD, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. LEE, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H. Res. 672: Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA.

H. Res. 673: Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. WELLER, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. CONAWAY, Ms. BEAN, Mrs. BIGGERT, Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. EVANS, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. KIRK, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. TERRY, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina, Mr. HULSHOF, and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.

H. Res. 675: Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. OBERSTAR, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

H. Res. 677: Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. FORD, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, and Ms. WATERS.

H. Res. 691: Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. MCCOTTER, and Mr. PAYNE.

H. Res. 693: Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. CLEAVER.

United States of America

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 109th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 152 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2006 No. 23

Senate

The Senate met at 9:45 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable GEORGE ALLEN, a Senator from the State of Virginia.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's prayer will by offered by the guest Chaplain, Bishop Steven E. Wright, National Chaplain for the American Legion, from Layton, UT.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray:

Our Father who art in heaven, we humbly thank Thee for untold blessings poured out upon the people of this great Nation. From our earliest beginnings, we have placed our trust in Thy power to guide and defend us. We reaffirm that trust as we seek Thy strength, Thy wisdom, Thy inspiration, and Thy love to be upon our Senators in their deliberations and efforts and decisions this day.

We thank Thee for the valiant men and women of our Armed Forces, as well as for our veterans, and ask Thee to bless them and their families with safety and with Thy comforting love. We pray likewise for each individual and family unit, and ask Thee to particularly bless fathers and mothers with ability to instill virtue in its many forms in their children.

We express our love and gratitude for Thy tender mercies in all our trials and challenges, and do so with a concluding moment of silence, allowing each to offer the personal benediction of his and her own heart and faith.

Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable GEORGE ALLEN, a Senator from the State of Virginia, led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 28, 2006.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable GEORGE ALLEN, a Senator from the State of Virginia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. ALLEN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today we will begin with a period for morning business for up to 60 minutes. Following that time, the Senate will resume debate on S. 2271, the PATRIOT Act amendments legislation. The debate will be equally divided until the hour of 12:30, and at 12:30 the Senate will recess until 2:15 p.m. for the weekly policy meetings. When we reconvene at 2:15, there will be 15 minutes for closing remarks prior to the cloture vote, which is scheduled for 2:30. That cloture vote on the PATRIOT Act amendments bill will be the first vote of the day. We fully expect cloture to be invoked, and therefore we have an agreement that the vote on passage of the bill will occur at 10 a.m. tomorrow, on Wednesday.

On Wednesday, in addition to the PATRIOT Act amendments bill, we will return to the conference report on the underlying PATRIOT Act. That conference report will require an additional cloture vote and we will have that vote on Wednesday afternoon.

I remind my colleagues that on Wednesday we will have a joint meeting with the House of Representatives in order to hear an address by the Prime Minister of Italy. That address will begin at 11 o'clock tomorrow morning, and therefore Senators are asked to gather in the Senate Chamber at 10:30 so we can proceed together at 10:40 to the Hall of the House of Representatives. I will have more to say about the remaining schedule for this week and the next at the close of business today.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON PENSION REFORM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, employer-sponsored pension plans have been a critical part of employment security for America's workers. Over 40 million Americans rely on these pension plans that promise a monthly retirement benefit for life. Increasingly, the retirement security offered by pension plans is at risk, and more and more employers opt out of offering pension plans because of increased costs and growing administrative difficulties. Further complicating the situation is the fact that the agency that insures workers' pensions, the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, faces huge deficits as a result of the termination of

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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pension plans throughout the country. These pension plans were maintained by companies in the troubled steel and airline industries.

For all these reasons and more, we know that Congress must act on pension reform legislation so employees can continue to count on the retirement security provided by employer-sponsored pension plans. That is why Senate Democrats strongly supported pension reform legislation and were eager to go to conference on this bill. We recognize this is an important bill and strongly believe the Senate and House must get to work immediately to hammer out the compromises necessary to produce a final bill.

Senators agree. I think, from our perspective, we are united, Democrats and Republicans. Senate Democrats believe we can and should name conferees right now, this morning, and send the bill to the House so they can name their conferees. Nevertheless, some recent press reports on the status of the pension reform bill have suggested that Democrats are preventing this bill from moving to conference.

I wish to take a few minutes and correct this record. We strongly support the improvements this legislation will bring to our private pension system. We support improvements this legislation will bring, improvements to our private pension system. We want to improve pension funding so employees will know their employer's pension promise will be fulfilled. Democrats believe it is important to provide certainty to employers who are trying to plan their pension costs. Democrats believe it is important to clarify the rules governing cash balance pension plans so older workers are protected. Democrats believe it is important we act quickly to provide relief to those airlines that want to maintain their pension plans but need some time to recover from the downturn following the attacks of 9/11. Democrats believe it is imperative that we shore up the finances of the PBGC.

In other words, Democrats want this bill to go to conference today, and we can do that if the majority will agree to a reasonable number of conferees. Throughout this process, Senate Democrats have worked closely with Republicans to move pension reform legislation in an expedited manner. The pension reform bill was reported by the Finance Committee by voice vote on July 26 of last year. The HELP Committee reported the bill on September 28 by a vote of 18 to 2. After consideration, the two committee bills had to be reconciled into one proposal. Senators ENZI, GRASSLEY, KENNEDY, and BAUCUS worked long and hard on a bipartisan basis to produce that legislation. At each step during this process, Democrats worked with the Republicans to produce a bipartisan bill.

When it came time to consider the bill on the Senate floor, Democrats again worked to move this legislation forward. Senate Democrats worked with the majority leader to reach agreement on a limited number of amendments. Democrats also worked to limit debate so the bill could move forward. Democrats did not have to forego their rights to offer amendments to the pension bill, but we did. Democrats didn't have to forego their rights to debate issues raised by this legislation, but we did. There are any number of steps that can be taken to slow down the progress of legislation if a Member of the Senate is so inclined. Democrats have not chosen to take any of these steps and are not choosing to take any of these steps now.

We are eager to go to conference on this legislation and we are not contesting the Republicans' desire to have a two-vote advantage in the conference. The majority leader set the margin at 7 to 5. We believe fairness is 8 to 6. All we are asking is that each committee which is a party to this legislation be adequately represented. We believe that appointing 14 conferees in a ratio of 8 to 6 gives the Senate the best opportunity to bring back a bill from the conference that will garner strong support by the Senate.

The majority leader has said he will go 9 to 6. That is not fair, to have a three-vote advantage. I urge the majority to consider its opposition to our very reasonable request so we can get to work on this legislation. Together we can improve our Nation's pension system and make America better.

Mr. President, simply it is this: Are we going to go to conference on this bill? We want to go. Arbitrarily, the majority leader said it will be a 7-to-5 ratio. We wanted 8 to 6. We will go to conference right now. It doesn't seem fair. We are not holding up the conference. We are not holding up the conference as indicated by the fact that we are willing to go from 7 to 5 to 8 to 6.

The distinguished Senator from Tennessee comes back with the suggestion that, well, we will go 9 to 6. That isn't fair. We want to go to conference, but we want at least to have a semblance of fairness. We are willing to go with the two-vote margin but not three votes.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 1 hour, the first half of the time under the control of the majority leader or his designee and the second half of the time under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee.

The Senator from Missouri.

ORDER FOR FILING DEADLINE

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the filing deadline for first-degree amendments to S. 2271 occur at 12 noon today.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE PATRIOT ACT

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to speak about the war on terror, progress in Iraq, and the PATRIOT Act. In spite of the negative press you see on the nightly news, Iraq is progressing toward the goal of being independent, free, and democratic. It has been nearly 3 years since our brave men and women in the military and our other agencies freed a people from the grip of a tyrannical and murderous dictator and began to work to establish a democratic society in the heart of the Middle East. In doing so, they are also making the world and all of us much safer.

Since then, the people of Iraq have set up a constitutional government and braved death by voting in free elections.

Surely more remains to be done, but let there be no doubt, progress is being made. But challenges remain. We recognize that and we must.

The recent bombing of a mosque in Samarra has highlighted the challenges Iraq continues to face. Who did it?

Following the attack, a prominent Iraqi Shiite cleric, al-Sistani, recognizing the hallmarks of al-Qaida, called, for the first time, for street demonstrations against the bombing, and thousands of his angry supporters protested, shouting slogans against al-Qaida and its supporters, accusing them of fueling hatred and violence, which is surely what they did.

News of the attack only underscores why we are in Iraq and what is at stake. When our delegation met with Sunni, Shiite, and Kurd leaders last month in Baghdad, those leaders recognized, as our able Ambassador emphasized, the dangers of sectarian violence. They committed to work together, knowing that they have to bring about a national unity government.

Recent news reports suggest that with the intervention of enlightened leaders such as al-Sistani, people are beginning to work together again. But the disturbing news of the bombing of the mosque and resulting reactions and killings simply seems to embolden all the hand-wringing naysayers who have incessantly talked of civil war in Iraq and American withdrawal. A greater lesson, however, lies within this tragic development.

Simply put, what is the alternative? Is America to retreat from Iraq and simply seek to be left alone and leave the world's problems to others to fix?

In the age of bin Laden, al-Zarqawi, and al-Sistani, that is a course America and the world cannot afford to take. We should have learned our lesson on 9/11.

As the Wall Street Journal recently pointed out, the fact is that under the Bush administration's policy, four democratic governments have come to power in the Middle East—Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and Palestine. Yes these democracies will face serious challenges along the way, from insurgents to bloody ethnic feuding.

These are very serious challenges, and we are witnessing these challenges right now.

Let us be blunt. There is always the possibility that a murderous dictator can come to power in a democracy. That is how Hitler got in, in Germany. No one said this approach is perfect. It isn't, especially when Hamas wins in Palestine. But democracy isn't supposed to be perfect or easy or smooth. It was not such as we set up our Government.

But what is the alternative to promoting democracy, no matter how great the challenges become? I submit there is no viable alternative. It is democracy, and only democracy, that will offer these countries the possibility of greater civic freedoms, greater economic freedoms, and the hope for a politically moderate future.

It is only because of American leadership, our brave soldiers, our brave civilians, and the hopeful leadership, the enlightened leadership of people such as Hamid Karzai, Jalal Talabani, and Saad Hariri that these countries and their people stand a chance of a better life and the world stands a chance to be a safer place. Along with it, America stands a chance of having important friends in a part of the world that in the past has been no friend to America.

Some of my colleagues have said we need to get out of Iraq. I agree—as soon as we train the Iraqi military and the police to ensure security but not until that is done.

But even when Iraq is stabilized, we will continue to see the threat of violence from the Islamofascists such as al-Qaida, Ansar al-Islam, Jamia Islamia.

As President Bush warned, this is going to be a decade-long war. Thus, our battles will go on overseas to deny foreign safe havens to murderous terrorist groups.

At home, the threat is still grim. And with recent disclosures, regrettably, of our most sensitive intelligence, according to CIA Director Porter Goss, we have experienced very severe damage to our capabilities.

It is even more important now that we provide our domestic law enforcement agencies the tools they need. That is why it is imperative we pass the PATRIOT Act as soon as possible. It is past time that we do so. 9/11 was not so long ago that we should have forgotten what it felt like that day.

You know and I know what it was like. We all need to remember. The results of hamstringing our domestic intelligence abilities are not so distant. The reasons we passed the PATRIOT Act have not gone away.

I am glad that an overwhelming number of Senators will join together to provide our terror fighters with the tools they need. For those for whom this was a hard decision, I applaud your courage. However, our actions pale in comparison to the courage exercised by those of us who protect us every day. It is to them we give these tools, to them we entrust our safety, to them we owe our freedoms, to them we owe our lives.

Why would we not give them the tools they need to hold terror at bay? Why should we slow their hunt for terror suspects here at home? Why would we take from them the tools that have aided in the capture of over 400 terrorist suspects?

Renewing the PATRIOT Act will do this and more. It strikes a balance between national security and personal liberties. In the words of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, it is a better bill now than it was before.

Negotiators have addressed many concerns. A balance has been struck on national security letters. Nondisclosure requirements prevent terrorists from learning the progress of investigations and investigative techniques. New language allows recipients of NSL letters to overturn the nondisclosure requirements, if a judge finds there is no reason to believe that disclosures may endanger the national security of the United States, interfere with criminal, counterterrorism or counterintelligence investigation, interfere with diplomatic relations or endanger the life or physical safety of any person.

Could we allow anything else?

Language was added clarifying that libraries, where functioning in their traditional roles, are not subject to national security letters. The agreement removes the requirement that a person inform the FBI of the identity of any attorney to whom disclosure was made or will be made to obtain legal advice or assistance.

For those of us who care about port security—quite a few people have been talking about it—this legislation includes the Reducing Crime and Terrorism at America's Seaports Act of 2005.

Those who join me in supporting this measure will make it a Federal crime to use fraud or false pretenses to enter America's ports; establish a new, general Federal crime to interfere forcibly with inspections of vessels by Federal law enforcement or resist arrest or provide law enforcement officers with false information; add ''passenger vessels'' to the forms of mass transit protected against terrorist attacks under Federal law; make it a Federal crime to place any substance or device in the navigable waters of the United States with the intent to damage a vessel or its cargo or to interfere with maritime commerce; and make it a Federal crime to transport explosives, biological, chemical, radioactive weapons or nuclear material aboard a vessel in the United States, in waters subject to U.S. jurisdiction on the high seas or aboard a vessel of the United States.

In addition, I care very deeply about fighting the drug scourge sweeping rural America, especially in the Midwest. Folks in my State know all too well that methamphetamine is perhaps the most deadly, fiercely addictive, and rapidly spreading drug the United States has known. It is cheap, potent, and available everywhere.

During the past decade, while law enforcement officers continue to bust record numbers of clandestine labs, methamphetamine use in some communities has increased by as much as 300 percent.

The PATRIOT Act reauthorization includes the most comprehensive antimeth package ever introduced in the Congress by my colleagues Senator JIM TALENT of Missouri and Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN of California. This Combat Meth Act will make certain legitimate consumers have access to the medicine they need while cutting off the meth cooks from the large amounts of ingredients they need to cook meth.

For all of these reasons, we must reauthorize the PATRIOT Act now. Our terror fighters cannot wait, our ports cannot wait, and our communities suffering from the scourge of meth cannot wait.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

MILITARY RECRUITERS

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I rise to speak about a very important issue—access for our military recruiters on our high school campuses.

Later today, I will introduce a resolution in support of our military recruiters.

I rise and stand here today in a country free from tyranny, free from dictatorship, and free from oppression. I stand here today protected by the rights that are guaranteed to me by the Constitution of the United States. I am free to stand here because I am protected by the men and women of our nation's Armed Forces. It is because of our Nation's military that I enjoy the freedoms that are laid out in our country's Constitution.

These freedoms are enjoyed by every citizen of this great country.

The No Child Left Behind Act contains a provision that provides military recruiters and college and university recruiters with access to some student information. The intent behind this provision was to ensure that military recruiters were put on a level playing field with recruiters from our Nation's colleges and universities. At the time this language was included in NCLB military recruiters across the country were being denied access to student information that college and university recruiters were given full access to.

The text contained in No Child Left Behind is very simple. It states that ''each local educational agency receiving assistance under this Act shall provide, on a request made by military recruiters or an institution of higher education, access to secondary school students' names, addresses, and telephone listings.''

Recently, there have been numerous news reports on this topic. The debate

has swirled around a provision also in NCLB that allows a student or parent to request that contact information not be released to recruiters. School districts are required to inform parents and students that they have the option to make this request.

In some areas the debate on this provision has gone much further. The city of San Francisco recently voted in favor of Measure I, a symbolic measure that opposes, but does not forbid, military recruiting on public high school or college campuses. The city cannot forbid military recruiting at public high schools as doing so would put the schools at risk of losing all federal funding. I cannot fathom why the city passed this Measure. Students in San Francisco should have access to the same information that all other students have, and should be allowed to hear what the military has to offer them.

I understand the concerns surrounding privacy of personal information in today's society. However, I find it appalling that people have taken this provision and used it to rally against our troops, against our military system, and against our President.

We are here today because we are secured by the presence of our military that protects our freedoms. My question is why are we so frightened by the very instrument that helps keep us free?

Service in our armed forces is 100 percent voluntary and has been since the end of the Vietnam War. In order to maintain a voluntary force, the services must offer incentives to allow them to compete with the private sector for young, bright students about to graduate from high school. Recruiters search for the best and the brightest in our Nation's high schools to keep our forces strong and able to fight the forces that are against our way of life.

In the last 30 years, millions of young Americans have been given technical skills, received money for college tuition and preferred loans for first-time home purchases by choosing to serve in our military. Not only are these young soldiers given skills that can lead them to future employment, they are also given unique leadership training. Our military trains leaders not just for war, but for success in life.

Yet, it is perplexing to me that many parents today seem to look at military service as being akin to joining a radical cult or a violent gang. Military recruiters are going to our Nation's high schools to inform high school students of the opportunities that are available in our Armed Forces. Military recruiters are on campuses to provide information to students that is often not available in the mainstream media or in many high school counseling offices. Military recruiters are on high school campuses to dispel the many myths that surround service opportunities in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines and Coast Guard.

Some parents are concerned about reports of recruiter abuse. In fact, following televised reports of recruiter abuse, the U.S. Army stopped recruiting activities for one day to review procedures that its 7,500 recruiters use.

In one case the network reported a recruiter suggesting how a volunteer might cheat to pass a drug test, and in another, a sergeant threatened a prospect with arrest if he didn't report to a recruiting station. Two cases out of 7,500 Army recruiters operating out of some 1,700 recruiting stations nationwide prompted the Army to stand down, to refocus recruiters on their mission, reinforcing the Army's core values, and ensure its procedures were carried out consistently at all recruiting stations. It sounds like a pretty responsible reaction to me. It sounds like an institution concerned about doing things the right way.

We must not forget the brave young men and women who do sign up for a tour of duty with the military. They swear to uphold and to protect the Constitution. We must not forget they take that duty seriously. They protect each and every one of us from outside threats, not just threats of violence but also threats to our constitutionally protected freedoms of speech and religion.

In his book ''The Greatest Generation,'' Tom Brokaw recounts a generation of Americans who sacrificed all they had to preserve our freedoms. Young men even went so far as to lie about their age so they could enjoy the honor of fighting for our country in World War II. Their country needed them, and they responded with uncommon valor and courage. The crucible of war formed who we are as a country today. Today, our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines stand on the shoulders of those warriors. We celebrate their accomplishments in movies and books. We regale them with the honors they earned and deserve. I wonder what sort of message we are sending to today's youth if we honor the soldiers of yesterday but shun the soldiers of today.

My fear is that freedom is becoming almost too free, too entitled to more and more Americans. As long as we are free to switch cell phone service or download music from any Web site, we believe our freedoms are intact. But freedom is about so much more than that. Freedom is having the ability to speak our mind and stand for what we believe. Freedom means having the right to publicly disagree with the decisions of elected leaders. Freedom is a right, but it comes with a responsibility.

As a parent, I have the direct responsibility to teach my children about the honor in serving our fellow man, our community, and in serving our country. As parents, from the time our children are born, we worry about their health, the friends they keep, the decisions they make, and the grades they bring home from school. We worry about drugs, letting them drive, and about preparing them for a life after mom and dad. But when we shield young adults from the things that scare us as parents, we belittle our children. It is our responsibility to share the world with our children, in many cases, the good with the bad. It is our responsibility to instill in them a sense of pride in our country and in the freedom we enjoy.

We cannot shield our children from information about military service because in doing so, we underestimate our children's capacity to judge for themselves what their future should be. It is vital that our young adults in high school have access not only to future employment and educational opportunities but also to the opportunities provided in the U.S. military. And most importantly, it is absolutely necessary that our Nation's military have the opportunity to recruit the best and the brightest our Nation has to offer. If we continue to discriminate against our military recruiters, we risk undermining the well-being of our military. We risk fracturing the base on which our Army, our Navy, our Air Force and our Marines is built. It is vital that recruiters have access to our Nation's young adults to continue the traditions of our Armed Forces.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. I inform the Senator from Florida that there is approximately 8 minutes remaining of the time reserved for the majority leader; there is 30 minutes reserved for the Democratic leader. The Senator may request to speak out of turn and have his time allocated toward the Democratic leader's time.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I ask unanimous consent to do so.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Florida is recognized.

CONFISCATION OF SENIORS' PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I share with the Senate that there have been a couple of occurrences in Florida over the course of this recess that might be worth noting.

The first is, seniors were assured by the Food and Drug Administration 2 years ago that our senior citizens would not be harassed by the confiscation of their prescription drugs when they order those prescriptions by the Internet or by mail from Canada for a limited supply. The Food and Drug Administration assured me that the overall intent of the law was to stop the massive purchases of drugs out of State in which they would go on the black market, but that for senior citizens

seeking a 90-day supply, since the prescriptions are so much cheaper ordering them through Canada, there was not going to be the harassment of the confiscations.

That has dramatically changed. Over the course of the last week and a half, I have received over 100 complaints of senior citizens from all over Florida having their prescriptions, when ordered by mail or Internet from Canada, confiscated. This is serious business. This could be a matter of life and death for senior citizens who cannot afford to pay the retail price and are depending on that medicine in order to help them with whatever their ailments are—in some cases, life-threatening situations. Fortunately, we have not had any one of those reported to me, but the harassment has started.

I certainly hope there is no connection between this spike in the number of instances with Customs taking senior citizens' prescriptions. I hope there is no connection between that and trying to force senior citizens into the Medicare prescription drug benefit, the Medicare Part D. Naturally, seniors are quite resistant to the new plan.

We have talked in the Senate over and over, and I have offered amendments, all of which have had a majority vote, but under the parliamentary procedure of having to waive the Budget Act, I had to get 60 votes. I have gotten over 50 but not the 60 votes needed in order to delay the implementation of the prescription drug benefit, the deadline for signing up, which is May 15.

Naturally, seniors are resistant because they do not understand it. They are confused and in some cases bewildered. They have 40 to 50 plans to pick from. They are confused and they are frightened because if they do not pick a plan by the May deadline, they will be penalized 1 percent a month or 12 percent a year, or if they pick the wrong plan, they are stuck with that plan for a year and they have the fear that suddenly the need to change their prescription by their doctor may occur and the formulary they pick may not cover the new prescription.

This resistance is a fact. I hope we do not see any of this harassment connected with trying to force seniors into the prescription drug bill.

I call on the Department of Homeland Security, Customs, to stop harassing our senior citizens by confiscating their prescriptions for purchase of a short supply, which is bought at so much of a reduced cost.

That is not the total answer, just getting the drugs from Canada. That is bandaiding the problem. The problem is having a Medicare prescription drug benefit offered to senior citizens where Medicare can use its huge buying power of bulk purchases in order to bring down the price of the drugs, as the Veterans' Administration has been doing for the last two decades. But until we can get to that point, until we can change the law, until we can get the votes to change the law, in the meantime, some of our senior citizens who have trouble making financial ends meet have to buy their drugs through Canada at a much reduced price.

I bring this to the attention of the Senate. I bring it to the attention of Customs, as I have through correspondence. It is time to stop harassing our senior citizens.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COLEMAN). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask unanimous consent to have 12 minutes in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. MENENDEZ pertaining to the introduction of S. 2334 are located in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

ORDER FOR FILING DEADLINE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the filing deadline for all amendments to S. 2271 occur at 12 noon today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I yield back the remaining Republican time for morning business.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

USA PATRIOT ACT ADDITIONAL REAUTHORIZING AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2006

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 2271, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2271) to clarify that individuals who receive FISA orders can challenge nondisclosure requirements, that individuals who receive national security letters are not required to disclose the name of their attorney, that libraries are not wire or electronic communication service providers unless they provide specific services, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Frist Amendment No. 2895, to establish the enactment date of the Act.

Frist Amendment No. 2896 (to Amendment No. 2895), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 12:30 p.m. will be equally divided.

The Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I wish to speak about the USA PATRIOT Act. As you know, the Senate has recently agreed to another temporary extension of this act. We have twice since December been in a position of having to offer, instead of permanent reauthorization, a temporary fix. Yet at a time when so many in this body are continuing to talk about security, this one piece of legislation, in my humble opinion, has been more important in terms of protecting the security of the United States than anything else we have done since September 11.

This critical law, which, of course, provides law enforcement agencies with the vital tools necessary to fight and win the war on terror, should not be allowed to expire. I, frankly, am at a loss to explain why we are spending so much time trying to get to final closure on this legislation when the merits of the legislation seem to be so obvious—primarily by providing tools to law enforcement and intelligence agencies of this country, tools that are already in broad use in other aspects of law enforcement investigations.

Unfortunately, it seems to me that there has been a certain amount of hysteria whipped up over this to cause people to have unreasonable fear and concern about civil liberties, when, in fact, the balance between security and civil liberties has been struck in an entirely appropriate way in this legislation.

We must make it a top priority of the Senate to reauthorize this legislation as soon as possible, as it would be unconscionable to compromise the safety of the American people and undermine the progress we have made since 9/11 and delay critical investigations.

An agreement reached in December between the House and Senate conferees preserved the provisions of this act which have made America safer since 9/11 while increasing congressional and judicial oversight, which should alleviate the concerns of those who believe the law enforcement tools somehow endanger civil liberties. And even recently, the White House and leaders of the House and Senate have made additional concessions in an attempt to reach a final agreement to reauthorize the PATRIOT Act.

Unfortunately, it seems that there are a few who are continuing in their effort to stop reauthorization of the PATRIOT Act, insisting on imposing their will on a bipartisan majority of the Senate, the House, and the President of the United States. The handful of diehards who continue to oppose this legislation are simply unwilling to accept the compromise that has been agreed to by both Houses of Congress, despite efforts from all quarters to try to accommodate reasonable concerns. Most reasonable people would agree

that it is a practical impossibility for each legislator to get every single thing they want out of any particular piece of legislation, but that doesn't mean the American people should be left with nothing and be stripped bare of the protections the PATRIOT Act has been so effective at delivering.

The art of compromise is, at times, a bitter pill, particularly when matters of such profound consequence as our national security and waging the war on terror hang in the balance. I personally supported leaving sections 215, 213, and other provisions of the PATRIOT Act alone. I also wanted to add administrative subpoenas to the PATRIOT Act and to add judicial review for national security letters.

I also feel very strongly about ensuring that the 9/11 Commission's recommendations with regard to risk-based funding for homeland security grant moneys are implemented and personally pushed for such a provision during these negotiations. Senator SPECTER made it clear to me that he would try to seek consensus but that my demands would not be met in all regards.

While I did not get everything I wanted and while I believe what I wanted was in the best interests of my country, I support this bill. I am simply unwilling to return the American people to the pre-9/11 law enforcement tools which so poorly served our national interests at that time. And while this legislation is not perfect in every regard, it represents what I believe are the best efforts of the Congress to arrive at an acceptable compromise.

The national security has been well served by the PATRIOT Act since its original passage in a way that is both consistent with our national values and the protection of civil liberties. The war on terror must be waged in a manner consistent with American values and American principles.

The hysteria over this legislation is simply hard for me to understand. The fact that people in too many instances have not focused on the hard-fought attempts to balance our security and civil liberty concerns is, I believe, a disservice to the American people. This debate does not concern a typical policy disagreement about taxes or other issues; in fact, the stakes are much higher.

The PATRIOT Act was enacted in 2001 by an overwhelming bipartisan margin—98 to 1 in the Senate and 357 to 66 in the House. At that time, Senators on both sides of the aisle agreed that this legislation struck a wise and careful balance between national security and civil liberties.

The law, to date, has had a successful track record. In addition to helping prevent any terrorist attacks in this country since 9/11 and playing such a critical role in dismantling several terrorist cells within the United States, the Department of Justice inspector general has consistently found no systemic abuses of any of the act's provisions.

I support these recent concessions that have made this bill what it is today—and one in particular. Before these changes, a recipient of a 215 order seemingly could challenge the nondisclosure obligation at any time. The new revisions make clear that a recipient cannot challenge this requirement for 1 year, and it ensures that the conclusive presumption applies to these orders as well—something that was not clear before reaching this compromise agreement.

The remaining changes seemed to me to be quite sensible; that is, recipients of a 215 order or a national security letter do not have to tell the FBI that they have or will consult an attorney or that a library is not an electronic or wire communications provider unless, of course, they happen to be such a provider.

Prior to the PATRIOT Act, we know there were barriers that seriously hindered information sharing among law enforcement agencies and intelligence agencies, and those barriers imperiled our Nation. This was described by Patrick Fitzgerald in his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee. I quote:

> I was on a prosecution team in New York that began a criminal investigation of Osama bin Laden in early 1996. The team—prosecutors and FBI agents assigned to the criminal case—had access to a number of sources. We could talk to citizens. We could talk to local police officers. We could talk to foreign police officers. Even foreign intelligence personnel. We could talk to foreign citizens. And we did all of those things as often as we could. We could even talk to al-Qaida members—and we did. We actually called several members and associates of al-Qaida to testify before a grand jury in New York. And we even debriefed al-Qaida members overseas who agreed to become cooperating witnesses. But there was one group of people we were not permitted to talk to. Who? The FBI agents across the street from us in lower Manhattan assigned to a parallel intelligence investigation of Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida. We could not learn what information they had gathered. That was the wall.

I am confident I am not the only one who is astounded at that statement. Consider our progress in the war on terror since the PATRIOT Act's enactment: Information sharing between intelligence and law enforcement personnel has been critical in dismantling terrorist operations, including the Portland Seven in Oregon, as well as a terrorist cell in Lackawanna, NY.

It has helped prosecute several people involved in an al-Qaida drugs-for-weapons scheme in San Diego, two of whom have already pleaded guilty.

Furthermore, nine associates of an al-Qaida-associated Northern Virginia violent extremist group were convicted and sentenced to prison terms ranging from 4 years to life.

Two Yemeni citizens have been charged and convicted for conspiring to provide material support to al-Qaida and Hamas.

An individual has been convicted of perjury and illegally acting as an agent of the former Government of Iraq by a jury in January of 2004.

And the executive director of the Illinois-based Benevolence International Foundation, who has had a longstanding relationship with Osama bin Laden, pleaded guilty to racketeering and furthermore admitted that he diverted thousands of dollars from his charity organization to support Islamic militant groups in Bosnia and Chechnya.

These tools simply must remain available to those on the front lines who continue to wage the war on terror. The very safety of our Nation depends on it.

I would like to share with my colleagues—and perhaps some of them have seen this op-ed piece—a piece written by Debra Burlingame, the sister of Charles F. ''Chic'' Burlingame III, the pilot of American Airlines flight 77 which crashed into the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. This op-ed was originally published in the Wall Street Journal, and I believe it articulates precisely why this legislation must be reauthorized without delay.

I will read an excerpt, and I ask unanimous consent that the complete op-ed be printed in the RECORD following my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SUNUNU). Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, Ms. Burlingame writes:

> A mere four-and-a-half years after victims were forced to choose between being burned alive and jumping from 90 stories, it is frankly shocking that there is anyone in Washington who would politicize the Patriot Act. It is an insult to those who died to tell the American people that the organization posing the greatest threat to their liberty is not al Qaeda but the FBI. Hearing any member of Congress actually crow about ''killing'' or ''playing chicken'' with this critical legislation is as disturbing today as it would have been when Ground Zero was still smoldering. Today we know in far greater detail what not having it cost us.

She continues:

> The Senate will soon convene hearings on renewal of the Patriot Act—

And indeed we had those hearings—

> and the NSA terrorist surveillance program. A minority of Senators want to gamble with American lives and ''fix'' national security laws which they can't show are broken. They seek to eliminate or weaken anti-terrorism measures which take into account that the Cold War in its slow-moving, analog world of landlines and stationary targets is gone. The threat we face today is a completely new paradigm of global terrorist networks operating in a high-velocity digital age using the Web and fiber-optic technology. After four-and-a-half years without another terrorist attack, these senators think we're safe enough to cave in to the same civil liberties lobby that supported that deadly FISA wall in the first place. What if they, like those lawyers and judges, are simply wrong?
>
> Why should we allow enemies to annihilate us simply because we lack the clarity or resolve to strike a reasonable balance between

a healthy skepticism of government power and the need to take proactive measures to protect ourselves from such threats? The mantra of civil-liberties hard-liners is to ''question authority''—even when it is coming to our rescue—then blame that same authority when, hamstrung by civil liberties laws, it fails to save us. . . .More Americans should not die because the peace-at-any-cost fringe and antigovernment paranoids still fighting the ghost of Nixon hate George Bush more than they fear al Qaeda. Ask the American people what they want. They will say that they want the commander in chief to use all reasonable means to catch the people who are trying to rain terror on our cities. Those who cite the soaring principle of individual liberty do not appear to appreciate that our enemies are not seeking to destroy individuals, but rather whole populations.

She concludes:

The public has listened to years of stinging revelations detailing how the government tied its own hands in stopping the devastating attacks of September 11. It is an irresponsible violation of the public trust for members of Congress to weaken the Patriot Act or jeopardize the NSA terrorist surveillance program because of the same illusory theories that cost us so dearly before, or worse, for rank partisan advantage. If they do, and our country sustains yet another catastrophic attack that these antiterrorism tools could have prevented, the phrase ''connect the dots'' will resonate again—but this time it will refer to the trail of innocent American blood which leads directly to the Senate floor.

I urge my colleagues to heed the words of Ms. Burlingame. And today I join my voice with hers and the millions of Americans who are calling for us to do our duty and to do our utmost to protect this country and the American people.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

EXHIBIT 1

[From opinionjournal.com, Jan. 30, 2006]

OUR RIGHT TO SECURITY

(By Debra Burlingame)

One of the most excruciating images of the September 11 attacks is the sight of a man who was trapped in one of the World Trade Center towers. Stripped of his suit jacket and tie and hanging on to what appears to be his office curtains, he is seen trying to lower himself outside a window to the floor immediately below. Frantically kicking his legs in an effort to find a purchase, he loses his grip, and falls.

That horrific scene and thousands more were the images that awakened a sleeping nation on that long, brutal morning. Instead of overwhelming fear or paralyzing self-doubt, the attacks were met with defiance, unity and a sense of moral purpose. Following the heroic example of ordinary citizens who put their fellow human beings and the public good ahead of themselves, the country's leaders cast aside politics and personal ambition and enacted the USA Patriot Act just 45 days later.

A mere four-and-a-half years after victims were forced to choose between being burned alive and jumping from 90 stories, it is frankly shocking that there is anyone in Washington who would politicize the Patriot Act. It is an insult to those who died to tell the American people that the organization posing the greatest threat to their liberty is not al Qaeda but the FBI. Hearing any member of Congress actually crow about ''killing'' or ''playing chicken'' with this critical legislation is as disturbing today as it would have been when Ground Zero was still smoldering. Today we know in far greater detail what not having it cost us.

Critics contend that the Patriot Act was rushed into law in a moment of panic. The truth is, the policies and guidelines it corrected had a long, troubled history and everybody who had to deal with them knew it. The ''wall'' was a tortuous set of rules promulgated by Justice Department lawyers in 1995 and imagined into law by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) court. Conceived as an added protection for civil liberties provisions already built into the statute, it was the wall and its real-world ramifications that hardened the failure-to-share culture between agencies, allowing early information about 9/11 hijackers Khalid al-Mihdhar and Nawaf al-Hazmi to fall through the cracks. More perversely, even after the significance of these terrorists and their presence in the country was known by the FBI's intelligence division, the wall prevented it from talking to its own criminal division in order to hunt them down.

Furthermore, it was the impenetrable FISA guidelines and fear of provoking the FISA court's wrath if they were transgressed that discouraged risk-averse FBI supervisors from applying for a FISA search warrant in the Zacarias Moussaoui case. The search, finally conducted on the afternoon of 9/11, produced names and phone numbers of people in the thick of the 9/11 plot, so many fertile clues that investigators believe that at least one airplane, if not all four, could have been saved.

In 2002, FISA's appellate level Court of Review examined the entire statutory scheme for issuing warrants in national security investigations and declared the ''wall'' a nonsensical piece of legal overkill, based neither on express statutory language nor reasonable interpretation of the FISA statute. The lower court's attempt to micromanage the execution of national security warrants was deemed an assertion of authority which neither Congress or the Constitution granted it. In other words, those lawyers and judges who created, implemented and so assiduously enforced the FISA guidelines were wrong and the American people paid dearly for it.

Despite this history, some members of Congress contend that this process-heavy court is agile enough to rule on quickly needed National Security Agency (NSA) electronic surveillance warrants. This is a dubious claim. Getting a FISA warrant requires a multistep review involving several lawyers at different offices within the Department of Justice. It can take days, weeks, even months if there is a legal dispute between the principals. ''Emergency'' 72-hour intercepts require sign-offs by NSA lawyers and preapproval by the attorney general before surveillance can be initiated. Clearly, this is not conducive to what Gen. Michael Hayden, principal deputy director of national intelligence, calls ''hot pursuit'' of al Qaeda conversations.

The Senate will soon convene hearings on renewal of the Patriot Act and the NSA terrorist surveillance program. A minority of senators want to gamble with American lives and ''fix'' national security laws, which they can't show are broken. They seek to eliminate or weaken anti-terrorism measures which take into account that the Cold War and its slow-moving, analog world of landlines and stationary targets is gone. The threat we face today is a completely new paradigm of global terrorist networks operating in a high-velocity digital age using the Web and fiber-optic technology. After four-and-a-half years without another terrorist attack, these senators think we're safe enough to cave in to the same civil liberties lobby that supported that deadly FISA wall in the first place. What if they, like those lawyers and judges, are simply wrong?

Meanwhile, the media, mouthing phrases like ''Article II authority,'' ''separation of powers'' and ''right to privacy,'' are presenting the issues as if politics have nothing to do with what is driving the subject matter and its coverage. They want us to forget four years of relentless ''connect-the-dots'' reporting about the missed chances that ''could have prevented 9/11.'' They have discounted the relevance of references to the two 9/11 hijackers who lived in San Diego. But not too long ago, the media itself reported that phone records revealed that five or six of the hijackers made extensive calls overseas.

NBC News aired an ''exclusive'' story in 2004 that dramatically recounted how al-Hazmi and al-Mihdhar, the San Diego terrorists who would later hijack American Airlines flight 77 and fly it into the Pentagon, received more than a dozen calls from an al Qaeda ''switchboard'' inside Yemen where al-Mihdhar's brother-in-law lived. The house received calls from Osama Bin Laden and relayed them to operatives around the world.

Senior correspondent Lisa Myers told the shocking story of how, ''The NSA had the actual phone number in the United States that the switchboard was calling, but didn't deploy that equipment, fearing it would be accused of domestic spying.'' Back then, the NBC script didn't describe it as ''spying on Americans.'' Instead, it was called one of the ''missed opportunities that could have saved 3,000 lives.''

Another example of opportunistic coverage concerns the Patriot Act's ''library provision.'' News reports have given plenty of ink and airtime to the ACLU's unsupported claims that the government has abused this important records provision. But how many Americans know that several of the hijackers repeatedly accessed computers at public libraries in New Jersey and Florida, using personal Internet accounts to carry out the conspiracy? Al-Mihdhar and al-Hazmi logged on four times at a college library in New Jersey where they purchased airline tickets for AA 77 and later confirmed their reservations on Aug. 30. In light of this, it is ridiculous to suggest that the Justice Department has the time, resources or interest in ''investigating the reading habits of law abiding citizens.''

We now have the ability to put remote control cameras on the surface of Mars. Why should we allow enemies to annihilate us simply because we lack the clarity or resolve to strike a reasonable balance between a healthy skepticism of government power and the need to take proactive measures to protect ourselves from such threats? The mantra of civil-liberties hard-liners is to ''question authority''—even when it is coming to our rescue—then blame that same authority when, hamstrung by civil liberties laws, it fails to save us. The old laws that would prevent FBI agents from stopping the next al-Mihdhar and al-Hazmi were built on the bedrock of a 35-year history of dark, defeating mistrust. More Americans should not die because the peace-at-any-cost fringe and antigovernment paranoids still fighting the ghost of Nixon hate George Bush more than they fear al Qaeda. Ask the American people what they want. They will say that they want the commander in chief to use all reasonable means to catch the people who are trying to rain terror on our cities. Those who cite the soaring principle of individual liberty do not appear to appreciate that our enemies are not seeking to destroy individuals, but whole populations.

Three weeks before 9/11, an FBI agent with the bin Laden case squad in New York learned that al-Mihdhar and al-Hazmi were in this country. He pleaded with the national security gatekeepers in Washington to launch a nationwide manhunt and was summarily told to stand down. When the FISA

Court of Review tore down the wall in 2002, it included in its ruling the agent's Aug. 29, 2001, email to FBI headquarters: ''Whatever has happened to this—someday someone will die—and wall or not—the public will not understand why we were not more effective and throwing every resource we had at certain problems. Let's hope the National Security Law Unit will stand behind their decisions then, especially since the biggest threat to us now, [bin Laden], is getting the most 'protection.' ''

The public has listened to years of stinging revelations detailing how the government tied its own hands in stopping the devastating attacks of September 11. It is an irresponsible violation of the public trust for members of Congress to weaken the Patriot Act or jeopardize the NSA terrorist surveillance program because of the same illusory theories that cost us so dearly before, or worse, for rank partisan advantage. If they do, and our country sustains yet another catastrophic attack that these antiterrorism tools could have prevented, the phrase ''connect the dots'' will resonate again—but this time it will refer to the trail of innocent American blood which leads directly to the Senate floor.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, later today we will have a cloture vote on S. 2271. We should not end debate on this bill, and we should not pass this bill. Doing so will only help implement the deeply flawed deal that was struck with the White House to reauthorize the PATRIOT Act without enacting the core civil liberties protections for which so many of us have fought. So I urge my colleagues to vote no on cloture.

Everybody in this body wants to reauthorize the PATRIOT Act. Many of the expiring provisions are entirely noncontroversial. But we also need to fix the provisions that went too far, that do not contain the checks and balances necessary to protect our rights and freedoms. This reauthorization process is our chance to get it right, and moving forward with this bill takes us one step closer to wasting that chance.

Back in December, 46 Senators voted against cloture on the PATRIOT Act conference report. I think it is clear by now that the deal makes only minor changes to that conference report, which remains as flawed today as it was 2 months ago. The Senator from Pennsylvania, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee and the primary proponent of the conference report in this body, was quoted as saying that the changes that the White House agreed to were ''cosmetic.'' And then he said, according to the AP:

But sometimes cosmetics will make a beauty out of a beast and provide enough cover for Senators to change their vote.

Since this deal was announced, editorial pages of newspapers also have pointed out how minimal these changes are and have urged Senators not to change their votes. Let me read a few examples.

The editorial board of the Roanoke Times in Virginia had this to say on February 11:

A compromise that is expected to clear the way for the law's reauthorization is a victory of fear over strength. The ''compromise'' the White House and congressional leaders reached this week on reauthorization of the USA PATRIOT Act is a compromise of the basic freedoms that define this Nation. The Bush administration has made a few minor concessions, enough to give the handful of defiant Senate Republicans and some of their Democratic allies cover to extend the broad antiterrorism bill and claim they have done what they could to protect the civil liberties of innocent Americans. They have not.

That same day from the New York Times we heard this:

The PATRIOT Act has been one of the few issues on which Congress has shown backbone lately. Last year, it refused to renew expiring parts of the act until greater civil liberties protections were added. But key members of the Senate have now caved, agreeing to renew these provisions in exchange for only minimal improvements. At a time when the public is growing increasingly concerned about the lawlessness of the Bush administration's domestic spying, the Senate should insist that any reauthorization agreement do more to protect Americans against improper secret searches.

From my own home State, this is from the Wisconsin State Journal on February 18:

In recent weeks, Senators have worked with the White House to produce a compromise. However, the compromise remains far short of what is required to protect Americans' civil liberties. Regrettably, the Senate has backed down from its earlier stand and is poised to pass the inadequate bill.

These editorial boards and millions of Americans across the country recognize what everybody in this body already knows: that this deal makes only minor—yes, cosmetic—changes to the conference report that was blocked in December. The deal is woefully inadequate, and let me explain why.

I start by reminding my colleagues of the context for this deal. Back in November and December, when so many of us were fighting for improvements to the conference report, we made very clear what we were asking for. We laid out five issues that needed to be addressed to get our support, and I am going to read quickly excerpts from a letter we sent explaining our concerns because I think it will help demonstrate why this deal is so bad and so inadequate. Here are the problems we identified and the changes we asked for several months ago.

On section 215, we said:

The draft conference report would allow the Government to obtain sensitive personal information on a mere showing of relevance. This would allow Government fishing expeditions. As business groups like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce have argued, the Government should be required to convince a judge that the records they are seeking have some connection to a suspected terrorist or spy.

Next, we discussed gag orders, both for section 215 orders and national security letters:

The draft conference report does not permit the recipient of a section 215 order to challenge its automatic, permanent gag order. Courts have held that similar restrictions violate the First Amendment. The recipient of a section 215 order is entitled to meaningful judicial review of the gag order.

The draft conference report does not provide meaningful judicial review of an NSL's gag order. It requires the court to accept as conclusive the Government's assertion that a gag order should not be lifted, unless the court determines the Government is acting in bad faith. The recipients of NSLs are entitled to meaningful judicial review of a gag order.

We then moved on to national security letters more generally. The draft conference report does not sunset the NSL authority. In light of recent revelations about possible abuses of NSLs, the NSL provision should sunset in no more than 4 years when the Congress will have an opportunity to review the use of this power.

Finally, we addressed sneak-and-peek search warrants. The draft conference report requires the Government to notify the target of a sneak-and-peek search no earlier than 30 days after the search rather than within 7 days as the Senate bill provides and as pre-PATRIOT Act judicial decisions required. The conference report should include a presumption that notice will be provided within a significantly shorter period in order to protect fourth amendment rights. The availability of additional 90-day extensions means that a shorter initial timeframe should not be a hardship on the Government.

Again, these quotes are from a letter we sent late last year. Now, you might ask, in this newly announced deal on the PATRIOT Act, have any of these five problems been solved?

The answer is no, not a single one. Only one of these issues has even been partially addressed by this deal, but it has not been fixed.

This deal only makes a few small changes. First, it would permit judicial review of section 215 gag orders, but under conditions that would make it very difficult for anyone to obtain meaningful judicial review. Under the deal, judicial review can only take place after a year has passed, and it can only be successful if the recipient of the section 215 order proves that the Government has acted in bad faith. As many have argued in the context of the national security letters, now that is a virtually impossible standard to meet. We need meaningful judicial review of these gag orders, not just the illusion of it.

Second, the deal would specifically allow the Government to serve national security letters on libraries if the library comes within the current requirements of the NSL statute. This is a provision that appears to just restate current law. Even the American

Library Association has called it nothing other than a fig leaf.

Third, the deal would clarify that people who receive a national security letter or a section 215 order would not have to tell the FBI if they consult with an attorney. Now, this last change is a positive step, but it is only one relatively minor change. So that is what we are left with: one relatively minor improvement. That is nowhere near enough.

Ordinarily, when we debate a flawed bill such as this one, we at least have the chance to improve it on the Senate floor by offering amendments, and I have been trying to do just that to make sure we don't miss the opportunity to address the core problem with the PATRIOT Act that so many of us have been fighting to fix. Before the recess, I filed four amendments to S. 2271, but I was prevented from calling them up because the majority leader used the procedural tactic of filling the amendment tree in order to prevent Senators from offering and getting votes on amendments. Using procedural maneuvers like this to prevent the Senate from debating and voting on amendments is an insult to the institution, and it is an insult to every one of my colleagues. We are being told that we have no choice but to accept the deal that a few Members cut with the White House, without being allowed to even try to change a single word.

We do have a choice—to oppose cloture on this bill and insist that any deal include meaningful civil liberties protections. I don't know if the majority leader fears that my amendments would actually pass or if he just wants to protect Senators from having to explain why they oppose basic protections for law-abiding Americans, but that should not be how the Senate does its business. Offering, debating, and voting on amendments is what the Senate is supposed to be all about. That is how we are supposed to craft legislation. Trying to ram this deal through without a real amending process is a cynical maneuver that we should all reject, regardless of how we may feel about the merits of the bill.

If my colleagues want to vote against my amendments, that is their right. But no one has the right to turn this body into a rubberstamp.

Let's take a step back and consider the process that got us here today. As we know, conference reports are not amendable. They come to this body as a take-it-or-leave-it proposition. Those are the rules, and we all understand them and play by them. In December, we understood that. In December, we just said no. We said no to the PATRIOT Act conference report.

Now we have a new bill, the product of a side deal with the White House, that is essentially an amendment to the conference report. It is even drafted that way. Each section of the bill amends the underlying law, as amended by the conference report. That is right. The bill we are considering today amends a law that hasn't even been passed by the Senate, much less signed into law. As I understand it, this bill, should both Houses of Congress pass it, will have to sit on the President's desk unsigned until the President signs the conference report bill into law.

The proponents of this deal want to effectively amend the conference report which couldn't pass the Senate in December, even though conference reports are unamendable, and they want to do it by circumventing the regular legislative process with a bill that no one is being allowed to amend, even though the bill did not go through committee, let alone a conference. How is that fair? Why should a handful of members of this body be able to amend an unamendable conference report with a deal struck by the White House, and then prevent the Senate from working its will on that deal?

How can one group of Senators amend the conference report but prevent other Senators from trying to do the same thing? How is that possible?

The answer is that it is not possible unless the Senate lets it happen. And the vote we will have later today is the vote where we will find out if the Senate will let it happen.

I hope even colleagues who may support the deal will oppose such a sham process. It makes no sense to agree to end debate without a guarantee that we will be allowed to actually try to improve the bill, and it is a discourtesy to all Senators, not just me, to try to ram through controversial legislation without the chance to improve it.

My amendments are limited and reasonable. I spoke about them at length before the recess, but let me just take a few minutes to explain again what they would do.

First, amendment No. 2892 would implement the standard for obtaining section 215 orders that was in the Senate bill that the Judiciary Committee approved by a vote of 18 to 0, and that was agreed to in the Senate without objection. This is obviously a very reasonable amendment that every Senator in one way or another has basically supported.

It took hard work, but the Judiciary Committee came up with language on section 215 that protects innocent Americans, while also allowing the Government to do what it needs to do to investigate and prevent terrorism. The Senate standard would require the Government to convince a judge that a person has some connection to terrorism or espionage before obtaining their sensitive records.

The Senate standard is the following: One, that the records pertain to a terrorist or spy; two, that the records pertain to an individual in contact with or known to a suspected terrorist or spy; or—and I emphasize ''or''—three, that the records are relevant to the activities of a suspected terrorist or spy. That is the standard my amendment would impose.

This would not limit the types of records that the Government could obtain, and it does not go as far to protect law-abiding Americans as I might prefer, but it would make sure the Government cannot go on fishing expeditions into the records of innocent people.

The conference report did away with this delicate compromise, replacing the three-prong test with a simple and quite broad relevance standard which could arguably justify the collection of all kinds of information about perfectly law-abiding Americans.

Of all the concerns that have been raised about the PATRIOT Act since it was passed in 2001, section 215 is the one that has received the most public attention, and rightly so. A reauthorization bill that doesn't fix this provision, in my view, has no credibility.

My second amendment is amendment No. 2893, which would ensure the recipients of business records orders under section 215 of the PATRIOT Act and also recipients of national security letters can get meaningful judicial review of the gag orders they are subject to.

Under the conference report, as modified by the Sununu bill, recipients of these documents would theoretically have the ability to challenge the gag orders in court, but the standard for getting the gag orders overturned would be virtually impossible to meet. In order to prevail in challenging the NSL or section 215 gag order, the recipient would have to prove that any certification by the Government that disclosure would harm national security or impair diplomatic relations was made in bad faith. There would be what many have called a conclusive presumption that the gag order stands, unless the recipient can prove that the Government acted in bad faith. Again, I simply don't think that anyone could reasonably call this meaningful judicial review.

My amendment would eliminate the bad faith showing currently required for overturning both section 215 and NSL gag orders. And it would no longer require recipients of section 215 orders to wait a year before they can challenge the accompanying gag orders, which is actually a new requirement in the Sununu bill.

My third amendment, amendment No. 2891, would add to the conference report one additional 4-year sunset provision. It would sunset the national security letter authorities that were expanded by the PATRIOT Act. It would simply add that sunset to the already existing 4-year sunsets that are in the conference report with respect to section 206, section 215, and the so-called lone wolf provision.

National security letters, or NSLs, are finally starting to get the attention they deserve. This authority was expanded by sections 358 and 505 of the PATRIOT Act. The issue of NSLs has flown under the radar for years, even though many of us have been trying to bring more public attention to it.

National security letters are issued by the FBI to businesses to obtain certain kinds of records without any—any—sort of court approval whatsoever. NSLs can be used to obtain three types of business records: subscriber and transactional information related to Internet and phone usage; credit reports; and financial records, a category that has been expanded to include records from all kinds of everyday businesses such as jewelers, car dealers, travel agents, and even casinos. This is a very broad power. I can think of no reason Congress would not want to place a sunset on these authorities to ensure we have the opportunity to take a close look at them.

Finally, my fourth amendment, amendment No. 2894, concerns so-called sneak-and-peek searches, whereby the Government can secretly search people's houses in everyday criminal investigations and not provide notice of the search until afterward. The key issue here is how long the Government should be allowed to wait, at least in most cases, before it notifies individuals that their homes have been searched. The Senate bill said 7 days, 7 days should be the presumption, with the ability to get extensions if necessary, but the conference report does away with that and instead allows a delay of 30 days in most cases.

My amendment would restore the key component in the Senate compromise by requiring that subjects of sneak-and-peek searches be notified of the search within 7 days unless a judge grants an extension of that time because there is good reason to still keep the search secret.

It makes no other change in the conference report other than changing 30 days to 7 days.

Those are my amendments. They are eminently reasonable. They are consistent with provisions that we approved in the Senate last year or they were central to the concerns raised by so many Senators late last year. So these are obviously not extreme ideas, and the Senate should be allowed to vote on these four amendments. All of us have as much right as the Senators who struck a deal with the White House to try to amend the conference report.

I am happy to report that the Senator from Pennsylvania, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, thinks these are reasonable amendments, too. In fact, he thinks they are so reasonable that late yesterday he announced that he is going to combine them into a single bill and introduce it today and try to move it through the Judiciary Committee. That is right. The chairman of the Judiciary Committee, the chief proponent in this body of the PATRIOT Act reauthorization conference report and of the White House deal the Senate is being asked to ratify, has taken the four amendments I just described and, with a few minor tweaks, he has introduced them as a bill.

I must say, I guess I am flattered and, of course, I will support that bill, but there is an alternative to the lengthy and uncertain legislative process that awaits the chairman's new bill, and that is to simply allow the Senate to vote on my amendments this week. The chairman could offer them with me. We could make a pretty powerful team on this issue, maybe. We have the perfect and logical vehicle for these amendments to the PATRIOT Act before us right now. All we need to do is add the chairman's reasonable proposals to this bill and send it to the House, where it would almost certainly pass if the leadership would simply allow it to be voted on.

These provisions, most of which come right out of the bill that passed the Senate without objection last July, could become law in a matter of weeks rather than a year or more from now, if ever.

My amendments and Senator SPECTER's bill are simply what the bipartisan group asked for back in December when we blocked the PATRIOT Act reauthorization conference report. Our requests were reasonable then, and they are reasonable now. The only reason we are considering a package that doesn't include them is that the White House played hardball, and the decision was made by some to capitulate.

Mr. President, I oppose the flawed deal we are being asked to ratify, and I oppose the sham process that the Senate is facing here. We still have not fixed some of the most significant problems of the PATRIOT Act, and if we allow the conference report to go through, the chairman's sincere hopes notwithstanding, I fear that we will lose that chance for at least another 4 years. So I must oppose cloture on this bill, which will allow the deal to go forward.

Before I yield the floor, let me ask one more time for unanimous consent to set the pending amendments aside so that I may call up amendment No. 2892, the amendment to modify the standard for section 215 orders.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as Senator from New Hampshire, I object.

Objection is heard.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, that objection says it all. I urge my colleagues to vote no on cloture, not only because this deal is flawed but also because of the tactics being used to prevent votes on reasonable, relevant amendments—reasonable, relevant amendments that would improve the flawed bill we are debating.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SUNUNU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BURR). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SUNUNU. Mr. President, I want to speak briefly about the bill before us, a bill that I introduced and the details of which I helped work out over a period of 5 or 6 weeks following the delay of the conference report to reauthorize the PATRIOT Act at the end of last year.

I recognize that this legislation, like almost any piece of legislation that is dealt with in Congress and in the Senate, in particular, represents a compromise. If you pursue every piece of legislation insisting that you get everything you asked for in that bill, in all likelihood you will never get anything you are seeking, and you certainly would not be able to count on the long-term support of others in this institution who might have requests or initiatives with which you might not agree. A compromise is always necessary.

But I think in this case the legislation represents a substantial step forward in terms of better safeguarding our civil liberties from where we were with the current law and, equally important, allows us to lock in, to get enacted into law a number of other improvements that many of us worked very hard on in a bipartisan way.

I understand that Senator FEINGOLD doesn't support the legislation. That is certainly his right, his prerogative. But I think he shortchanges the nature of these improvements.

I want to touch on the three elements of this bill so that all Senators and the public understand how these three provisions take us forward. Maybe the agreement represented in this bill does not move us as far forward as he or I or others in the Senate might like, but its moves us forward nonetheless.

First, in this bill, we create an explicit review of the gag order that accompanies a 215 subpoena. He has criticized the fact that there is a 12-month waiting period for taking that gag order before a judge.

In our legislation, the SAFE Act, we had a 3-month waiting period. We asked for a 3-month waiting period, and we ended up with a 12-month waiting period. That is the nature of compromise, but we did get an explicit judicial review of the gag order. I think the principle that any gag order be given an opportunity for review before a judge is not only a step forward but a victory on principle, which is extremely important in this legislation, and I think it will guide us in the future when we might deal with similar questions.

Second, we struck a provision in the delayed conference report that requires the recipient of a national security letter to disclose the name of their attorney to the FBI. That is a provision that doesn't occur anywhere else in the law. It is a provision that I think could have discouraged people from seeking legal advice. And in the case of a national security letter—a subpoena issued without the approval of a judge—we are not talking about a few

dozen subpoenas or a few dozen individuals or businesses affected; we are talking about tens of thousands. Striking that requirement regarding the recipient of an NSL notifying the FBI the name of their attorney, I think, again, is a very important step forward not only in encouraging people to seek legal advice but also a very important principle to set down in this bill.

A third improvement which was not even considered in the remarks of Senator FEINGOLD is clarification that a library engaged in the traditional role of lending books, providing books to patrons in digital format, or providing access to the Internet, is not subject to a national security letter. This is an important clarification of congressional intent, an important clarification of the existing law which, unfortunately, is not clear on this point.

It is not clear because the underlying law uses definitions that were written 20 years ago before the age of the Internet. I hope the Judiciary Committee will take up a full review and evaluation of the definitions and the standards regarding technology and the underlying law that is referenced here. In lieu of that, the least we can do is provide clarification as to how and when this law applies to institutions such as libraries. We have done so in a positive and meaningful way.

There are two areas Senator FEINGOLD mentioned where we had not made progress. I am more than willing to recognize we did not get everything asked for, even as we significantly improved the conference report. One is the standard of conclusive presumption which is a standard he does not support. I do not support imposing this standard of inclusive presumption for overturning the 215 and NSL gag orders, but the fact remains, as was pointed out by Chairman SPECTER during our original debate at the end of last year, that this is a standard that was in the Senate bill that was passed unanimously last summer. It is quite challenging tactically to try to negotiate out a provision that all Senators supported and voted for in the original Senate bill.

The second issue is the most problematic, the one where I would like to have made more progress. That is in changing the standard for getting a 215 subpoena from one of mere relevance to terrorism investigation, as is the current law and the standard in the conference report, to having a clear connection to a suspected or known terrorist or foreign power. We did not succeed in getting an improvement to the standard itself. However, through the course of negotiations, because of the work done by me and Senator FEINGOLD and others, we were able to get other requirements and criteria to be met by the government before a 215 subpoena can be issued which I will speak to in a moment.

These three provisions, again, are significant steps forward from the delayed conference report. They are a step forward in the very areas that were raised as concerns at the end of the session. In conversations with Senator FEINGOLD and Senator CRAIG and others after we defeated cloture on the conference report in December, we came back to the four priorities about which most of our discussions with the administration took place. We made progress on two of those priorities and added the provision clarifying the applicability of national security letters to libraries. That is a real success, indeed.

It is unfortunate in this debate on the underlying bill has included language such as ''capitulation'' and ''caving.'' But it certainly does not bother me. I am very comfortable with the process we used to get these improvements. I am certainly very comfortable with the stand I took, the priorities I raised, and the end result as far as this reauthorization process goes. The conference report is a significant improvement over current law and the bill before us today is a significant improvement to the conference report. However, it is unfair to those Members who might not have had the opportunity to work directly on these issues in Judiciary or directly in our working group but feel this is a good, appropriate improvement and a good compromise, to suggest that they are only changing their vote for political reasons. There were many individuals—Democrats and Republicans—who were never willing to take a stand on this issue, even though they may have agreed with Senator FEINGOLD, me, or others, about our concerns. They may have wished the issue would go away. There were some Members who claimed to support us but, frankly, when given the opportunity to weigh in with the administration or to help move the process forward, they chose not to.

It is unfair to criticize those who worked with us—Democrats and Republicans—to push this issue forward, to make these improvements, to suddenly bring their motivation into question when they decide to support a compromise. I do not think that serves the institution of the Senate well, especially as we had before the recess a 93-to-6 vote to move forward. We have leadership on both sides of the aisle supporting this package. I think the ultimate vote on final passage of my bill and the delayed conference report will yield a very strong bipartisan agreement also.

We can take issue with the level of progress that was made, we can take issue with the underlying substance of the original PATRIOT Act, the conference report, or these additional improvements, but everyone I have dealt with in this process has worked in a very direct, straightforward way. There has been a desire to find common ground, and in finding that common ground, to come to a consensus that allowed this conference report to move forward.

In addition to the three improvements I described, we had previously gained improvements in a number of other areas in the conference report. I talked about the 215 standard and the fact we were not successful in changing the standard as it exists in current law. We were successful, though, in getting into the conference report the requirement that a statement of facts is provided, a statement of articulable facts supporting the 215 subpoena request. We now have minimization requirements in the conference report that require the Justice Department to eliminate extraneous information, information collected on innocent Americans, and to report to Congress exactly how that is done. We were successful in adding clarity to the roving wiretap provision so it is less likely to be abused or misused. We were able to improve the sneak-and-peek search warrant.

Senator FEINGOLD indicated we supported a 7-day notification period. In the bill we have a 30-day notification period. The original PATRIOT Act contains no specific requirement on notice other than that notice must be given to the subject of a search ''in a reasonable amount of time,'' which I think everyone would recognize leaves things to the whim of a prosecutor or a judge unnecessarily.

We have 4-year sunsets for the most controversial provisions of this bill, including the 215 subpoena power, the roving wiretaps, and the lone wolf provisions.

Through the work of Senator LEAHY, in particular, we were able to get a criminal penalty for inadvertent disclosure of national security letters dropped from the conference report. All of these represent significant changes from the original act, significant changes included in the conference report. And in addition to the three changes in this underlying legislation, we have a better product and one that will receive strong bipartisan support.

I look forward to passage of the bill. I was pleased to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in getting this done. In doing so, in forcing us to take more time and forcing the administration to add additional protections for civil liberties to the legislation and putting together a bipartisan group willing to demand these things, we sent an important message, a message that we have a group willing to work in Congress to achieve these improvements and a message to the administration that when we are dealing with these issues, they need to be engaged and active and working toward consensus from the very beginning of the process.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 12:30 p.m. having arisen, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:30 p.m., recessed until 2:14 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. VOINOVICH).

USA PATRIOT ACT ADDITIONAL REAUTHORIZING AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2006—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, in his capacity as a Senator from the State of Ohio, suggests the absence of a quorum.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, in a few minutes the Senate is going to vote on whether one small group of Senators, with the blessing of the majority leader, can effectively amend a conference report while other Senators are precluded from offering amendments by a procedural tactic. I urge my colleagues, regardless of their views on the White House deal or PATRIOT Act reauthorization, to vote against cloture. Senators should not be precluded from offering amendments to important pieces of legislation.

In December, 46 Senators voted against cloture on the PATRIOT Act reauthorization conference report. The deal we are asked to bless today makes only minor or, in the words of the Senator from Pennsylvania, ''cosmetic'' changes to that conference report. But regardless of whether you agree with me that the deal does not address the key civil liberties issues identified as problems with the conference report in December, there is no question this is a deal the vast majority of the Senate had no role in. A few Senators worked out a few changes with the White House, and we are now being asked to take it or leave it. That is not how the Senate is supposed to work.

I have filed four reasonable amendments. They reflect provisions that were included in the bill the Senate passed in July without objection or that were central to the concerns raised by so many Senators late last year. They are so reasonable the Senator from Pennsylvania plans to introduce a bill incorporating them and has pledged to pursue it after the conference report becomes law. There is no reason we should put off addressing these important concerns that long when we could be debating and voting on them this week.

I am also willing to have time agreements limiting debate on my amendments as long as they get votes. But, again, the majority leader has simply said no. He has filled the amendment tree, effectively blocking me or any other Senator from trying to improve this bill during debate. The majority leader has told us the conference report will be amended by this deal cut with the White House by a few Senators, and there is nothing the rest of us can do about it.

But, of course, there is something we can do about it. We can reject this parliamentary game. These kinds of strong-arm tactics are not right. They are an abuse of the process. They are beneath the Senate, and I hope my colleagues will send a strong message that it will not be tolerated on this bill or any other bill. So I urge my colleagues to vote no on cloture and to allow the Senate to consider amendments to improve the PATRIOT Act.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MAKING AVAILABLE FUNDS FOR THE LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, 2006—MOTION TO PROCEED

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I now move to proceed to Calendar No. 363, S. 2320, the LIHEAP bill, and I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to S. 2320: a bill to make available funds included in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program for fiscal year 2006, and for other purposes.

Bill Frist, Lindsey Graham, John Warner, Norm Coleman, Lisa Murkowski, George Allen, Lamar Alexander, Elizabeth Dole, Rick Santorum, Susan Collins, Mitch McConnell, Ted Stevens, Christopher Bond, George Voinovich, John Thune, Johnny Isakson, Orrin Hatch, Craig Thomas.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I now withdraw the motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion to proceed is withdrawn.

USA PATRIOT ACT ADDITIONAL REAUTHORIZING AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2006—Continued

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on S. 2271: to clarify that individuals who receive FISA orders can challenge nondisclosure requirements, that individuals who receive national security letters are not required to disclose the name of their attorney, that libraries are not wire or electronic communication service providers unless they provide specific services, and for other purposes.

Bill Frist, Arlen Specter, Thad Cochran, Richard Burr, Mel Martinez, Jim Bunning, Jon Kyl, Craig Thomas, Mike Crapo, David Vitter, Bob Bennett, Norm Coleman, Michael B. Enzi, Lindsey Graham, Jeff Sessions, Saxby Chambliss, John Cornyn, John Thune.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise to explain why I will oppose cloture on the PATRIOT Act Amendments Act. In brief, I will vote against cloture to register my objection to the procedural maneuver under which Senators have been blocked from offering any amendments to this bill.

While I will vote against cloture, I nonetheless support the underlying bill offered by the Senator from New Hampshire, which improves the PATRIOT Act. The Sununu bill puts in place more checks on the expanded authorities granted to the Government by the PATRIOT Act, without interfering with the Government's ability to protect Americans from terrorism.

I support the PATRIOT Act. I voted for it in 2001, and I voted for a reauthorization bill that passed the Senate unanimously last summer. In December, however, I voted against cloture on a conference report to reauthorize the PATRIOT Act. I opposed that bill because it returned from the House-Senate conference without adequate checks to protect the privacy of innocent Americans.

In my view Congress should give the executive branch the tools it needs to fight terrorism, combined with strong oversight to protect against Government overreaching and abuse of these tools.

Senator SUNUNU has negotiated several needed improvements with the White House. His bill would allow for judicial review of the gag order imposed by the PATRIOT Act when the Government seeks business records. It would also restrict Federal access to library records, and it would eliminate the requirement that recipients of a national security letter tell the FBI the identity of any lawyer they consult.

The Sununu bill is a step in the right direction, and therefore I will support it.

Of course even a good bill can be improved. That is why we have an amendment process in the Senate. The junior Senator from Wisconsin has tried to offer a small number of relevant

amendments that I believe would make this bill even better. I am disappointed that he has been denied that opportunity by a procedural maneuver known as ''filling the amendment tree.''

This is a very bad practice. It runs against the basic nature of the Senate. The hallmark of the Senate is free speech and open debate. Rule XXII establishes a process for cutting off debate and amendments, but rule XXII should rarely be invoked before any amendments have been offered. There is no reason to truncate Senate debate on this important bill in this unusual fashion.

I will vote against cloture to register my objection to this flawed process.

I expect that cloture will be invoked and that the Sununu bill will pass. I also expect that the PATRIOT Act reauthorization will pass, now that it has been improved. But the passage of these measures should not be the end of our work. The Senate should continue the effort to strengthen civil liberties in the war on terror.

I welcome the bill of Senator SPECTER which includes many of the improvements Senator FEINGOLD seeks. I look forward to working with him to have his legislation enacted into law as soon as possible.

In this and other areas, we should give the Government the tools it needs to protect our national security, while placing sensible checks on the arbitrary exercise of executive power.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on S. 2271, the USA PATRIOT Act Additional Reauthorizing Amendments Act of 2006, shall be brought to a close? The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUYE) necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COLEMAN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 69, nays 30, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 23 Leg.]

YEAS—69

Alexander	Craig	Kyl
Allard	Crapo	Landrieu
Allen	DeMint	Lincoln
Bennett	DeWine	Lott
Biden	Dole	Lugar
Bond	Domenici	Martinez
Brownback	Ensign	McCain
Bunning	Enzi	McConnell
Burns	Feinstein	Murkowski
Burr	Frist	Nelson (FL)
Carper	Graham	Nelson (NE)
Chafee	Grassley	Pryor
Chambliss	Gregg	Roberts
Clinton	Hagel	Rockefeller
Coburn	Hatch	Santorum
Cochran	Hutchison	Schumer
Coleman	Inhofe	Sessions
Collins	Isakson	Shelby
Conrad	Johnson	Smith
Cornyn	Kohl	Snowe
Specter	Talent	Vitter
Stevens	Thomas	Voinovich
Sununu	Thune	Warner

NAYS—30

Akaka	Durbin	Menendez
Baucus	Feingold	Mikulski
Bayh	Harkin	Murray
Bingaman	Jeffords	Obama
Boxer	Kennedy	Reed
Byrd	Kerry	Reid
Cantwell	Lautenberg	Salazar
Dayton	Leahy	Sarbanes
Dodd	Levin	Stabenow
Dorgan	Lieberman	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Inouye

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 69, the nays are 30. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The Democratic leader.

SENATOR LEAHY'S 12,000TH VOTE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today PAT LEAHY, senior Senator from Vermont, reached a Senate milestone, to say the least. A few minutes ago he cast his 12,000th vote. He has voted in the Senate 12,000 times. This is quite an accomplishment. He joins a very elite club, led by the distinguished senior Senator from West Virginia, Senator BYRD, who has voted more than 17,000 times; Senator KENNEDY, more than 14,000 times; Senator INOUYE, more than 14,000 times; Senator STEVENS, more than 14,000 times; Senators BIDEN and DOMENICI, just over 12,000 times.

PAT LEAHY came to the Senate in 1974, the youngest Senator in Vermont history and the only Democrat ever elected to the U.S. Senate in the entire history of the State of Vermont—the only one, the first and only. He has been in the Senate 32 years. In each of those votes, Senator LEAHY voted to make Vermont a better and stronger place.

Senator LEAHY has a lot of things in mind when he comes to cast a vote, but No. 1 on the list is Vermont. That is one of the principal reasons Vermont is a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

I have worked very closely with PAT LEAHY. He is a Senator's Senator. He is able to be as partisan as any Senator we have, but he is also a person who can be as bipartisan as any Senator who has ever served in the Senate. The first example of that is his work with his colleague, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, ARLEN SPECTER of Pennsylvania.

I like PAT LEAHY for lots of reasons. His legislative skills, of course, are one of the reasons. But, to me, everything pales when I think of his wife Marcelle. She is a wonderful human being. PAT LEAHY is who he is because of the wife he has chosen. They have been married more than 40 years. She is a registered nurse. Marcelle Leahy is as kind and gentle as anyone would expect a nurse to be. I care about her a great deal.

PAT and Marcelle are very proud of their three children and certainly very proud of their grandchildren. All of us who have been in talking distance of PAT LEAHY have heard about his grandchildren. He is not bashful about bragging on his grandchildren. His newest grandchild was born earlier this month—in fact, about 27, 28 days ago.

I don't think Vermont could ask for anyone better than PAT LEAHY. I have been very impressed with his work. On the Judiciary Committee, he has been an advocate for fairness. He has worked with us on judges. It has been difficult and tiresome at times, but he has always done what I believe to be an outstanding job and a fair job.

For farmers, his work on issues relating to dairy has been historic. He has saved hundreds of family farms just in Vermont, and thousands and thousands around the country in his work on agriculture. His environmental credentials are unsurpassed by anyone.

Some would question his musical taste, but as far as I am concerned, that is also great. Emmylou Harris, to whom he introduced me, is my favorite. I think I met her personally because of a birthday party PAT LEAHY had. Then, of course, I am happy to say that PAT LEAHY and I are Deadheads.

He is a wonderful man and a great Senator. I congratulate him on reaching this milestone and look forward to watching him cast thousands of votes in the years ahead.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I join in paying tribute to the distinguished Senator from Vermont, Senator LEAHY. Our friendship precedes the service of both of us in the Senate. I first met Senator LEAHY at the National District Attorneys Convention in Philadelphia in 1970. Senator LEAHY was the district attorney of Burlington, VT, and I was the district attorney of Philadelphia. That friendship was renewed when I was elected to the Senate in 1980. Senator LEAHY had already been here for 6 years. We have worked together for 25 years plus on Judiciary and Appropriations and on the Subcommittee on Labor, Health, Human Services and Education. It has been a very close working relationship, and never as close as it has been for the past 14 months as we have worked together on the Judiciary Committee with some very significant accomplishments for the Senate and for the American people.

Last year, when I had a problem or two, besides working with Senator LEAHY on the administration of the Judiciary Committee I had a period where I was bald. On our frequent visits together, the only way we could be distinguished was by the color of our ties. I usually wore red and he customarily wore green, so people knew who was who.

Earlier today I received this picture of Senator LEAHY with his new grandson. The grandson is a few weeks old, but I am pleased to report to C–SPAN viewers, if there are any, that the grandson has more hair than Senator LEAHY.

PAT LEAHY is a great Senator and he is a great friend. It is a great achievement to cast 12,000 votes. I have been here for a good many of them, and he has even been right some of the time. I am delighted to join in praising my good friend Senator PAT LEAHY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, when you reflect back to that many votes, that many thousands of votes, very quickly you could go back and look at various issues PAT LEAHY has been involved with. I think that is important to do. It reflects a great legacy for our country, what he has stood for, the values and principles.

I wish to add to the accolades what I have found, and that is, as I have gone around the world over the last several years in humanitarian causes, part of which is done as official CODELs as a Senator but even more than that as a volunteer physician, going on the ground into communities, into villages all over the world, what is interesting to me—people don't care about the majority leader, they don't care about the typical names you hear from the Senate floor, but PAT LEAHY's name comes up again and again from the underserved, from the people who have suffered the tragedy of landmine injuries. It is remarkable. It is something we don't talk about on the floor a lot. But to have real people thousands of miles away coming forward with his name reflects the great legacy he leaves, that he continues to leave, and I am sure there will be another 12,000 votes as we come forward.

I do want to express both to him and to Marcelle, a nurse, who greatly influenced his life and for whom he has so much love that he expresses so directly to so many of us in casual conversations or the sorts of occasions that people don't see—that is the PAT LEAHY I want to recognize today—congratulations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, it has been my distinct pleasure to be either the ranking member of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee or the chairman with my good friend PAT LEAHY. Part of what Senate etiquette tells us is we are supposed to refer to each other as ''my good friend,'' but in the case of PAT LEAHY, it is not only Senate etiquette but it is the case that he has become a good friend.

Twelve thousand votes is quite an accomplishment, but beyond that, I have enjoyed the spirit of bipartisanship with which we have pursued each Foreign Operations Appropriations bill for each of the last 14 years, whether he was chairman or I was chairman. We tried to develop the expenditures of the Federal Government in a way that made sense for America and also had an impact on the rest of the world.

The majority leader has mentioned the landmine crusade Senator LEAHY has led for a long time. He is indeed known around the world for that. It has been an extraordinary crusade. He deserves enormous credit for leading it and is widely known around the world for that.

I thank him for his extraordinary service over the last 14 years in which I have been associated with him. It has been a pleasure to work with him every year. I, too, wish him 12,000 more votes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, it is hard to put in words what I feel as I listen to my good friends, HARRY REID and ARLEN SPECTER, BILL FRIST and MITCH MCCONNELL, saying such nice things. They are friends. We work together. HARRY—I should say, following Senate protocol, the distinguished Senator from Nevada, Senator REID—was kind enough to first and foremost mention my wife Marcelle. There is no conceivable way I could have accomplished any of this without Marcelle. She has been my guiding light for well over 40 years. Nothing I have done could I have accomplished without her.

Senator SPECTER was kind enough to hold up the picture of the latest member of our clan, Patrick Lucas Jackson. I think of that because I came here holding the actual pictures in my mind of my three children, Kevin, Alicia, and Mark, and their spouses, Carolyn, Lawrence, and Kristine, but also the pictures of four wonderful grandchildren: Roan, Francesca, Sophia, and now Patrick. To have them mentioned I realize there is another generation, and I hope their children will be proud of what their father does, but I especially hope the grandchildren, who will be the hope of our future, will feel the same way.

BILL FRIST, the distinguished Republican leader, and Senator MITCH MCCONNELL, the distinguished deputy Republican leader, were kind to speak of the landmine issue and things we worked out together—both of them being Senators who have done so much in that same area.

Sometimes we deal in issues people look at as just local issues or issues that affect only a few. What we have done in this case—Senator MCCONNELL, who was so good to move to name the war victims fund the Leahy War Victims Fund—is something I will never forget; Senator FRIST, who voluntarily goes into parts of Africa and elsewhere to use his medical skills. We talk of these kinds of things—the landmine issue; things Senator MCCONNELL and I have done to bring medicine to parts of the world that never see it; efforts to eradicate polio, childhood diseases, to bring to people the ability to actually feed themselves. The people we help don't contribute to campaigns. When Senator MCCONNELL and I pass a bill here on the floor, they don't know who we are. They do not know whether it is Republicans or Democrats. None of them know that. We will never meet most of them, but we like to think—I like to think—we have made their lives better.

We speak of what we bring to this body. We all come from different backgrounds. It is not just our political background; it is how we are raised, it is what our faith is. And if we believe in the best of what we learned when we were being raised or the best of what it is we believe in, then we have to help these people who will never be helped otherwise, and I have been proud to do that. I like to think what was instilled in me by my parents, Howard and Alba Leahy or in Marcelle by her parents, Phil and Cecile Pomerleau, brought about some of this, or just the upbringing in the special little State of Vermont.

I will close with this. I didn't expect to say anything, but I was kind of overwhelmed by what was said by a dear friend like ARLEN SPECTER, whom I have known since we were both prosecutors, a job that some days we think was the best job we ever had. It made me reflect on what a great honor it is for all of us, Republicans and Democrats and Independents, to serve in this body. Only 100 of us get a chance to do it at any one time, and someday we will be replaced by others. What an honor it is to be here and what a responsibility it is.

I have seen the Senate go through many changes, but I have also seen the personal relationships the press doesn't see, the public doesn't see, the personal relationships we have built across the aisle and with each other. When we do, the country is better, the Senate is better, and people's lives are better.

I must say that I was awed and humbled the first day I walked on the floor as a 34-year-old to be sworn in, where 30 minutes before I was the State's attorney sitting in a county in Vermont and 30 minutes later was then the junior Senator from Vermont. I still feel that same awe every time I walk on this floor. The day I stop feeling that awe, I will stop walking here.

With that, I have said more than Vermonters usually do. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I come to the floor to speak about the PATRIOT Act. I support the reauthorization of this law. It is vital we reauthorize it and make it permanent. Finally, we will be able to move this reauthorization forward with a series of votes this week. It has been lingering out there too long, especially since the House passed it over 2 months ago.

The Senate needs to be taken seriously in the domestic fight against terrorism. Two months is too long to wait. I fear our delays have sent the wrong message to our antiterrorism investigators and prosecutors as well as those who would do us harm.

In this body I hear a lot of critics of the President and his efforts to fight terrorism. Those critics always have problems but rarely do they have any solutions other than to do nothing. Doing nothing led us to 9/11, and we would be foolish to go back.

The PATRIOT Act was one of the first things we did after September 11 to make sure something like that never happens again. It passed the Senate 98 to 1. This Chamber can be pretty partisan at times, but at that time 98 Senators thought it went far enough to protect civil liberties.

But now we hear how the PATRIOT Act is bad. The conference report we received in December makes permanent most of the expiring provisions of the existing law but with additional protections for civil liberties. But that was not enough, and 47 Senators filibustered the bill. So here we are today, 2 months later, about to pass some changes to the conference report and finally send something to the President.

Now, do not get me wrong. I think the improvements in the conference report are positive. We absolutely should write protections into the law where they do not tie the FBI's hands in stopping terrorist attacks. But the FBI was not using the PATRIOT Act to bother law-abiding Americans. We did not need to delay the law for 2 months. And we do not need to rewrite it from scratch, as some of my colleagues in the body are suggesting.

It is important to protect Americans' civil liberties, and the original PATRIOT Act and the updated one do this. But I think some Senators are missing the point. Civil liberties do not mean much when you are dead. And that is what the PATRIOT Act is about: stopping us from ending up dead at the hands of terrorists.

Some Senators make the PATRIOT Act sound like some huge expansion of law enforcement powers. That is simply not true. The PATRIOT Act brought our laws up to date with modern technology. It gave antiterrorist investigators the same tools as other investigators, and it tore down the artificial wall between intelligence and law enforcement. In other words, it removed the legal barriers that kept us from being able to prevent things like the September 11 attacks.

As Senators, it is our job to fix the laws when they put Americans in danger. It is sad that it took September 11 for those problems to be exposed. But it is even sadder still that some want to second-guess those changes and turn our antiterror laws into a partisan issue. But the safety of Americans is not a partisan issue. We have to do everything we can within the Constitution to protect Americans from both foreign and domestic threats. We all swore an oath to do so when we joined this body.

The PATRIOT Act is critical to protecting Americans, and now is the time to pass this bill once and for all.

Just last week, we were reminded that there are those in America who want to do us harm. Three men in Ohio were indicted for conspiring to commit acts of terrorism, including trying to make bomb vests that could be used on the battlefield in Iraq or in a shopping mall in America. The enemy is not sleeping, and now is not the time for us to lose our resolve.

Under the PATRIOT Act, we have captured over 400 terrorist suspects. That is a lot of people who want to do us harm. Over 200 terrorists have been convicted or pled guilty in investigations helped by the PATRIOT Act.

Using the PATRIOT Act, our investigators have seized cash and drugs being used to fund terrorism. They have also captured weapons and broke up plans to smuggle weapons into the country, including antiaircraft missiles.

Home-grown terrorists have been caught, also. The list of successes goes on and on. There are terrorists behind bars instead of advancing plots against us because of the PATRIOT Act tools and, more importantly, there are many Americans alive who may be dead if those terrorists were successful in carrying out their plots.

We need the PATRIOT Act. We need to get it reauthorized and signed into law. Our terrorist investigators need their tools to be permanent. This gives them certainty. We need to send a strong message to the terrorists that we will come after them with everything we can.

I urge my colleagues to support these bills and to drop their obstruction so we can do our job to protect all Americans.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARTINEZ). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BUDGET PRIORITIES

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, as we return from the President's Day recess, the Senate will be debating the future direction of our country.

This debate will come in the form of the discussions we have on the Federal Government's budget.

A budget is a statement of our priorities. Families across our country make difficult decisions every day while living within their own budgets, choosing one priority over another and working hard to fulfill their own American dream.

Likewise, our national budget and the way we spend tax dollars reflects our priorities as a Nation. We make difficult choices, establish priorities and try to set our Nation on a course to prosperity.

Unfortunately, the President's recent submission of his fiscal year 2007 budget and subsequent request for supplemental appropriations for the ongoing war in Iraq do not reflect the priorities our Nation needs to move ahead, and it makes the wrong choices in spending and saving.

Taken together, they represent a callous disregard for fiscal reality and a failure to prioritize our country's most important needs.

No American family would dare manage their finances this way, and I am on the floor today to say that we must take a different course.

In the 3 years since the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom, our country and Congress have stood with the President in staunch support of our troops.

While we are both proud and duty-bound to provide the resources our men and women in uniform need to do their jobs safely and effectively, it is disingenuous to continue to ask for ''emergency'' spending to pay for military action that has been ongoing for years.

Year in and year out, the President asks the Congress to provide the resources for his Iraq policy outside the bounds of the traditional budget process, and in each one of those years, concerns over accountability swell and demands for a plan that will allow our troops to fulfill their mission and return home go unanswered.

Like every American, we all want to succeed in our mission in Iraq. We want to achieve our military and policy goals, and to bring our troops home safely.

We know that this will require sacrifice and that a U.S. presence will be required for some period of time.

Despite these obvious facts, the administration continues to operate from the pretense that the cost of this ongoing war is unknowable and thus requires emergency spending.

The continued adherence to this policy deliberately misleads the American people about the cost of this war.

But it also misses a central point, the real emergency is here at home in our classrooms, in communities from the Gulf Coast to the Pacific Northwest, in our hospitals, and in our firehouses.

The Senate has shown unwavering support for our men and women fighting overseas. These heroes deserve every bit of aid we can provide—be it the best body armor, the best equipment, or the best pay and health care.

Time and again Democrats have stood shoulder to shoulder with the Bush administration to do just that—and in many cases we have pushed to provide more than the President requested for our troops, our veterans, and their families.

My concern—and I know many of my colleagues share it as well—is that while we provide the best for our men

and women overseas, we are doing far less for the men, women and children fighting to get ahead on our own shores.

They too deserve the best—the best education, the best health care, and the best protection from terrorist attack. I don't think anyone in this Chamber today can honestly say that we are achieving that goal.

I am here to say that this Senator will not stand idly by as we send billions to support and protect the heroes overseas while cutting basic needs for the heroes waking up every morning across our great Nation trying to provide themselves and their children a better life. We can and must do both.

So, as the Senate prepares to consider the budget and support our troops, I am going to ask that we stand up to protect and support hard working American families right here at home. That means: Providing affordable, accessible health care for every American, ensuring the best education for our young people, taking care of our veterans when they return home, pointing our Nation down a path toward energy, independence, and protecting our homeland from both terrorists and natural disasters.

The costs of mismanagement, corruption, and lack of investment at home are creating a crisis of confidence in our current path among the American people. We must change course.

There is precedent in our Nation's history for future oriented investment during difficult times—in fact, troubled times demand that we don't just wallow in current events, but better prepare for our future.

In 1862, our great Country was torn apart. The Civil War defined our Nation and determined our future. But war was not the only thing that was debated that year, and war was not the only thing that determined our Nation's fate: 1862 was also the year that legislation creating the land-grant college system was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Lincoln.

Think of it, in the midst of war, when the Union's very existence was in question, our leaders took the forward looking step of establishing a path by which average Americans could improve themselves and contribute to the welfare of our Nation. And you know what—it worked.

Today, those same land-grant colleges and universities are the envy of the world because of the great education they provide many Americans and the economic benefit they provide to our country.

Today, we too, are in the grip of war, and there are forces arrayed against us that seek to do us real and lasting harm—we must combat our enemies with every ounce of energy we have.

But like previous generations of American leaders, we also have an obligation to prepare the American people for the challenges we will confront in the future and to ensure that we are strong and secure in meeting those challenges head-on. Today, our efforts in this regard are woefully inadequate.

To be strong in the future—to have the ability to fight the wars of the future, create the economy of the future, and lead the world in human liberty and freedom—we must create an environment of hope and opportunity here at home. And yes, this is an emergency.

We all support our troops, and we will support the President's efforts to provide for their well-being and to ensure that they have the tools and resources they need to carry out their missions.

But, candidly, we must be able to both support our troops and create a country full of hope and optimism for them to return to.

To accomplish this we need to make changes in policy and allocation of resources, and I am going to demand that we consider these important questions when we debate the budget and the Iraq war supplemental appropriations request.

As I have said before on this floor, the Federal budget is the statement of our priorities as a people, and it should be a moral, thoughtful document.

Today, America's need for sound fiscal policy and a solid commitment to prosperity at home is not being met.

We can do better. If the President and the majority won't lead our country toward a more hopeful, prosperous future, then we will.

Mr. President, I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak and have my speech recorded as if in morning business. I will use the time allotted with my hour postcloture.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. DORGAN pertaining to the introduction of S. 2341 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. DORGAN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CHAMBLISS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, during this President's Day recess, I journeyed to Illinois and made stops in several cities. There were many places to visit, but I chose to visit drugstores. In each one of these towns, large and small, I sought out pharmacists—whether it was Collinsville, IL, or Decatur, IL, or Chicago—to talk about the Medicare prescription Part D plan. I thought the pharmacist was the right person to speak to because these pharmacists are on the front line in health care. Across America, many Americans view the pharmacist as their friend when it comes to their medical conditions and their health. So they have a good, trusting relationship.

Also, of course, Medicare prescription Part D is the first time we are trying to provide prescription drugs to people under Medicare, something we should have done from the beginning, but we are doing now. We are not doing it very well.

What I learned during my visit to Illinois is the fact that there are thousands of people in my home State who are struggling to make the right decision when it comes to their Medicare prescription drug program. They are struggling because there are some choices, and the choices are very difficult to evaluate. In Illinois, there are about 42 different plans from which seniors can choose. If you seek the information on the plan, you are directed to a Web site. A Web site may be of value to many people who are following the Senate proceedings, but to many senior citizens it is terror incognito; it is unknown territory.

Only one in four senior citizens have ever logged onto a computer. They do not have the luxury of going to the appropriate Web site using their mouse to click through the options trying to figure out the best choice. They are lucky, in many cases, to have one of their kids who will sit with them and work through the options.

But, I tell you, some of the professional people I run into, educated people I run into, quickly tell me that this is not an easy thing to navigate. With 42 plans, you had better make the right choice.

Most seniors start with the basic drug they are currently taking and they go to the prescription drug plan to see if that drug is offered by the drug plan. Then they calculate the prices of the drugs to try to determine how much they are going to have to spend to get into the program, or once in the program how they will pay for their drugs. What they come to learn, to their chagrin, is that many of the drugs which are part of the formulary or the drugs that are being offered in a program today are changed tomorrow. The drug you needed, the drug you are looking for may be discontinued tomorrow.

In other words, instead of a discount you may have to pay the full price. It is really a classic bait-and-switch situation.

Second, the price that is quoted to you for this drug may change as well. It is like following the stock market. You have had two different plans. These seniors are trying to choose the right one. The drugs that are covered can change day to day. The prices can change day to day. And seniors have to make their choice and live with it for a year.

It is fundamentally unfair. It is unfair that the drug plans can change right as these seniors have made their choice. And the seniors can't change their drug plan for a year.

I have introduced legislation that would give senior citizens that option, an option that if the price of the drug goes up 10 percent or more, or it is dropped from the formulary, you can change your plan without a penalty. I think that is only reasonable.

I also have to tell you that many of these pharmacists are at their wit's end. They care for these people. They really do. These are customers of a lifetime, and they come to these drugstores—some of them—distraught over what they are going through with Medicare prescription Part D, and the pharmacist tries to help. He gets on the phone. He may call that drug plan and try to make sure that the seniors are being treated fairly. He may ignore the plan, which says don't give some tablets over the course of a month, and give the person what he knows they need.

These are things he does at his own peril in terms of his own financial well-being.

I talked to one pharmacist who said that the drug Ambien, which is used by some who can't sleep at night had been prescribed, and one of the seniors who signed onto one of the plans brought in his monthly prescription for Ambien and was told he could only have 18 pills.

So the plan decided that whatever the doctor had said notwithstanding, whatever the condition, the senior citizen, 12 days out of 30, was not going to have their medication.

That is the kind of thing these seniors are facing. It is no wonder, to me, that the seniors I meet and the pharmacists who are trying to help them are really upset about this plan. They understand, as I do, that this plan wasn't written for senior citizens. This plan was written for health insurance companies that make these plans available, as well as the pharmaceutical companies. They are the big winners in many respects, first, because Medicare is not offering an overall plan for every senior to choose. I think that is where we should have started.

We have a Medicare plan in America. People were brought into it in a matter of a few months, and it has worked very well for 40 years. There could have been a Medicare prescription drug plan which would have been the basic template, the standard model that is available to every senior. If someone in the private sector wants to compete and offer an alternative, they could have. I would have voted for that. But Medicare should have been able to offer the basic fundamental model plan that every senior could turn to, and it would have been successful because Medicare, with the potential of bargaining for 40 million senior citizens, could sit down with that drug company and tell them you can't raise the price of drugs 10 percent a year, we just won't let you under the plan.

You know what happened. The same thing happened in Canada. That is exactly what the Canadian Government did to these same American drug companies. They told them if they wanted to sell to the Canadian health plan, they couldn't keep raising the cost of the drugs every single year.

That is why exactly the same drugs manufactured in the United States sell for a fraction of the cost in Canada because the Canadian Government stepped in.

When we tried to do that on the floor of the Senate, the pharmaceutical companies fought us and won big time. Now we have 500 plans across America trying to negotiate better prices. And you know what that means: You don't get the discount, the bulk discount, and the lower prices that can occur.

We know the VA had already tried this. They offered the veterans who come to veterans clinics and hospitals prescription drugs at reduced rates because they bargained with the same drug companies, but these drug companies didn't want to give up their power in this negotiation. So they insisted that Medicare would not write a basic plan. They insisted that there be 500 plans across America. They knew they would make more money that way.

I am sure they will—but at the expense of senior citizens and taxpayers.

There is also this strange, inexplicable, indefensible element in Medicare prescription Part D known as the donut hole. The donut hole says as follows: Once you have spent out of pocket $2,200 for prescription drugs during the course of a year, you are on your own—no protection, no payment. Everything from that point on is out of pocket. Until you have spent an additional $2,900 and reached $5,100 total spending, then the plan kicks in and is generous to you.

The donut hole means that seniors truly in need of medication can find themselves at some point during the course of a year reaching into their savings to pay for their prescription drugs. How often does that occur?

When I went to the Order of Saint Francis Health Center in Peoria, IL, I met with the pharmacy, Wayne Beckman, and his wife Bev. I asked Bev if they had run into anyone who is concerned about this donut hole where they already spent out $2,200. She said: There was a woman in here yesterday who already reached $2,200 in the month of February. She was a transplant patient. She needed expensive medication.

So, now, this woman having gone through all of these surgeries, all of this medical care, has to reach into her pocket and pay out $2,900 before the Medicare plan kicks in again.

Could we have dreamed up a more complex and convoluted approach to providing prescription drugs to seniors?

I learned during the course of my visit that many of these seniors are desperate. They know they have to decide by May 15 to sign up for a plan. Some of them are not taking drugs at this moment but are afraid if they do not sign up for some plan and start paying for it that they will be penalized, which is part of the law as well. So they are trying to decide what the best decision might be.

I really wish my colleagues in Congress would get out of these marble halls and get into some drugstores. I wish they would stop listening to lobbyists and start listening to pharmacists. If they did, they would realize what a bad law this is. This was passed 2 years ago. We were supposed to have all the time in the world to get this right, make sure that when the moment came that this plan went into place nothing like this would occur. Yet it does.

Some of the, I guess, most painful stories involve victims who are in nursing homes—people who have really spent down everything they have in life. They have nothing left. How do they live? Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Medicaid, of course, is health insurance for the poorest among us.

These poor people who usually don't have many friends, other than maybe a couple of family members, are sick in the nursing homes. Many of them are caught in the middle of this Medicare prescription Part D and what it does to them. Someone takes their prescription to a pharmacy and finds out they will not fill a month's prescription, only 10 days, and Governors across America have had to step in to protect these people, these poor people, literally poor people, who need a helping hand.

What a sad turn of events. What could have been a source of pride for America, for seniors, for all has turned out to be a national embarrassment, an embarrassment that could have been avoided.

My colleagues have to understand unless and until we work to make Medicare prescription drugs Part D a program that reaches out and helps people, a program that is simple, fair, gives true discounts on their prescriptions, then we have not done a service to our seniors. These men and women are parents and grandparents, the greatest generation who served in America's past in so many different ways. How can we put them in this predicament? They, unfortunately, had to go to the back of the line when it came to passage of this bill. The prescription

drug companies, as well as the insurance companies, were the ones that wrote the bill.

I know what we have to do. We have to take from this calendar, after we finish the PATRIOT Act, we have to push aside all the special interest legislation. We spent a week and a half on a bill last week, the clash of the special interest titans over asbestos. We have to set those aside and say, for at least a week, instead of taking up special interest legislation, we are going to take up the Medicare prescription drug bill. We are going to make this work. We are going to finally put something together that is an honor to the people who are part of our Medicare system.

I don't know if we can do that. When the President signed this bill, people said: You are going to have to change some parts of it. He said: I am not going to touch it, not a word.

The President should show a little humility. All of us in public life should from time to time. As we look at this Medicare prescription drug program, we know it is not working for America, it is not working for seniors. It is causing much too much heartache, much too much concern.

This much I will say I have learned, having been in public life a few years. There is one thing about senior citizens, they know who is on their side. They have long memories. I might add, they vote. If the leaders in Congress, the Republican leaders, the President's own party, do not understand how badly this Medicare prescription Part D program is working, some of the seniors may give them their medicine in November. They have to understand we have a responsibility to these people, not to the lobbyists in the hallway who represent the drug companies. They are doing quite well, thank you.

We have a responsibility to the people whom we were sent to represent. They may not have a lobbyist, but they have a vote and a voice and we will hear from them.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THUNE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, each year, during the month of February, America celebrates the achievements, contributions, and history of the African-American community.

In previous years, I have had the honor of joining my colleague Congressman John Lewis on his civil rights pilgrimage to Alabama and Tennessee.

It is an extraordinary journey that changes all who partake.

It connects us to our history, our geography, our shame and redemption, and to the astonishing bravery and commitment of the civil rights leaders who fought for America's honor: Martin Luther King, Jr., his wife Coretta Scott, Rosa Parks, the Greensboro Four, to name a few.

Their willingness to face violence and intimidation, injustice and oppression, with steadfast love and bravery transformed America.

Indeed, it led to a great awakening that continues to reverberate around the world.

This year, as we celebrate those extraordinary individuals and events, let us also recognize the exceptional leaders in our midst who toil every day for justice and racial reconciliation.

This year, I have the pleasure of presenting Mr. Jeffrey T. Higgs of Memphis, TN, with my office's first ever American New Trailblazer Award in honor of Black History Month.

In January, my office sent out requests to over 200 recipients of our African-American leader's newsletter. We asked our readers to nominate individuals of extraordinary character and achievement.

We received the nominations of published authors, clergy, local community leaders, and business professionals. All were deserving candidates and I am both humbled by and proud of their example of service.

After culling through the nominations, we chose Mr. Higgs for his outstanding work as executive director of LeMoyne-Owen College Community Development Corporation.

For over 15 years, Mr. Higgs has been involved in urban community housing, economic development and micro lending.

As CEO of the multi-million-dollar organization, he has led the efforts to revitalize the community surrounding LeMoyne-Owen College.

Among his many development projects, he led the renovation of the historic JE Walker House. Today, the building serves as a community resource center for housing development, computer training, economic development and investment.

Currently, Mr. Higgs is leading the charge for 2 major capital projects generating over $25 million in economic activity.

His sponsor for the award, Bridget Chisolm, President and CEO of BBC Consulting, wrote to tell us that Mr. Higgs is, ''truly a Renaissance man and community trailblazer. We are blessed to have such a leader striving to make a good city great.''

Indeed, America is blessed to have individuals like Mr. Higgs selflessly serving his fellow citizens.

I congratulate Mr. Higgs for his contributions to his community. And I thank him for carrying forward the torch of social justice.

As we close this month of celebration, let us remember that the movement is not over. So much has changed in so very short a time. But the great hope of the movement has yet to be realized: full equality not only before the law, but in the lives of every citizen.

It is citizens like Mr. Higgs who are working to make that happen.

I close with a quote from the great Dr. King.

In his historic speech following the march to Selma, the Reverend told his fellow freedom marchers,

> We must come to see that the end we seek is a society at peace with itself, a society that can live with its conscience. And that will be a day not of the white man, not of the black man. That will be the day of man as man.

RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, ''Celebrating Community: A Tribute to Black Fraternal, Social and Civic Institutions'' is the theme this year of African American History Month. On this last day of the Month I want to pay a special tribute to the Alpha Phi Alpha, which is the oldest of the African American Greek-letter collegiate fraternities and sororities. Alpha, which I am proud to say has its headquarters in Baltimore, this year celebrates its centennial. For the past one hundred years Alpha has upheld the principles of scholarship, fellowship, good character and the uplifting of humanity principles that command our respect and admiration.

It has been my privilege to work closely with Alpha in the effort to establish an appropriate memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in our Nation's Capital. More than 20 years ago I introduced legislation to assure that a monument would be built, and it took a decade to get the legislation enacted. Since 1996, when the bill was signed into law, we have moved steadily forward. The site on the Mall is set, lying between the Memorial to President Franklin Roosevelt and the Lincoln Memorial. The magnificent design is in hand. The challenging work of raising the necessary funds continues, and in this Alpha and the other African American campus organizations play a vital role. I look forward to the day, not too far in the future, when we will have on the Mall a monument worthy of Dr. King's legacy, to remind us and future generations of the struggles the civil rights movement endured, and to inspire us all to continue the movement.

Even as we celebrate our progress toward a memorial to Dr. King, we mourn the loss of two great Americans, Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King.

When Rosa Parks died 4 months ago, all Americans mourned her passing. Fifty years ago, with a singular courageous act that in the words of the New York Times became a ''mythic event,'' she galvanized the civil rights movement and helped to write a new and hopeful chapter in our history. As the Times put it, ''(W)hat seems a simple gesture of defiance so many years later was in fact a dangerous, even reckless move'' at the time. Her steadfastness in the face of harsh and unjust laws struck a chord in the nation's conscience and challenged us to build a society worthy of the principles on which it was founded. When Ms. Parks was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 1999, I was honored to have an opportunity to meet her. At the time of her death I joined with my Senate colleagues in honoring her at her memorial service.

We lost a second courageous leader with the death more recently of Coretta Scott King. She was a student at the New England Conservatory of Music with plans for a musical career when she met her future husband, but she was from the beginning his steadfast partner in the arduous fight for civil rights and a more decent and humane society. After Dr. King's death she continued the fight with the quiet dignity and determination that were her hallmarks. It was a privilege to work with Mrs. King on the legislation establishing Martin Luther King day as a national holiday; I deeply regret that she could not live long enough to see the memorial to her husband built as well.

Last month we honored Dr. Martin Luther King and his legacy. If he were with us today, Dr. King would be deeply gratified by the national tributes paid to Ms. Parks and Mrs. King. In the 50 years since Martin Luther King, Jr., Coretta Scott King and Rosa Parks first challenged the Nation to live up to its founding principles, we have come a long way. We have changed our laws fundamentally to assure the rights of all Americans. We have worked together—at the local, State and national level—to create hope and opportunity where there was none, and to guarantee respect for every person.

The role of the Black fraternal, social and civic institutions in bringing about these changes cannot be overstated. Over the years they have fought for justice in courts of law and in the court of public opinion, and worked tirelessly to promote equality and opportunity for all.

Still, much remains to be done. Working together we continue to build the society for which Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King stood, and fought. Success in this effort is the finest tribute we can pay to them.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise to recognize Black History Month and pay tribute to the enormous and varied contributions African Americans have made to our Nation.

The other evening, on the final night of the Olympics, Tom Brokaw of NBC News did a story about an American soldier named Vernon Baker who fought in Italy in World War II. Mr. Baker is now 86 years old. He was just a young man on the day in 1945 when he wiped out three Nazi machine gun nests and took out an enemy observation post.

Mr. Baker came home from the war without much fanfare. But like the 1.7 million other Black soldiers who served our Nation during World War II, he came home a changed man. After fighting on foreign soil against an enemy that claimed superiority to other races, these men could no longer accept second-class treatment in their own country.

World War II was the catalyst that finally convinced a significant portion of the American people that segregation was wrong. It was the beginning of the end of segregation in our Nation.

After World War II, 432 Americans were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Not one of them was African American. Finally, in 1997, the Government bestowed our Nation's highest medal on six Black veterans of World War II. Vernon Baker was the only one of those men still alive to accept his award.

Mr. Baker's story mirrors Black history in our Nation in the last half of the 20th century. It is a story of determination and hope. During World War II, African Americans fought to keep our Nation free, even when their own freedom was not fully enjoyed. In the same way, the ideas and talent of African Americans have always enriched American life, even as their own lives were impoverished by racism and the vestiges of slavery.

From the Nobel laureate Toni Morrison to the great composer Duke Ellington, from the brilliant jurist Thurgood Marshall to my old friend Larry Doby, the first Black baseball player in the American League, from the uplifting leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr., to the heroism of Vernon Baker, African Americans have inspired and enlightened our Nation.

I join the people of New Jersey in celebrating the contributions of African American citizens during Black History Month.

NATIONAL EATING DISORDERS WEEK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of National Eating Disorders Awareness Week to heighten awareness and emphasize prevention of eating disorders.

More than 10 million Americans today struggle with eating disorders, including anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and compulsive eating. Not only do these serious illnesses afflict people of all races and socioeconomic groups, eating disorders are now striking more men and children. The harm to the victims and their families can be tragically devastating, yet too often they continue to suffer in silence.

This week, I hope that we can take an important step to reach out to them and let them know that help is available. Inadequate information, misunderstandings, or shame should never be a barrier to recovery.

For this reason, I proudly sponsored Eating Disorders Information and Education Act of 1997 and the very first Senate resolution, S. Res. 197, to designate a National Eating Disorders Awareness Day. And it is the same reason I rise today. I hope that my colleagues will join me in this effort to improve eating disorder awareness, prevention, and treatment.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a letter from Ms. Chelsey Cogil, a resident of Zephyr Cove, NV, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEAR SENATOR REID: Hello! My name is Chelsey Cogil and I am writing to inform you that National Eating Disorders Awareness Week is coming up next month starting on February 26th and lasting until March 4th.

Coming from a family where eating disorders run common, I know first hand the importance of spreading eating disorder awareness and prevention.

I would be absolutely delighted if you would make a statement, in support of National Eating Disorders Awareness Week, about the importance of spreading eating disorders awareness. Below are some statistics that I encourage you to read.

Thank you for your time and help!

Very Sincerely,

CHELSEY COGIL,
Zephyr Cove, NV.

The Renfrew Center Foundation for Eating Disorders, ''Eating Disorders 101 Guide: A Summary of Issues, Statistics and Resources,'' published September 2002, revised October 2003, http://www.renfrew.org: 1 in 5 women struggle with an eating disorder or disordered eating; Up to 24 million people suffer from an eating disorder in the United States; Up to 70 million people world wide struggle with an eating disorder; Nearly half of all Americans personally know someone with an eating disorder; Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental illness; The mortality rate associated with anorexia nervosa is 12 times higher than the death rate of ALL causes of death for females 15–24 years old. Anorexia is the 3rd most common chronic illness among adolescents; Eating disorders are higher among young women with type 1 diabetes than among young women in the general population.

IN RECOGNITION OF AMERICAN HEART MONTH

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, February is American Heart Month. As cochair of the Congressional Heart and Stroke Coalition, I rise today to urge my colleagues to commit to the fight against this devastating disease.

Heart disease remains the Nation's leading cause of death. Stroke is the No. 3 killer. More than 70 million adults in the United States suffer from heart disease, stroke, or other cardiovascular diseases. Cardiovascular diseases will cost our Nation an estimated $403 billion in 2006, including more than $250 billion in direct medical costs.

Although we need to continue to fund research to unlock the many mysteries that remain, we can make real progress in the fight against cardiovascular diseases by applying the knowledge that we already have today. A recent study funded by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute found that by quitting smoking, reducing obesity and controlling blood pressure and cholesterol levels, you can add 10 years to your life.

Thanks to our prior investments in cardiovascular research and prevention programs, we are now at a point where we have the tools in hand to make substantial progress. Yet, we find ourselves at a crossroads. As the population ages, the number of Americans affected by cardiovascular diseases will rapidly increase if we don't take the right steps today. It is estimated that by 2050, the number of deaths from heart disease will increase by nearly 130 percent.

Now is the time to redouble our efforts to fight heart disease, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases, not back away from our commitment. Yet, the President's budget proposal for fiscal year 2007 would cut funding for medical research and cardiovascular disease prevention programs.

The administration has even proposed eliminating a program to help rural communities purchase automated external defibrillators, AEDs. Last year, over my objection, Congress cut funding for this program by more than 80 percent. This makes no sense to me. AEDs are small, laptop size devices that help restore normal heart function after cardiac arrest. AEDs save lives, especially when placed in areas where large numbers of people congregate and in rural communities where emergency medical personnel are not readily available.

That is why I was pleased to see the Architect of the Capitol announce last month that AEDs will be placed around the Capitol complex. However, I find it highly ironic that Congress decided to purchase AEDs for its own buildings while slashing funding for programs that help rural communities purchase the same devices.

In the next several weeks, we will have a serious debate in the Senate about the administration's budget proposal. The decisions we will make will clearly show our priorities. I urge my colleagues to make the fight against heart disease, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases a top priority.

HAWAII CREDIT UNION LEAGUE

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, every year, members of the Hawaii Credit Union League meet with me during their trip to Washington, DC. They keep me abreast of their work in Hawaii by providing affordable financial services to their members. I would like to recognize credit unions and other mainstream financial services organizations that provide access to financial services that improve the lives of their members. Without credit unions, even more of our constituents would be susceptible to predatory lending and high-cost financial services. For example, individuals that lack credit union or bank accounts are considered to be unbanked. The unbanked rely on alternative financial service providers to cash checks, pay bills, send remittances, utilize payday loans, and obtain credit. However, their earnings are unnecessarily diminished in the process by their reliance on these high-cost, and often predatory, financial services. These hardworking families can ill-afford this hit to their paychecks. Not having a credit union or bank account prevents families from being able to save securely to prepare for the loss of a job, a family illness, a down payment on a first home, or education expenses for their children.

I am proud that we have credit unions in Hawaii that provide innovative services to more effectively meet the needs of their members such as offering payday loan alternatives to members of the armed services. Payday loans are small cash loans repaid by borrowers' postdated checks or borrowers' authorizations to make electronic debits against existing financial accounts. Typically, the principal for payday loans is in the range of $100 to $500 with full payment due in 2 weeks. Finance charges on payday loans are normally in the range of $15 to $30 per $100 borrowed, which translates into triple digit interest rates of 390 percent to 780 percent when expressed as an annual percentage rate, APR. A common practice is loan flipping, which is the renewing of loans at maturity by paying additional fees without any principal reduction. This practice often creates a cycle of debt that is hard to break. Furthermore payday lenders often locate near military bases because they know that a military servicemember's government paychecks represent a reliable source of fees and military personnel may be court marshaled or dishonorably discharged for failing to repay their debt.

I am proud that the Windward Community Federal Credit Union in Kailua, on the island of Oahu, has developed an affordable alternative to payday loans. I commend the staff of the Windward Community Federal Credit Union for their outstanding program which benefits the marines and other members that they serve. I have introduced legislation that would encourage credit unions and other financial institutions to offer this sort of low-cost, short-term credit product. S. 1347, the Low-Cost Alternatives to Payday Loans Act, would promote low-cost alternatives to payday loans by authorizing the Secretary of the Treasury to award demonstration project grants. I will continue to work with my colleagues on the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee to enact this important legislation.

I also have included efforts to increase access to credit union and bank accounts in an attempt to combat refund anticipation loans, RALs. While the earned income tax credit, EITC, helps working families meet their food, clothing, housing, transportation, and education needs, EITC refunds are unnecessarily diminished by excessive use of RALs. Interest rates on RALs can range from 97 percent to more than 2,000 percent. Considering the low repayment risk of this type of loan, the interest rates and fees charged on this type of product are not justified. Often, those who take out RALs are lower income families for whom these costs are a particular burden.

I have introduced the Taxpayer Abuse Prevention Act, which would restrict predatory practices associated with RALs and expand access to mainstream financial services. The bill would expand the eligibility of electronic transfer accounts, ETA, which are low-cost accounts at banks and credit unions intended for recipients of certain Federal benefit payments, to include EITC benefits. These accounts will allow taxpayers to receive direct deposit refunds into an account without the need for a refund anticipation loan. Additionally, my bill would mandate that low- and moderate-income taxpayers be provided opportunities to open low-cost accounts at federally insured banks or credit unions via appropriate tax forms. Providing taxpayers with the option of opening a bank or credit union account through the use of tax forms provides an alternative to RALs and immediate access to financial opportunities found at banks and credit unions.

In addition, I have worked with my friend, the Senator from New Mexico, Mr. BINGAMAN, on the Taxpayer Protection and Assistance Act. The legislation includes a provision that authorizes a grant program to link tax preparation services with the opening of a bank or credit union account. This will help encourage the estimated four million unbanked EITC recipients to establish a relationship with a mainstream financial institution. In turn, they will no longer be forced to pay the excessive fees RAL providers assess. Once the previously unbanked have established a credit union or bank account, they will be able to benefit from the wide range of financial services that mainstream financial institutions provide.

I will continue to work to expand access to mainstream financial institutions so that more individuals can benefit from lower cost opportunities found at credit unions and banks. I thank the representatives from the Hawaii Credit Union League for all of their work in providing financial services and increasing the financial literacy knowledge of their members. I also will continue to work to enact legislation that promotes the utilization of the services of credit unions and banks so that even more people can improve their lives by having access to

low-cost accounts, cheaper remittances, less expensive loans, and insured savings accounts.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate crimes legislation that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

On June 15, 2005, Dwan Prince was savagely beaten by three men as Prince stood outside of his apartment building in New York, NY. The apparent motivation for the attack was Prince's sexual orientation. According to police, the three attackers shouted anti-gay slurs throughout the attack on Prince.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that are born out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

LETTER ON THIRD ARMORED CAVALRY REGIMENT

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I rise today to share with my colleagues a letter written by the mayor of Tall-at Afar, Ninewa, Iraq, concerning the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment of the U.S. Army. This unit of brave soldiers is completing its second deployment to Iraq. As the unit prepares to come home, they have recently received this letter from the mayor of that city:

In the Name of God the Compassionate and Merciful To the Courageous Men and Women of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, who have changed the city of Tall-at Afar from a ghost town, in which terrorists spread death and destruction, to a secure city flourishing with life.

To the lion-hearts who liberated our city from the grasp of terrorists who were beheading men, women and children in the streets for many months. To those who spread smiles on the faces of our children, and gave us restored hope, through their personal sacrifice and brave fighting, and gave new life to the city after hopelessness darkened our days, and stole our confidence in our ability to reestablish our city.

Our city was the main base of operations for Abu Mousab Al Zarqawi. The city was completely held hostage in the hands of his henchmen. Our schools, governmental services, businesses and offices were closed.

Our streets were silent, and no one dared to walk them. Our people were barricaded in their homes out of fear; death awaited them around every corner. Terrorists occupied and controlled the only hospital in the city. Their savagery reached such a level that they stuffed the corpses of children with explosives and tossed them into the streets in order to kill grieving parents attempting to retrieve the bodies of their young.

This was the situation of our city until God prepared and delivered unto them the courageous soldiers of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, who liberated this city, ridding it of Zarqawi's followers after harsh fighting, killing many terrorists, and forcing the remaining butchers to flee the city like rats to the surrounding areas, where the bravery of other 3rd ACR soldiers in Sinjar, Rabiah, Zumar and Avgani finally destroyed them.

I have met many soldiers of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment; they are not only courageous men and women, but avenging angels sent by The God Himself to fight the evil of terrorism.

The leaders of this Regiment; COL McMaster, COL Armstrong, LTC Hickey, LTC Gibson, and LTC Reilly embody courage, strength, vision and wisdom. Officers and soldiers alike bristle with the confidence and character of knights in a bygone era. The mission they have accomplished, by means of a unique military operation, stands among the finest military feats to date in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and truly deserves to be studied in military science. This military operation was clean, with little collateral damage, despite the ferocity of the enemy. With the skill and precision of surgeons they dealt with the terrorist cancers in the city without causing unnecessary damage.

God bless this brave Regiment; God bless the families who dedicated these brave men and women. From the bottom of our hearts we thank the families. They have given us something we will never forget. To the families of those who have given their holy blood for our land, we all bow to you in reverence and to the souls of your loved ones. Their sacrifice was not in vain. They are not dead, but alive, and their souls hovering around us every second of every minute. They will never be forgotten for giving their precious lives. They have sacrificed that which is most valuable. We see them in the smile of every child, and in every flower growing in this land. Let America, their families, and the world be proud of their sacrifice for humanity and life.

Finally, no matter how much I write or speak about this brave Regiment, I haven't the words to describe the courage of its officers and soldiers. I pray to God to grant happiness and health to these legendary heroes and their brave families.

NAJIM ABDULLAH ABID AL-JIBOURI
Mayor of Tall-at Afar, Ninewa, Iraq.

This mayor's gratitude towards the soldiers of the 3rd Armored Calvary Regiment speaks volumes of the sacrifice and bravery that all of our soldiers are displaying in Iraq. Our service men and women are making a difference in Iraq by spreading democracy and fighting the terrorists. These soldiers ought to be proud of their efforts—we certainly are, and so are the Iraqis.

CLEAN WATER AUTHORITY RESTORATION ACT

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, for the last 33 years, the American people have relied upon the Clean Water Act to protect and restore the health of the Nation's waters. The primary goal of the act to make rivers, streams, wetlands, lakes, and coastal waters safe for fishing, swimming and other recreation, suitable for our drinking water supply, and available for wildlife and fish habitat—has become accepted by the public not only as a worthy endeavor but also as a fundamental expectation of government providing for its citizens. It is our responsibility to provide adequate protection to ensure that our freshwater resources are able to enhance human health, contribute to the economy, and help the environment.

Despite being one of our Nation's bedrock environmental laws, the Clean Water Act faces new and unprecedented challenges.

The Supreme Court recently heard two Clean Water Act cases, the outcome of which will have significant implications for Federal efforts to protect the Nation's waters from pollution and destruction. Fortunately, an unprecedented array of local, State, regional, and national officials, professional organizations, and public interest groups from across the country and the political spectrum have joined in the defense of the Clean Water Act. The unparalleled collection of interested parties includes the attorneys general of 33 States plus the District of Columbia; four former Administrators of the Environmental Protection Agency—Russell Train, Douglas Costle, William Reilly, and Carol Browner; nine current and former members of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives who were directly involved in the passage of the 1972 Act and its reaffirmation in 1977; the Association of State Wetlands Managers, the Association of State Floodplain Managers, the Association of State and Interstate Water Pollution Control Administrators, and the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies; numerous hunting, fishing, wildlife and outdoor recreation organizations and businesses, including Ducks Unlimited, the National Wildlife Federation, Trout Unlimited, the American Sportsfishing Association, Bass Pro Shops, the Orvis Company, and the Wildlife Management Institute, among others; and a number of local, regional, and national environmental groups. All of these interests filed briefs expressing strong support of the Clean Water Act's core safeguard: the requirement to obtain a permit before discharging pollutants into waters of the United States.

With such strong support for the Clean Water Act, which is grounded in the language, history, and purpose of the law itself, I hope that the Supreme Court will follow its own precedent and reaffirm Federal protections for streams, headwaters, tributaries, and wetlands that have long been covered by the Act.

Whatever the outcome of these critical cases, Congress must reaffirm the historical scope of the Clean Water Act. The best way to do this is through passage of the Clean Water Authority Restoration Act, S. 912. This bill simply confirms that the Act has always covered all of these waters, consistent with Congress's clear intent, by codifying the regulatory definition of ''waters of the United States'' that has been in use since 1973.

The bill addresses protections for certain so-called isolated streams and wetlands in the wake of the Supreme Court's 2001 decision in Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County v. Army Corps of Engineers and will help to ward off any future legal challenges to the scope of the act.

Our Nation's streams, ponds, isolated wetlands, and other bodies of water are too important to not take action to protect them. We owe future generations nothing less than healthy waters.

WDEV: SOUNDS LIKE HOME

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, 2006 marks the 75th anniversary of a true Vermont treasure. Locally owned and operated, WDEV of Waterbury, VT, first came to the airwaves on July 16, 1931. Its continuing and expanded presence in Central Vermont and the Champlain Valley ever since then is a rare and stellar example these days of the invaluable resources that independent, community-based media can offer.

WDEV station owner and President Ken Squier took the reins of WDEV from his parents, Guila and Lloyd, who first operated the station at the same time my own parents were operating a small Waterbury newspaper nearby, and his parents and mine were friends. If things had gone differently Ken and I might have had a media conglomerate in the making. Growing up in the station's studios, Ken's life was steeped in the culture and the craft of community radio. He understood WDEV's role in community life, and when he assumed operation of the station, his approach to community-based programming became the foundation of the station's lineup. Today the residents of Waterbury and its surrounding communities turn the dial to WDEV to find everything from a trading post to buy and sell their goods and treasures, to such off-beat program offerings as ''Music to Go to the Dump By.'' WDEV is the place to go for everything from local news to high school sports to school closings. It has become a vital source of news, information and entertainment to its devoted audience. WDEV is an authentic piece of the Vermont that we cherish.

Under Ken's guidance and initiative, WDEV has broadened its scope, becoming the anchor for the Radio Vermont Group, which now operates stations devoted to classical and country music, as well as news, sports and community events. It has taken to the web, where WDEV now streams two of its most popular morning news programs, ''The Morning News Service'' and ''The Mark Johnson Show.''

Ken has shepherded WDEV through the years with his acute sensitivity to the local perspective. I have always enjoyed stopping in to the station for a quick chat, or greeting Ken and the station's longtime personalities at local events, from parades to political rallies. I look forward to chatting with Eric Michaels, Radio Vermont's general manager and vice-president, every month during his daily morning show. The connection that WDEV and the voices it carries have to the community is as distinctive and unique as Vermont is to our country.

Vermont Life recently published a well-crafted piece, ''Community Radio Speaks,'' featuring the history and highlights of WDEV's 75 years on the air.

I join my fellow Vermonters in congratulating Ken, Eric, and all the people who, in 75 successful years, have made WDEV a station with a true touch for its Vermont audience.

I ask unanimous consent the article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From Vermont Life, Spring 2006]

COMMUNITY RADIO SPEAKS

(By Marialisa Calta)

''Rural radio is important to people,'' intones Eric Michaels in his mellifluous radio-announcer's voice. He is taking a break from his duties as on-the-road producer of WDEV's ''Music to Go to the Dump By,'' broadcasting, on this particular Saturday in September, from the Tunbridge World's Fair. ''We feel that if we are out in the community, working hard, people will know us and respect us. We take our work very seriously.'' A cow in a nearby 4–H exhibit moos loudly, and Michaels, fiddling with his equipment, sends a song over the airwaves, a country-western tune called ''I Don't Look Good Naked Anymore.''

There, in a nutshell, is the contradiction—and the strength—of WDEV, which celebrates 75 years of broadcasting from Stowe Street in Waterbury this July. Smart local commentary is mixed with ridiculous tunes. Conservative local pundit Laurie Morrow's show, ''True North,'' broadcasting an hour or two before nationally known liberal icon Amy Goodman's ''Democracy Now.'' Patsy Kline, the Texas Tuba Band, stock car racing from Barre's Thunder Road and Harwood Union High School boy's basketball share airspace with Miles Davis, Red Sox baseball, state legislative reports and Mozart.

It's the place on the dial (550 AM, 96.1 FM and 96.5 FM) where a Vermonter can tune in for the Dow Jones average of the milk prices. Where the Associated Press delivers news from the world, and Bethany Dunbar, an editor at The Barton Chronicle, delivers the news from the Northeast Kingdom.

A listener whose normal fare comes from ''dedicated'' channels—all-sports, all-talk, all-country-music, all-jazz—and who accidentally tuned in to WDEV might find the station bewildering, if not downright schizophrenic. But, as Middlebury College professor and author Bill McKibben points out, the hodgepodge of views, opinion, musical styles, reports (sports, business, agriculture, politics, news) pretty much reflects the hodgepodge of views, opinion, musical tastes and interests that make up the average Vermont community.

McKibben, who included WDEV in a story about the virtues of a life lived on a small scale that he wrote for Harper's Magazine two years ago, said that when you listen to the station ''you hear . . . things that other people are interested in. Which is pretty much the definition of community.''

You also hear—and this may be WDEV's genius—the actual voices of the community. It is nearly impossible for anyone who has lived in WDEV's broadcast area (which extends south to Route 4 and north nearly to the Canadian border) to listen to the station for even a few hours without hearing the voice of someone the listener knows. It might be Dan DiLena reading his menu from the Red Kettle in Northfield or Ben Koenig of the Country Bookshop in Plainfield singing about his store in a hokey Caribbean accent. It might be Ed from Morrisville, phoning in to ''The Trading Post'' at 6:30 a.m. to sell an old-fashioned grinding wheel and a prickly pear cactus. It might be a birthday wish going out to someone the listener works with. Or a caller to any one of the talk shows: ''The Mark Johnson Show,'' Morrow's ''True North'' or progressive activist Anthony Pollina's ''Equal Time.'' If you listen to WDEV long enough you will get a sense of what your neighbors are doing and thinking. Which is a pretty good way to not only define community but to keep it alive and well.

At the heart of this rich local stew is the station owner and president, Kenley Dean Squier, who, at 70, has made a national name for himself (and was part of two Emmy-award winning broadcast teams) as a television broadcaster covering stock-car racing and other sports for CBS, NBC, ABC, ESPN, Fox, Turner Broadcasting and the Speed Channel, among others. Squier is a walking conundrum, a serious fan of jazz and classical music with a deep background in the auto racing world of NASCAR. He is a man equally at home interviewing, say, Governor Jim Douglas about fuel shortages or health care or hosting ''Music to Go to the Dump By,'' and reading advertising copy (including, full disclosure, an ad for this magazine, a sponsor). He employs an enormous—by corporately held radio standards—staff of more than 30 yet he is famously cheap; Bryan Pfeiffer, who cohosts ''For the Birds,'' (a show about birding), loves to joke about the single light bulb that Squier allows, the bulb that all the broadcasters purportedly have to share, unscrewing it from one broadcast booth and taking it to another.

It is not unusual for Squier, in a single broadcast, to support the death penalty, criticize the Bush administration and fulminate about the rise of corporate monopolies. His station may broadcast conservative Ann Coulter and independent Congressman Bernie Sanders in the same morning. ''It's as if Rush Limbaugh and Al Franken shared a brain,'' wrote McKibben.

''His watchword is 'relevant,'' says Mark Johnson, who has been hosting a two-hour weekday call-in show on the station since 1998. ''It's all about what's meaningful to the community.''

And you can describe ''meaningful'' in different ways. The All Men's Moscow Marching Transistor Radio Band, for example, depends on WDEV to provide music for its parade up the main street of the village of Moscow every July 4th. Farmers depend on weatherman Roger Hill's forecasts for haying. Kids tune in on snowy mornings to hear about school closings. Representative Sanders recalls that once, when he was on the air, a station newscaster interrupted him to inform listeners about an accident on Main Street in Waterbury.

Squier was born to radio; for Christmas 1935, his parents Guila and Lloyd Squier (then the program director) sent out a holiday card depicting the infant Ken in front of a set of building blocks spelling out the call letters WDEV. The station itself was only four years old, having been started in 1931 by the visionary Harry Whitehill, owner and operator of the Waterbury Record and the Stowe Journal. Whitehill was a man of many trades; he sold stationary, pens and ink, party gods and wrapping paper from his

newspaper headquarters at 9 Stowe Street in Waterbury. He was also Vermont's Collector of Customs, an active post during Prohibition and a job that brought him frequently to St. Albans. In 1929, Whitehill heard Vermont's first commercial radio station, WDQM, there, and, reasoning that ''more people can hear than can read,'' he returned to his newspaper to proclaim: ''We need a radio station.'' ''Radio was big city . . . worldly stuff,'' writes Squier, who chronicled the birth of the station in an unpublished history of WDEV. On July 16, 1931, the dulcet tones of Miss Kate Lyons of Waterbury Center singing ''The Rose in the Garden'' were sent over the airwaves, marking the station's official launch. The antenna was a copper wire strung from the newspaper office to a nearby funeral parlor.

It was a glorious venture, an opportunity, as U.S. Senator Warren R. Austin put it, ''to sell a cow or an idea, quickly to a great number of people.'' The engineer for that first broadcast was 28-year-old Lloyd Squier, the son of the Whitehills'' housekeeper. The young Squier (now known as ''The Old Squier'' and frequently heard on the station via old recordings) soon moved up to program director responsible for an entire hour of airtime a day. Fred Somers & Sons Hardware (still on Main Street in Montpelier) was an early sponsor.

Within a year, the station was broadcasting local sports, legislative hearings and other events of note. By 1936, the WDEV offices were a ''mini-media Mecca'' according to Ken Squier, complete with Western Union, New England Telephone and Telegraph Co., the radio station and the newspapers all under the same roof. ''Because of radio, people can live among the most beautiful hills on earth, our own Vermont hills, and yet in an instant feel the pulse of world affairs by simply turning a switch,'' said then-Lieutenant Governor George Aiken in dedicating a new tower and transmitter that year.

Nowadays, what makes WDEV stand out is not that it brings us world news, but that—unlike the huge networks of radio stations fed formatted shows from a remote central location—it brings us the local happenings. The staff, on any given day, might be broadcasting from a State House hearing, the opening of the Farm Show or a county fair, a race at Thunder Road (which Ken Squier co-owns), a high school hockey game, a ribbon-cutting at a local lumber store or from a phone booth in downtown Montpelier, as Michaels did during the flood of 1992. (Michael's phoned-in report—replete with operator's request for additional coins—aired on the morning of the flood when the rising waters prevented him from getting through the city). Events like the flood, in fact, underscore the station's importance; Squier enlisted every employee—from the news staff to the sales reps—as reporters that day. The payoff came when then-Governor Howard Dean, asked at a press conference how he was keeping abreast of flood news, answered that he had been listening to WDEV.

Another of the station's strengths is the number of unforgettable radio personalities who have taken on larger-than-life characteristics in listeners' minds: Buster the Wonder Dog (Squier's own border collie); the station's country band, the Radio Rangers; Farmer Dave; the Old Squier; Ma Ferguson; Glen Plaid; Seymour Clearly and Spike the Cat. Past and current broadcasters—the late ''Cousin Harold'' Grout (who hosted ''The Trading Post'' for at least 30 years), the late Rusty Parker (who suffered a fatal heart attack in 1982 while broadcasting the morning news) and many more—seem like old friends to regular listeners.

In addition to sports of local interest—70 local high school basketball and hockey games, Norwich University hockey, local motor sports events, Red Sox games and Mountaineers baseball—WDEV has pioneered ''sporting events'' that have become community institutions: the Winter Croquet Tournament, Opening Day at the ABCD Deer Camp, Opening Day at Perch Camp (an ice-fishing extravaganza), the State Agency of Transportation Snow Plow Championships and the Joe's Pond Ice Out competition, to name a few.

There is no doubt in this era of corporately owned radio stations that a locally owned station like WDEV and its Radio Vermont affiliates (WLVB–FM in Morrisville, a country station, and WCVT–FM, a classical music station in Stowe) are anomalies.

An analogy can be made, in fact, between the physical landscape and the aural landscape of Vermont. Think of corporate-owned stations—what Mark Johnson calls ''electronic jukeboxes''—as sprawl. Public radio is analogous to state parks and land in conservation trusts. WDEV is analogous to the working landscape. Like tractors and manure pits, it's not always pretty. But it's real. And it's distinctive.

''It's a station that understands the community and understands what the real issues are,'' says Congressman Sanders. He has held hearings on the recent trends in communication law that enable large media conglomerates to own large numbers of stations. ''Local ownership of media is increasingly important and increasingly rare,'' he said in a telephone interview. ''When it goes, something valuable is lost.''

Loyal listeners would say that ''something'' is a piece of Vermont.

HONORING GREGORY McCARTHY'S SERVICE TO THE DISTRICT

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, when I began serving on the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the District of Columbia in January of 2001, my knowledge of the city's relationship with Congress was limited to someone who had lived here for only a few years. I quickly learned, however, not only the workings of the committee, but also the unique relationship between the District of Columbia and the Congress. One of the first people who helped me learn of this relationship and how to best serve the District was the energetic, dedicated chief advocate for DC Mayor Anthony Williams, Mr. Gregory McCarthy.

Behind all of the big ideas, the hours of debate and the finely cut deals, there is the staff. The staff must work the long hours to merge the big ideas and the little details into policy and legislation that achieves the goals set forth by their boss. Gregory McCarthy was an exemplary staffer who did all of this and more. Gregory has worked tirelessly on behalf of the Nation's Capital to create policy that benefited the city, met the needs of the elected officials of the District of Columbia, and satisfied the oversight function of the Congress. While working in the Mayor's Office, he helped build the credibility of the city, from the Halls of Congress, to the many visitors to the capital city, to the bond rating agencies. And all the while, Gregory served as the best source for a history lesson on the District, the current status of a program, and the gauge of the Mayor on any issue that any member of the DC Appropriations Subcommittee could ask for.

Gregory McCarthy exemplifies the public service that fuels a government which serves the people. It is this type of public service that benefits students in the District of Columbia especially. Through Gregory's hard work, he navigated the strong and varying positions of Members of Congress and local officials in order to create the first federally sponsored, private school voucher program. While I have been a tough critic of the program, I have always said that Gregory and the city represented the District's constituents well by seeking more school options, and through their tireless discussion and debate came a program that supports traditional public schools and public charter schools, as well as private school scholarships. Gregory's efforts to improve education for District residents have not been limited to elementary and secondary alternatives. Similarly, he has worked to authorize and fund college grants for more than 8,000 DC residents so that those who wish to pursue a degree of higher education may see their dreams become a reality.

Gregory McCarthy shepherded these and numerous other programs through a frequently arduous District of Columbia appropriations process. The residents of the District have benefited greatly from his years of public service. When the year 2006 draws to an end, a new mayor will be elected and a new staff of dedicated public servants will work to improve this great city. As this new crew weaves their way through charted and uncharted territories, they will build on the positive relationships that Mayor Williams, Gregory McCarthy, and other members of the Mayor's staff have worked so hard to create. As Mr. McCarthy leaves the District of Columbia government for his next challenge, I offer him my congratulations and best wishes. From my own experience in working with him, I know that Gregory will succeed in whatever he pursues next.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

NEW YORK YMCAS

• Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the excellent work New York YMCAs are doing to build healthier communities. They are taking important steps to address health problems, such as obesity, smoking, and physical inactivity, by participating in the Pioneering Healthier Communities Project, Gulick Project, YMCA Healthy Kids Day, and Steps to a HealthierUS partnership. These projects are part of the initiative, YMCA Activate America, whose goal is to promote healthy living among millions of Americans.

The Pioneering Healthier Communities Project—a partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—brings leaders together to promote cultural and environmental changes in neighborhoods supportive of healthy lifestyles. Each year YMCAs are selected to convene teams of representatives from the government and public health and private sectors to improve healthy living. This year, the YMCAs of Rye and Greater Rochester were selected and convened teams, resulting in creative plans to help youngsters. For example, the Rye YMCA implemented the Fitkids Program to increase healthy menu choices and promote physical activity and healthy eating in four school systems. The YMCA of Greater Rochester introduced the Coordinated Approach to Child Health, CATCH, Program, which promotes physical activity and healthy food choices and prevents tobacco use in children, as well as the Family Cooks Program, which teaches children using a hands-on approach to nutritious cooking.

In addition, YMCAs in greater New York and greater Rochester are participating in the Gulick Project—an initiative that is dramatically improving the way they work with individuals and families to support healthy living. Through the Gulick Project, YMCAs in New York and in other States are enhancing their programs, facilities, and staff to effectively meet the needs of those who want to be active and healthy but continuously stop and start the process. Cutting-edge work at four YMCA branches in Prospect Park, Cross Island, Long Island city and West Side, as well as at other Gulick YMCAs in the Nation, is leading to the development of best practices.

Moreover, YMCAs in New York are actively involved in YMCA Healthy Kids Day, a grassroots event that encourages children and families to adopt and uphold behaviors that support healthy living through fun and engaging activities. Healthy Kids Day recognizes that there is local help for parents, from schools to public libraries and YMCAs. In 2006, more than a half million people will participate in Healthy Kids Day with events in more than 1,300 communities across the country.

New York YMCAs are also engaged in a variety of health initiatives through partnerships with the Steps to a HealthierUS, which offers grants to address health problems like obesity and asthma and risk factors like physical inactivity and poor nutrition. For instance, Broome County YMCA has partnered with the Steps program to develop Mission Meltaway, an 8-week program that educates participants on ways to control weight. This partnership has also established nutrition and physical activity policies for all YMCA afterschool programs. Similarly, the Chautauqua County YMCA has joined with the Steps program to create a wellness resource center and expand a weight loss management program, among other things. Through the Steps program, the Rockland County YMCA is improving nutritious offerings at snack time in child care programs called ''healthy snack Wednesdays.'' The Watertown Family YMCA has teamed up with the Steps program to implement Kids NutriFit, a project that will increase physical activity in children ages 5 to 12 by engaging them in traditional play and teaching them about healthy snacking.

Many health problems are linked to habits common in American lifestyles, including overeating, underexercising, and poor diets. YMCAs in New York and their community partners are vigorously promoting healthy lifestyle choices and behaviors through innovative programs. I applaud their hard work and dedication to build healthy families and communities in New York and look forward to continuing to work with them.

As an advocate for strong and healthy children and families, I will continue to fight for increased funding for programs that promote access to healthy food and nutrition education in our schools and communities. Specifically, I have supported Farm-To-Cafeteria programs, which promote using locally grown produce in school cafeterias through community grants, and the USDA Team Nutrition program, which funds coordinated efforts between Federal, State and local entities to offer nutrition education to children. Through my own Farm-to-Fork initiative, I also have been working to get local New York State produce in schools, colleges, and universities. Healthy food options in school cafeterias teach kids about good nutrition and the importance of agriculture, as well as support local farms by keeping food dollars within the community.

Obesity, which has doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, is another serious health issue I am committed to addressing. Last year, I reintroduced the Improved Nutrition and Physical Activity Act, IMPACT Act, that awards grants to train primary care physicians and other health professionals in identifying, treating, and preventing obesity and eating disorders and allows States to use preventive health and health services block grants for activities and community education programs targeting obesity and eating disorders. This bill also promotes funding programs that encourage healthy eating and physical activity and collecting and analyzing data to determine the fitness levels and energy expenditures of children.

I have used nonlegislative avenues to address obesity and eating disorders as well. I wrote an article in the New York Daily News last summer highlighting long-term physical and emotional problems that can result from childhood obesity, such as cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes, cancer, and depression, not to mention low self-esteem, academic problems, and discrimination. I have urged making childhood obesity a real priority for families, schools, government and businesses and outlined steps to do this, including educating parents and children about the importance of a healthy lifestyle, restoring physical education programs during and after school hours, and enlisting health care professionals to join the antiobesity campaign. Working with the Eating Disorders Coalition, I sponsored a congressional briefing called Schools, Students, Obesity and Eating Disorders to raise awareness of obesity, eating disorders, and physical activity in school-age youth.

I am dedicated to promoting safe and fit lifestyles in our children and to fighting for healthier and stronger communities. Together we can combat the health problems afflicting our youth today and create a better, more promising future. I commend the exemplary efforts of New York YMCAs as they contribute to this mission on many fronts.●

TRIBUTE TO JANET ALTMAN SPRAGENS

● Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, on February 19, 2006, our Nation lost a great lawyer, educator, advocate, and public servant. Janet Altman Spragens was a lifelong resident of Washington, DC, and a professor at American University's Washington College of Law for 33 years.

I met Janet when she was a young graduate student at Northwestern University and taught social studies at my alma mater, Maine South High School in Park Ridge, IL. She was a Wellesley graduate, and as I was making choices about where I would go to college, she urged me to consider Wellesley. I am grateful to Janet for helping me make that important decision in my life.

Janet went on to law school and developed an expertise in tax law. She used that expertise to benefit our Nation's underserved taxpayers by advocating for them in Congress and, in 1990, founding the Federal Tax Clinic. The clinic continues to operate today and the American Bar Association's Tax Section called it one of the earliest and most successful low-income taxpayer clinics in the country.

Janet Altman Spragens made a difference in the lives of many Americans who never will have the pleasure and privilege of knowing her. I join her family and friends in mourning her loss and ask that her obituary in the Washington Post be printed in the RECORD.

The material follows:

[From the Washington Post, Feb. 22, 2006]

JANET SPRAGENS, 62; LAW PROFESSOR SET UP TAX CLINIC TO AID POOR

(By Joe Holley)

Janet R. Spragens, 62, a tax professor at American University's Washington College of Law and the founder of the nation's first tax clinic for low-income taxpayers, died Feb. 19 of cancer at her home in the District.

Ms. Spragens joined the faculty of the Washington College of Law in fall 1973 and founded the Federal Tax Clinic in 1990. Its purpose is to provide third-year law students the opportunity to learn by doing instead of just reading legal theory and to provide assistance to people who frequently are not served well by the legal system.

''Janet came to realize that the tax system is a place where low- and moderate-income taxpayers don't have the resources to protect themselves,'' said Andy Pike, an associate dean at the law school.

The clinic's clients have included cabdrivers, single working mothers, travel agents, construction workers, retirees, high school teachers, household workers and others who find themselves caught up in the complexity of the nation's administrative and judicial systems. As Ms. Spragens told a House committee in 2001, many are non-English speakers who are frightened and confused. The clinic charges no fees for its services.

Since the clinic was founded, participation in it has been ''standing-room only,'' said its supervising attorney, Nancy Abramowitz, referring both to students and clients. The program's success has spawned others at law schools across the nation.

Born in Washington into a family of lawyers, Ms. Spragens considered becoming a teacher before deciding to pursue a career as a lawyer who taught. She received a bachelor's degree from Wellesley College in 1964 and a master's degree in education from Northwestern University in 1965. She received a law degree from George Washington University Law School in 1968.

As a student teacher during her year at Northwestern, she taught future Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D–N.Y.), then a high school senior. In her memoir, ''Living History,'' Clinton credits Ms. Spragens with urging her to broaden her horizons by leaving the Midwest and attending college in the East. Like Ms. Spragens, Clinton chose Wellesley.

During her third year of law school, Ms. Spragens served as a clerk to U.S. District Judge Oliver Gasch. She was an attorney with the appellate section of the Justice Department's tax division before joining the faculty of the Washington College of Law in 1973. At the time, she was the only female member of the full-time faculty.

Federal funding for the tax clinic, thanks to Ms. Spragens' efforts, came about almost accidentally. Testifying in 1997 before the National Commission on Restructuring the Internal Revenue Service, she was asked what could be done to alleviate tax problems confronting the working poor.

''She said, somewhat offhandedly, just provide funds to create more clinics for the provision of services to this needy population across the country,'' Abramowitz noted. ''The rest is history.''

Ms. Spragens also was concerned about unethical tax preparers who prey on low-income taxpayers and about the complexities of the earned income tax credit, which is designed to help the working poor. ''They are just overwhelmed by the complexity,'' she told The Washington Post in 2001.

Ms. Spragens served as executive director of the American Tax Policy Institute from 1996 to 2001, was a member of the council for the American Bar Association section on taxation since 1999 and had chaired the section's low-income taxpayer and teaching taxation committees. She was director of the Israel program at the Washington College of Law and was visiting professor of law at the University of Haifa Faculty of Law in 2000.

For her work on behalf of low-income taxpayers, she received the 2006 ABA Section on Taxation Pro Bono Award.

Her marriage to Jeffrey Spragens ended in divorce.

Survivors include two daughters, Robin Spragens Trepanier of Washington and Lee Spragens of Los Angeles; her mother, Sophie B. Altman of Washington; two sisters, Susan Altman of Washington and Nancy Altman of Bethesda; and a brother, Robert Altman of Potomac.●

IN HONOR OF ED McNAMARA

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, last week, Michigan lost a distinguished public servant and a visionary leader, and I lost a good friend. Ed McNamara passed away at the age of 79 after a lifetime of service to our State, including 16 years as Wayne County executive and 17 years as mayor of Livonia. He fought relentlessly to make Michigan a better place, and he succeeded in ways small and large. And as he made a difference in the lives of average people, he did so with a sparkle in his eye and humor on his lips.

Ed was an old pol in the best sense of the word. He loved his constituents, he loved serving them, and he made a difference in their lives. Ed brought health care to the poor, saved a countywide bus system, and revitalized the county's parks. He paved the roads, helped save the Rouge River, and made big investments in the people and infrastructure of Southeastern Michigan.

When Ed took office as county executive, Wayne County, which includes the city of Detroit, was facing a $135 million deficit. Ed quickly eliminated that red ink and revived the county's bond rating as a first step toward the greater revitalization he envisioned. Ed McNamara never stopped believing in Wayne County, and we will be reaping the rewards of that leadership for years to come. Just this month, Detroit hosted the Super Bowl at Ford Field, which Ed helped to build. Last year, Detroit hosted Major League Baseball's All-Star Game at Comerica Park, which Ed helped to build. And visitors to each of these events flew into the Detroit Metro Airport terminal named in his honor, which Ed helped to build.

Ed's legacy will also live on in the many people he has inspired and mentored, including the Governor of Michigan. Like them, I have learned so much from him in the years that I have known him. It has been a joy to know a man of such energy, talent, kindness, and warmth.

Ed's abundant good nature spread hope and opportunity for the multitude that he touched. His life demonstrated what a difference one person can make. He will be greatly missed by the people he loved and led. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Lucille and his children and grandchildren.●

TRIBUTE TO CENTER FOR PROVISIONAL ACCELERATED LEARNING

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the Center for Provisional Accelerated Learning, PAL, in San Bernardino, CA. For the past 20 years, the Provisional Accelerated Learning Center has been an outstanding community center for service and support.

The PAL Center was the vision of Dr. Mildred Dalton Henry, a retired professor emeritus from California State University at San Bernardino. In August 1983, Dr. Henry, community resident Alonza Thompson, and other members of the community worked together to establish a community-based learning center.

Today, these PAL Center founders can look back at 20 successful years of community outreach and mentorship that has changed the lives of many. Many students have written about the gratitude and fond memories they hold for the PAL Center and the positive effect it had on their lives.

At the PAL Center, individuals from throughout the community can receive quality educational services and individual life assistance and support. The PAL Center values cultural diversity and strives to assist individuals from all walks of life. In many communities throughout our Nation, troubling situations have forced many individuals to go without the assistance that could change their lives. In San Bernardino, these same individuals can count on the PAL Center to help them plan for and take action to face life's challenges and plan for successful futures.

I applaud the service and dedication of the community heroes at the Center for Provisional Accelerated Learning in San Bernardino. Their efforts have made a lasting impression on their community, and set a standard for our nation. Please join me in honoring them on their 20th anniversary.●

RECOGNIZING THE WILLIAMS INSTITUTE

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am very pleased to take a few moments to recognize the work of The Williams Institute—formerly the Williams Project—on Sexual Orientation Law and Public Policy at UCLA Law School, as it gathers for its Fifth Annual Update.

Founded 5 years ago with the generous support of Charles R. Williams, the Williams Institute produces substantive scholarship on matters pertaining to sexual orientation law and public policy. The first and only institution of its kind in the United States, the institute produces scholarship on sexual orientation issues through the collaborative efforts of scholars, judges, advocates, and students. Those working for the Williams Institute have published an array of documents ranging from amicus briefs that have proved useful in key court cases to books that have helped legal scholars comprehend the ramifications of a constantly evolving body of law.

Educating members of the legal community in America through continuing legal education, lectures, symposia, classes, and speakers is a critical part

of the Williams Institute's mission. This focus on disseminating information, coupled with the intellectual and material resources of UCLA, has made the Williams Institute into a national center for the interdisciplinary exploration of sexual orientation law and policy matters by scholars, judges, practitioners, advocates, and students.

The Williams Institute actively strives to produce well-informed young lawyers. To this end, student involvement in the organization is of paramount importance. Students partake in research with faculty scholars and contribute to the wide breadth of scholarship produced by the Williams Institute.

I invite my colleagues to join me in commending the work of the Williams Institute. In a nation where equal treatment under the law is a central tenet of citizenship, the Williams Institute plays a critical role in ensuring that America lives by its creed.●

IN CELEBRATION OF THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF SAN FRANCISCO'S JAPANTOWN

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to recognize the centennial anniversary of San Francisco's historic Japantown. Today San Francisco's Japantown is one of only three remaining Japantowns in California. The other two are in Los Angeles and San Jose. For the past 100 years, Japantown has been an integral part of San Francisco's rich and diverse cultural history. At 100 years old, it is the first and oldest Japantown in the continental United States.

The first Japanese immigrants arrived in San Francisco in the 1860s. Originally settling in the South Park and Chinatown areas, the Japanese community relocated to the Western Addition after the great earthquake and fire of 1906 destroyed much of San Francisco. When Japantown relocated to the Western Addition in 1906, the Japanese community had the opportunity to grow. More Japanese businesses, shops, churches, schools, restaurants, and hotels moved to the area and supported community development. Before long, the area became known as Nihonmachi, or Japantown. At the height of its growth in 1940, more than 5,000 Japanese lived in Japantown, and there were more than 200 Japanese-owned businesses.

We are not proud of what happened to the Japanese-American community during World War II in the early 1940s. In 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which forced ''all persons of Japanese ancestry, including aliens and non-aliens'' into internment camps until the end of World War II. The internment was fueled by racism and war hysteria and will forever tarnish our country's history. As time has proved, there was no excuse for our Government's decision to intern American citizens. Since those dark days, our Nation has made great strides toward tolerance and inclusion.

In 1983, as part of Fred Korematsu's successful petition to the Federal District Court in San Francisco to overturn his conviction for violating evacuation orders, the court also ruled that the internment of American citizens of Japanese descent during World War II was legally unsupportable. In 1989, Congress passed legislation formally apologizing for the internment of Japanese-American citizens during World War II and authorized a reparations fund for internment survivors. Though we still have further to go to assure equality for all, most Americans now realize that diversity is one of our country's greatest strengths.

When the Japanese community returned to San Francisco after World War II, it was difficult to rebuild the extensive community that existed before the war. However, despite the many barriers, the Japanese community did rebuild Japantown. And although San Francisco's Japantown is smaller today than it was in the past, it still plays a large and important role in our community. Not only does it serve as a reminder of our past, it provides us with an opportunity to celebrate the history, challenges, triumphs, and contributions of the Japanese-American community in San Francisco.

For 100 years, San Francisco's Japantown has served as a cultural resource for the San Francisco Bay area and California. I thank the San Francisco Japantown community for its many efforts to educate the community about Japanese culture and traditions. I congratulate them on their centennial anniversary and wish them another 100 years of success.●

IN MEMORIAM TO DAVE TATSUNO

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to honor the life of Dave Tatsuno, whose courageous documentation of life in a Japanese-American internment camp contributed immensely to our knowledge of this dark time in U.S. history. Mr. Tatsuno passed away on January 26, 2006. He was 92.

Mr. Tatsuno, born in 1913 to a family who had come to the United States in the late 19th century, was raised in San Francisco, in my home State of California. Mr. Tatsuno changed his first name from Masaharu to Dave when he successfully ran for student body president of his junior high school; Masaharu was too long to fit on his campaign posters. In 1936, Mr. Tatsuno graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in business and went to work at Nichi Bei Bussan, a department store in San Francisco that his father founded.

After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which forced ''all persons of Japanese ancestry, including aliens and non-aliens'' into internment camps until the end of World War II. Mr. Tatsuno and his family were forced to move to the Topaz Relocation Center, an internment camp in Topaz, AZ. Over the next 3 years, Mr. Tatsuno secretly filmed life in the camp with an 8-millimeter Bell & Howell camera that Walter Honderick, his supervisor at the internment camp's co-op store, helped smuggle in. Because the camera was forbidden, Mr. Tatsuno kept it hidden in a shoe box, taking it out only when guards were not looking. These images of daily life in Topaz—of church services, of people gardening, of birthday celebrations—have left viewers with a stark image of what life was like during those hard years.

After the Tatsuno family was released from the internment camp, Mr. Tatsuno's footage of life in Topaz was turned into a 48-minute silent film, ''Topaz.'' In 1996, the Library of Congress placed ''Topaz'' on its National Film Registry, which was established in 1989 by Congress to preserve culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant films. Mr. Tatsuno's film is one of only two home movies on the registry's 425-film list; the other film is Abraham Zapruder's footage of the John F. Kennedy assassination. The original footage for ''Topaz'' is now a part of the permanent collection at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles.

After the war, Mr. Tatsuno helped his father reopen Nichi Bei Bussan and took over the business when his father retired. Through this work, Mr. Tatsuno became a prominent and respected businessman and civic leader in San Francisco and San Jose, where he eventually made his home. He also remained engaged and interested in film. His compassion and thoughtfulness inspired many others and he will be deeply missed.

Mr. Tatsuno is survived by three daughters, Arlene Damron, Valerie Sermon, and Melanie Cochran; two sons, Rod Tatsuno and Sheridan Tatsuno; his sister, Chiye Watanabe; four grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. I extend my deepest sympathies to his family.

Dave Tatsuno played down the importance of his role in chronicling the history of the Japanese-American internment camps, always giving credit to Walter Honderick. But Dave Tatsuno will long be remembered for his courage and perseverance in difficult times. His film will have a lasting effect on many generations to come.●

RECOGNIZING WESTSIDE CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am very pleased to take a few moments to recognize the tremendous accomplishments of the Westside Center for Independent Living, WCIL, based in Santa Monica and Los Angeles, as this unique organization celebrates its 30th year of service.

WCIL has devoted innumerable hours and incredible effort toward giving senior citizens and members of our community with disabilities the gift of independence. The WCIL was founded in 1976 during the height of the ''independent living movement.'' Originating in Berkeley in 1970, the independent living movement has strived to provide disabled persons with the opportunity to manage their own lives. Today, centers such as the WCIL have become a vital staple of urban life across the Nation.

Through an array of innovative methods, the center allows seniors and disabled persons to become more fully integrated into our community. One such technique is the peer training system, whereby veterans of the independence training program share their tested knowledge with people who are new to the program. Such pairing instills a sense of confidence in new participants, as it lets them know that they are not alone and that others like them have succeeded in leading a more independent life.

WCIL's Advocacy Action Group works with the disabled community and elected officials to modernize existing disability legislation. The group collects the ideas and complaints of disabled people and transforms them into substantive legislation. Through true grassroots campaigning and issue advocacy, the group ensures that elected officials stay abreast of current accessibility issues in their community.

Recognizing the necessity for information regarding accessibility throughout Los Angeles, the WCIL, in partnership with UCLA, has established Living Independently in Los Angeles, LILA. LILA provides a host of useful information regarding the accessibility of public and private places, community organizations working for the betterment of those with disabilities, and advocacy groups. Thanks to LILA, numerous disabled persons are better equipped to navigate Los Angeles.

The center provides invaluable educational services, including public awareness about the Americans with Disabilities Act. Countless businesses, community organizations, and local community members credit WCIL for helping them to ensure that buildings and offices are accessible for Americans with disabilities.

I am pleased to join the thousands of beneficiaries of this important organization in commending the Westside Center for Independent Living. The Center's work has bettered the lives of countless disabled and senior citizens and has enabled them to participate more fully in our community. The center's efforts have clearly shown that ''a disability need not be disabling.''●

TRIBUTE TO DAVID L. CROW

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to the distinguished public service of David L. Crow. After 15 years at the helm of the largest air-pollution control district in the Nation, he will soon retire as the air pollution control officer and executive director of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, SJAPCD. During his tenure, the district grew from a fledgling union of regional air boards into one of the Nation's most active air-pollution control districts.

After completing his undergraduate and graduate studies at California State University, Fullerton, David built a solid resume in public service before he assumed the leadership of the SJAPCD in 1991. He served as the acting city manager for Foster City, CA, budget director and director of policy development for Fresno County, as well as deputy county administrative officer for Fresno County before lending his considerable talents to improving air quality in the Central Valley.

David accepted the challenge to address and solve the air-quality issues in a region that perennially rank among the worst nationwide in summertime smog and wintertime particulate pollution. Under his stewardship, the Valley air basin has made great strides in reducing ozone exceedances, as it has seen a 50-percent reduction in the emissions from statutory sources. The SJAPCD has implemented programs such as the ''Check Before You Burn'' winter wood-burning restriction program; a system to reduce smoke emissions from agricultural burning, and creating cost-effective rules to encourage conservation management practices for farms.

During his tenure as the head of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, David has earned a reputation as a skilled consensus-builder who forged partnerships between interests which seldom agreed. Under his leadership, the air-pollution district has distributed over $100 million to implement a myriad of projects to reduce serious air pollution in the region. David Crow's efforts, and those of the talented staff that he helped build, are helping to improve the air quality in California's Central Valley, one of the fastest growing regions in the Nation.

Throughout his career, David Crow has proven to be a highly effective administrator who was committed to protecting the public's health. As he gets set to spend more time with his wife Vicky and sons, Ryan and Matthew, I wish him continued success and good luck in all his future endeavors.●

CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL OFFICER EARL HARWOOD SCOTT

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I rise to honor the memory of a dedicated public servant, Officer Earl Harwood Scott of the California Highway Patrol. Officer Earl Harwood Scott spent nearly 5 years with the California Highway Patrol, providing the citizens of California with safety and service. On the morning of February 17, 2006, while on motor patrol near the City of Salida, Officer Scott was mercilessly murdered in the line of duty during a traffic stop.

The California Highway Patrol was in Officer Scott's bloodlines. Officer Scott's father, Sergeant William Scott, as well as two uncles, are proud retired California Highway Patrol veterans. Officer Scott was to celebrate his 5-year anniversary with the California Highway Patrol on February 19. Officer Scott dutifully served the citizens and communities of Stanislaus and San Joaquin counties with great dedication and integrity. Officer Scott's commitment to help others, combined with his passion for law enforcement, enabled him to become a model California Highway Patrol officer. Officer Scott's colleagues shall always remember his gregarious nature and commitment to his job.

Officer Scott is survived by his father, William Scott, and his mother, Judith. When he was not on duty, Officer Scott enjoyed spending time with his neighbors, especially the children who would often play darts and watch sporting events in his garage. Officer Earl Harwood Scott served the State of California with honor and distinction and fulfilled his oath as an officer of the law. His contributions and dedication to law enforcement are greatly appreciated and will serve as a shining example of his legacy.

We shall always be grateful for Officer Scott's heroic service and the sacrifices he made while serving the community and protecting the people he loved.●

HONORING THE LIFE OF ANDREA BRONFMAN

● Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Andrea Bronfman, a respected philanthropist and a dear friend. Andrea passed away on January 23, 2006, at the age of 60.

Born in Great Britain in 1945, Andrea quickly demonstrated remarkable compassion for those in need and an ardent desire to improve the world around her. She was married to Charles Bronfman in 1982, and together they raised five children and six grandchildren. While their wonderful family was certainly one of Andrea's proudest achievements, she will also be fondly remembered for her generous nature, her passion for life, and her multitude of charitable endeavors.

Andrea's philanthropy benefited citizens of all countries and faiths, but she is best known for her activism within the Jewish community and her devotion to Israel, Jewish life, and the Jewish people. In addition to serving on the boards of several well-respected Jewish organizations, she and Charles cofounded Birthright Israel, a program that offers young adults a chance to travel to Israel and experience the roots of their ancestry firsthand. As a result of these good works and her undying devotion to Jewish life, Andrea

was named an honorary citizen of Jerusalem in 2002 and was given the key to the city by then-Mayor Ehud Olmert.

Throughout her life, Andrea proved herself to be a true pillar of decency and generosity both within the Jewish community and outside of it. Not content just to fund projects, Andrea was actively involved in the community and was constantly devising new undertakings that would benefit society and help more people. Most recently she served as founder and deputy chairman of The Gift of New York, a nonprofit initiative that provided free admission to concerts, theatrical productions, and sporting events to the families of those who died at the World Trade Center in 2001. Andrea recognized that grief is not an emotion that subsides after a few months. Long after the rubble of 9/11 had been cleared, she ensured that the bereaved families knew that their loss and heartache had not been forgotten.

Our hearts go out to Andrea's family and friends as they deal with the inevitable pain and sadness that come from an unexpected death. To mitigate that pain somewhat, we can remember and be grateful that Andrea lived a life filled with love, kindness, and compassion. Her dedication to humanitarian causes and deep devotion to her faith served as an inspiration to everyone who knew her and benefited from her achievements and generosity. While her determination and spirit will be missed, her legacy will live on through the millions of people her work has touched.

I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Mrs. Andrea Bronfman and the legacy she left to philanthropy and caring about people whether she knew them or not.●

REPORT RELATIVE TO THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY BLOCKING PROPERTY OF PERSONS UNDERMINING DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES OR INSTITUTIONS IN ZIMBABWE—PM 41

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency blocking the property of persons undermining democratic processes or institutions in Zimbabwe is to continue in effect beyond March 6, 2006. The most recent notice continuing this emergency was published in the *Federal Register* on March 4, 2005 (70 FR 10859).

The crisis constituted by the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions has not been resolved. These actions and policies pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue this national emergency and to maintain in force the sanctions to respond to this threat.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *February 27, 2006*.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–5774. A communication from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Weighted Average Interest Rate Update'' (Notice 2006–19) received on February 16, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–5775. A communication from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Appeals Settlement Guidelines: Notional Principal Contracts'' (UIL: 9300.20–00) received on February 16, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–5776. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Office of the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''HIPAA Administrative Simplification: Enforcement'' (RIN0991–AB29) received on February 16, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–5777. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, transmitting, authorization of 4 officers to wear the insignia of the grade of brigadier general in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–5778. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Report to Congress on Head Start Monitoring for Fiscal Year 2004''; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–5779. A communication from the Ombudsman for Part E, Energy Employees Compensation Program, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Ombudsman's 2005 First Annual Report; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–5780. A communication from the Chairman and President (Acting), Export Import Bank of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to transactions involving U.S. exports to India; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–5781. A communication from the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's semiannual report entitled ''Monetary Policy Report''; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–5782. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Surface Mining, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Texas Regulatory Program'' (Docket No. TX–055–FOR) received on February 16, 2006; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–5783. A communication from the Secretary of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the United States Merchant Marine Academy's Board of Visitors; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5784. A communication from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Notice Providing Examples of Non-Reportable Transactions and a Reporting Safe Harbor for Certain Reportable Transactions, Involving Notional Principal Contracts'' (Notice 2006–16) received on February 16, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–5785. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to U.S. military personnel and U.S. civilian contractors involved in the anti-narcotics campaign in Colombia; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–5786. A communication from the Assistant Administrator, Office of Administration and Resources Management, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Agency's 2005 Competitive Sourcing Report; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–5787. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Georgia Update to Materials Incorporated by Reference'' (FRL No. 8022–4) received on February 22, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–5788. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Indiana; Dearborn County Sulfur Dioxide Emission Limits'' (FRL No. 8036–3) received on February 22, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–5789. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans and Designation of Areas for Air Quality Planning Purposes; Arizona'' (FRL No. 8022–5) received on February 22, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–5790. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; State of Iowa'' (FRL No. 8037–9) received on February 22, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–5791. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting,

pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Wisconsin; Wisconsin Construction Permit Permanency SIP Revision'' (FRL No. 8037–6) received on February 22, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–5792. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Indian General Assistance Program 2006 Grants Administration Guidance'' (FRL No. 8024–7) received on February 22, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–5793. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''New Hampshire: Final Authorization of State Hazardous Waste Management Program Revisions'' (FRL No. 8038–3) received on February 22, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–5794. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''State Implementation Plan Revision and Alternate Permit Program; Territory of Guam'' (FRL No. 8030–3) received on February 22, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–5795. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Disapproval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Colorado; Affirmative Defense Provisions for Startup and Shutdown; Common Provisions Regulation and Regulation No. 1'' (FRL No. 8029–7) received on February 22, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–5796. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of State Implementation Plans; Texas; Revision to the Rate of Progress Plan for the Beaumont/Port Arthur Ozone Nonattainment Area'' (FRL No. 8034–7) received on February 22, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–5797. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Regulation of Fuels and Fuel Additives: Removal of Reformulated Gasoline Oxygen Content Requirement for California Gasoline and Revision of Commingling Prohibition to Address Non-Oxygenated Reformulated Gasoline in California'' (FRL No. 8035–2) received on February 22, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–5798. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Regulation of Fuels and Fuel Additives: Removal of Reformulated Gasoline Oxygen Content Requirement and Revision of Commingling Prohibition to Address Non-Oxygenated Reformulated Gasoline'' (FRL No. 8035–1) received on February 22, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–5799. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''TSCA Inventory Update Reporting Partially Exempted Chemicals List; Addition of Certain Vegetable-based Oils, Soybean Meal, and Xylitol'' ((RIN2070–AC61) (FRL No. 7760–7)) received on February 22, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–5800. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Notice of Availability of Final Aquatic Life Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Nonylphenol'' (FRL No. 8035–8) received on February 22, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–5801. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Notice of Availability of Final Recommended Aquatic Life Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Diazinon'' (FRL No. 8035–9) received on February 22, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–5802. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Pesticide Management and Disposal; Standards for Pesticide Containers and Containment; Notification to the Secretary of Agriculture'' ((RIN2070–AB95) (FRL No. 7749–1)) received on February 22, 2006; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–5803. A communication from the Administrator, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Ante-Mortem Inspection of Horses'' (RIN0583–AD21) received on February 27, 2006; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–5804. A communication from the Administrator, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Changes in Fees for Meat, Poultry, and Egg Products Inspection Services—Fiscal Years 2006–2008'' (RIN0583–AD12) received on February 27, 2006; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–5805. A communication from the Chairman, Farm Credit System Insurance Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Golden Parachute and Indemnification Payments'' (RIN3055–AA08) received on February 27, 2006; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–5806. A communication from the Chairman, Federal Election Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's annual report regarding the implementation of the Government in the Sunshine Act for calendar year 2005; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

EC–5807. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's Buy American Report for Fiscal Year 2004; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–5808. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Fiscal Year 2004 Annual Report to Congress for the Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–5809. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General for Administration, Justice Management Division, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Exemption of Privacy Act System of Records for the Bureau of Prisons: 'Inmate Electronic Message Record System (JUSTICE/BOP–013)' '' (AAG/A Order No. 004–2006) received on February 27, 2006; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–5810. A communication from the Director, Regulations and Rulings Division, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment of the Covelo Viticultural Area'' ((RIN1513–AA90) (T.D. TTB–42)) received on February 27, 2006; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–5811. A communication from the Director, Regulations and Rulings Division, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment of the Rattlesnake Hills Viticultural Area'' ((RIN1513–AA77) (T.D. TTB–43)) received on February 27, 2006; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–5812. A communication from the Acting Assistant to the Secretary, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Filipino Veterans' Benefits Improvements'' (RIN2900–AK65) received on February 27, 2006; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. ENZI, from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

Report to accompany S. 1614, a bill to extend the authorization of programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 109–218).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. NELSON of Florida, and Mrs. BOXER):

S. 2334. A bill to ensure the security of United States ports, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. BAYH:

S. 2335. A bill to clarify the role of the Director of National Intelligence, amend the Defense Production Act of 1950 to clarify the notification and investigation requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. SALAZAR:

S. 2336. A bill to establish the South Park National Heritage Area in the State of Colorado, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. LIEBERMAN (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. KERRY, Mr. AKAKA, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 2337. A bill to increase access to postsecondary education, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Ms. CANTWELL, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 2338. A bill to extend the authority of the Secretary of the Army to accept and expend funds contributed by non-Federal public entities to expedite the processing of permits; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. COBURN:

S. 2339. A bill to reauthorize the HIV Health Care Services Program under title 26 of the Public Health Service Act; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SPECTER (for himself, Mr. COLEMAN, and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. 2340. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to preserve access to community cancer care by Medicare beneficiaries; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DORGAN:

S. 2341. A bill to prohibit the merger, acquisition, or takeover of Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company by Dubai Ports World; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. REED, and Mr. LAUTENBERG):

S. Res. 384. A resolution designating March 2, 2006, as ''Read Across America Day''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. ENSIGN:

S. Res. 385. A resolution expressing the gratitude and appreciation to the men and women of the Armed Forces who serve as military recruiters, commending their selfless service in recruiting young men and women to serve in the United States military, particularly in support of the global war on terrorism; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. KERRY:

S. Con. Res. 82. A concurrent resolution to establish a procedure for the appointment of an independent Congressional Ethics Office to investigate ethics violations in the Senate and the House of Representatives; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 337

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 337, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to revise the age and service requirements for eligibility to receive retired pay for non-regular service, to expand certain authorities to provide health care benefits for Reserves and their families, and for other purposes.

S. 345

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 345, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to deliver a meaningful benefit and lower prescription drug prices under the medicare program.

S. 408

At the request of Mr. DEWINE, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 408, a bill to provide for programs and activities with respect to the prevention of underage drinking.

S. 471

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 471, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for human embryonic stem cell research.

S. 709

At the request of Mr. DEWINE, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 709, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a grant program to provide supportive services in permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals, and for other purposes.

S. 1052

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1052, a bill to improve transportation security, and for other purposes.

S. 1112

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1112, a bill to make permanent the enhanced educational savings provisions for qualified tuition programs enacted as part of the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001.

S. 1528

At the request of Mr. MCCONNELL, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1528, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the tax treatment of horses, and for other purposes.

S. 1791

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the names of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. ALLEN) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) were added as cosponsors of S. 1791, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a deduction for qualified timber gains.

S. 1881

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1881, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the Old Mint at San Francisco otherwise known as the ''Granite Lady'', and for other purposes.

S. 2123

At the request of Mr. ALLARD, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2123, a bill to modernize the manufactured housing loan insurance program under title I of the National Housing Act.

S. 2178

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2178, a bill to make the stealing and selling of telephone records a criminal offense.

S. 2185

At the request of Mr. HAGEL, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2185, a bill to amend part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to provide full Federal funding of such part.

S. 2197

At the request of Mr. DOMENICI, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2197, a bill to improve the global competitiveness of the United States in science and energy technology, to strengthen basic research programs at the Department of Energy, and to provide support for mathematics and science education at all levels through the resources available through the Department of Energy, including at the National Laboratories.

S. 2198

At the request of Mr. DOMENICI, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2198, a bill to ensure the United States successfully competes in the 21st century global economy.

S. 2199

At the request of Mr. DOMENICI, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2199, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives to promote research and development, innovation, and continuing education.

S. 2200

At the request of Mr. LUGAR, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2200, a bill to establish a United States-Poland parliamentary youth exchange program, and for other purposes.

S. 2201

At the request of Mr. OBAMA, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) were added as cosponsors of S. 2201, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to modify the mediation and implementation requirements of section 40122 regarding changes in the Federal Aviation Administration personnel management system, and for other purposes.

S. 2231

At the request of Mr. BYRD, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2231, a bill to direct the Secretary of Labor to prescribe additional coal mine safety standards, to require additional penalties for habitual violators, and for other purposes.

S. 2259

At the request of Mr. OBAMA, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2259, a bill to establish an Office of Public Integrity in the Congress and a Congressional Ethics Enforcement Commission.

S. 2284

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from Colorado

(Mr. SALAZAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2284, a bill to extend the termination date for the exemption of returning workers from the numerical limitations for temporary workers.

S. 2291

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2291, a bill to provide for the establishment of a biodefense injury compensation program and to provide indemnification for producers of countermeasures.

S. 2302

At the request of Mrs. CLINTON, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2302, a bill to establish the Federal Emergency Management Agency as an independent agency, and for other purposes.

S. 2305

At the request of Mr. AKAKA, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2305, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to repeal the amendments made by the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 requiring documentation evidencing citizenship or nationality as a condition for receipt of medical assistance under the Medicaid program.

S. 2307

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2307, a bill to enhance fair and open competition in the production and sale of agricultural commodities.

S. 2320

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SANTORUM) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. SUNUNU) were added as cosponsors of S. 2320, a bill to make available funds included in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program for fiscal year 2006, and for other purposes.

S. 2321

At the request of Mr. SANTORUM, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2321, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of Louis Braille.

S. 2333

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. AKAKA) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 2333, a bill to require an investigation under the Defense Production Act of 1950 of the acquisition by Dubai Ports World of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 236

At the request of Mr. COLEMAN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 236, a resolution recognizing the need to pursue research into the causes, a treatment, and an eventual cure for idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, supporting the goals and ideals of National Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis Awareness Week, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 373

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. DEWINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 373, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the Senate should continue to support the National Domestic Violence Hotline, a critical national resource that saves lives each day, and commemorate its 10th anniversary.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. NELSON of Florida, and Mrs. BOXER):

S. 2334. A bill to ensure the security of United States ports, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I am proud that I have introduced today along with Senators CLINTON, LAUTENBERG, NELSON, and BOXER legislation that would guarantee that foreign governments cannot control the operations of the ports of the United States. I thank Senator CLINTON for her leadership on this issue as we fight together, along with Senator SCHUMER and others, to keep the Port of New York/New Jersey safe.

I think we all know why public attention has been focused on this deal over the past 2 weeks. Our ports are the gateway to this country. They are the gateway for much that we eat, that we drink, that we wear, drive, and use on a daily basis. But just as they bring in goods we enjoy, the ports are also our Achilles' heel, the vulnerability that could be exploited in an attempt to bring us down if terrorists transport a nuclear, biological, or chemical weapon to our ports. That is why our legislation sets a new standard for the future control of our ports.

Our legislation would protect our national security by keeping our ports from falling into the hands of foreign governments. Our legislation bans foreign government-owned companies from operating in our ports and requires the President to report to Congress on how to manage national security risks arising from any existing port contracts. Our legislation would also end the secrecy associated with the Dubai deal by making the executive branch notify Congress as well as State and local officials of future deals. The legislation also includes a new public comment period.

Never again should the American public find out about a secret deal through the newspapers after the fact. Never again should Congress learn about the sale of a key U.S. infrastructure asset to a foreign state-owned company only after the deal is done. And never again can we compromise national security by turning our port operations over to another country, whether friend or foe.

Our message with this legislation today is clear: Never again.

I think all Americans instinctively know we cannot simply turn over our critical national security infrastructure such as terminal operations at our ports to a foreign government. Foreign governments act very differently than even foreign companies. Foreign governments act in their own national interests and in their own national security interests. Privately held foreign companies are controlled by stockholders and answer to the needs of the market, not the needs of a government. One must only study the way in which Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has used his state-owned oil company to pursue the interests of the Government of Venezuela to understand that state-owned companies often behave very differently than publicly traded ones.

That is why our legislation bans foreign governments from owning, leasing, or operating any facilities in our ports. We believe that just as we would not turn over the operations of our airport facilities to a foreign government, why should we turn the operations of our ports, which are the biggest hole in our national security blanket, over to a foreign government.

The opponents of this thought process, of this bill, like to argue this is the reality of global trade. But the people making this argument are the same ones who constantly remind us that the world has changed since September 11 and that we must adapt our security response accordingly. Whatever happened before September 11, the world has changed since then and we cannot rely on our old methods of looking at the world in a traditional way.

One of the things the September 11 Commission told us was to think outside of the box. A simple envelope became a weapon of great injury when it was filled with anthrax; an airplane used to travel commercially or for pleasure was turned into a weapon of mass destruction. Think outside the box. And if we cannot think outside the box in the context of understanding how the ports in the United States, in the hands of a foreign government in an operational capacity, can have a security consequence, we are in trouble in this post-September 11 world. This is an area in which security must take priority over commercial transactions.

Make no mistake about it; the legislation is urgently needed, and I am writing the President today expressing my concern that this new 45-day review leaves the President with no authority to act to stop Dubai Ports World from taking control of United States port operations. I am not sure that is clear with this 45-day review. This transaction was set to close on March 2, and

we want to stop the clock now and make sure that 45-day investigative review period is precedent to the fulfillment of that agreement.

We also believe it is time to end the secrecy surrounding these deals. This secrecy apparently allowed the executive branch to ignore our own laws. These laws require a 45-day investigation of deals involving government-owned companies which could affect national security. Clearly a deal to turn over part of our port operations to a foreign government-owned company would impact national security. We know the Coast Guard warned the administration that there were intelligence gaps that made it impossible to determine the threats raised by the deal. Yet it is only now, after enormous external pressure, that this 45-day review period may be carried out. But starting an investigation that should have already been carried out under the law is not enough, and that is why, from my position on the Banking Committee, during hearings later this week, I plan to seek to discover why the law wasn't followed. I am looking forward to working with both the chairman and ranking member to come up with comprehensive solutions to these problems that emanated under the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States.

As I said before, I am also concerned about the secrecy in this process. Many New Jersey residents have written or called me asking why the process in approving the deal was so secretive and why Congress was kept in the dark. It is clear to me, to the people of New Jersey, using their common sense, and to the American public that we must have transparency and openness as we address these national security issues.

Without our legislation, the committee that reviews this process doesn't even have to tell Congress about the deal until after it has made a decision. And even after they make a decision, they have no obligation to inform the American public. In the particular case of the Dubai Ports deal, the committee sent out no information and the press only learned about it when Dubai Ports World decided to put out its own press release. That is why our legislation would require the notification of Congress, State, and local authorities where appropriate, as well as a public comment period to allow the public impacted by any future deals to share their concerns with the Federal Government.

These are basic reforms which I think most Americans would agree seem necessary, almost obvious when it comes to protecting our ports. The fight to secure our ports cannot and will not end with this legislation.

Let me be clear: Our ports are not secure. I have been arguing on this for quite a long time as a former Member of the House of Representatives representing the Port of Elizabeth and Newark, the third largest port, the Port of New York/New Jersey and other ports on the eastern seaboard. For all the money the Nation has poured into improving our security, several critical links in the chain have been ignored, and this week the spotlight has shone brightly on one aspect of the problem: our ports, the port of entry for thousands of containers every day, holding everything from clothing to electronics. But these containers could also contain much more dangerous cargo such as a nuclear, chemical, or biological weapon.

The bottom line is we don't know what is in the vast majority of containers entering this country because despite repeated warnings from security experts from both within and without our Government, only 1 out of every 20 containers that passes through our ports is screened, and 95 percent receive no screening whatsoever other than a cursory glance at a cargo manifest.

It is crucial that we also develop a national transportation plan that includes a comprehensive strategy for protecting our ports. A weapon of mass destruction detonated in a shipping container at the Port of New York/New Jersey or any other seaport could cause tens of thousands of casualties and economic losses approaching a trillion dollars. According to the U.S. Coast Guard, $5.4 billion will be needed over the next 10 years for port security. Yet since the 9/11 attacks, Congress has provided less than $800 million.

This is not a new problem, and it should not be surprising that the administration has let this problem fester. They have continuously focused on the security of only one aspect of our critical infrastructure to the detriment of the rest. That is something we can no longer continue to accept.

In New Jersey we face the reality of failures in our national security every day when we look across the river at Ground Zero and mourn the loss of over 700 fellow New Jerseyans who died on September 11, 2001. The problem of port security is not in some distant future or some distant issue but an everyday reality, as we look at our own port which brings in hundreds of thousands of containers from around the world every day: 145 million tons last year from over 5,000 ships. This is a port that generates over 200,000 jobs and $25 billion of economic activity. It is a great economic engine. It is also a great risk.

In today's reality, a foreign government, if it were to be operating the facilities at one of those ports and simply wanted to do something as benign maybe as shutting it down at a critical moment, such as when we are sending supplies to our troops in the field—we use our commercial ports increasingly to send military equipment and supplies to back our troops in the field—imagine if it were shut down at a critical moment when we needed those supplies to be generated across the sea.

That is why we have to face these realities together. We must stand together across party lines and across States to fight for the safety and security of our families. Our ports are on the front lines in our fight against terrorism, and with this legislation, we say we will never again allow a deal which would compromise the national security of our ports, the safety of New Jersey, or the security of the United States.

I urge my fellow Senators on both sides of the aisle to join with us in this legislation.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2334

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Port Security Act of 2006''.

SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON LEASES OF REAL PROPERTY AND FACILITIES AT UNITED STATES PORTS BY FOREIGN GOVERNMENT-OWNED ENTITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 271(d) of the Defense Production Act of 1950 (50 U.S.C. App. 2170(d)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''Subject to subsection (d)'' and inserting the following:

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (e)''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(2) PROHIBITION ON LEASES OF REAL PROPERTY AND FACILITIES AT UNITED STATES PORTS BY FOREIGN GOVERNMENT-OWNED ENTITIES.—The President shall prohibit any merger, acquisition, or takeover described in subsection (a)(1) that will result in any entity that is owned or controlled by a foreign government leasing, operating, managing, or owning real property or facilities at a United States port.''.

(b) REPORT REQUIRED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to Congress a report on the leasing, operating, managing, or owning real property or facilities at United States ports by entities that are owned or controlled by foreign governments.

(2) CONTENT.—The report required under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) a list of all entities that are owned or controlled by foreign governments that are leasing, operating, managing, or owning real property or facilities at United States ports;

(B) an assessment of the national security threat posed by such activities; and

(C) recommendations for any legislation in response to such threat.

SEC. 3. INCREASED TRANSPARENCY OF MANDATORY INVESTIGATIONS.

Section 271(b) of the Defense Production Act of 1950 (50 U.S.C. App. 2170(b)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and (2) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), respectively;

(2) by striking ''The President'' and inserting the following:

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The President'';

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

''(2) NOTIFICATION TO CONGRESS.—Not later than one day after commencing an investigation under paragraph (1), the President shall provide notice of the investigation and relevant information regarding the proposed

merger, acquisition, or takeover, including relevant ownership records to—

''(A) the Majority Leader and Minority Leader of the Senate;

''(B) the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives;

''(C) the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the Committee on Finance, the Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, the Committee on Armed Services, and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate;

''(D) the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the Committee on Ways and Means, the Committee on Homeland Security, the Committee on Financial Services, the Committee on Armed Services, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives; and

''(E) the Members of Congress representing the States and districts affected by the proposed transaction.

''(3) NOTIFICATION TO PUBLIC OFFICIALS OF INVESTIGATIONS OF PROPOSED TRANSACTIONS AFFECTING UNITED STATES PORTS.—In the case of an investigation under paragraph (1) of a proposed merger, acquisition, or takeover that will result in any entity that is owned or controlled by a foreign government leasing, operating, managing, or owning real property or facilities at a United States port, the President shall, not later than one day after commencing an investigation under paragraph (1), notify the Governors and heads of relevant government agencies of the States in which such ports are located and provide to such Governors and relevant agency heads information regarding the proposed merger, acquisition, or takeover, including relevant ownership records.

''(4) PUBLIC COMMENTS.—

''(A) SOLICITATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS.—Not later than 7 days after commencing an investigation under paragraph (1), the President shall publish in the Federal Register a description of the proposed merger, acquisition, or takeover, including a solicitation for public comments on such proposed merger, acquisition, or takeover.

''(B) SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS.—Not later than 10 days prior to the completion of an investigation under paragraph (1), the President shall publish in the Federal Register a summary of the public comments received pursuant to subparagraph (A).''.

SEC. 4. TECHNICAL CORRECTION.

Section 271(e) of the Defense Production Act of 1950 (50 U.S.C. App. 2170(e)) is amended by striking ''subsection (c)'' and inserting ''subsection (d)''.

SEC. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendments made by this Act shall apply to any merger, acquisition, or takeover considered on or after October 1, 2005 under section 271 of the Defense Production Act of 1950 (50 U.S.C. App. 2170).

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I am glad to hear our new colleague from New Jersey talking about our national security, and certainly this is one subject which always concerns us. It is the primary role of our National Government to provide for the security of the American people. I hope that in the debate, though, about the control of our ports, we don't operate on the basis of looking for political advantage but, rather, we take a calm and deliberate review of the facts.

I heard this morning, in the Armed Services Committee, from the Director of National Intelligence, who said that after a review of this transaction, it was his opinion, as the lead Government official for the intelligence community in our Nation, that any risk in this transaction was low. Certainly, that was useful information to have, and I anticipate that we will continue to hear more as the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee continues to look into this transaction, and I trust we will do our due diligence during this 45-day review period.

But I hope we don't make this a political football. I hope we don't paint this with such a broad brush that we consider any Arab nation our enemy when, in fact, this Nation has been an ally in the global war on terror. I hope we will make our judgments based on behavior and not where someone comes from or their ethnicity or other origins because, of course, fanning the flames of prejudice based upon those sorts of considerations would be inappropriate entirely.

By Mr. LIEBERMAN (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. KERRY, Mr. AKAKA, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 2337. A bill to increase access to postsecondary education, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce, along with Senators SNOWE, AKAKA, KERRY, DURBIN, and DEWINE, the College Pathway Act of 2006. The intent of this bill is to provide a means of addressing the critical issue of college access and postsecondary academic success. College access for all will continue to be a struggle until the predictors of successful college performance are assimilated into high school curricula. The degree to which high school students are successfully prepared for college continues to be at the forefront of educational concerns. Reports abound repeating the same message: our high school students, particularly students from low-income and minority populations, are not being adequately prepared for the challenges of postsecondary education. The College Pathway Act seeks to foster alliances among the interested and integral stakeholders in the educational arena to create consistency in content and assessment standards between P–12 and higher education. We do this by encouraging the establishment of P–16 Commissions. We must rise to the challenge and forge a pathway to enhance both college access and academic success.

Postsecondary education is an important aspiration for most students and the future strength of our economy and workforce will largely depend on the postsecondary educational attainments of students across the country regardless of ethnicity or economic status. High school preparation is a major part of the problem. Published reports on the status of this topic stress the lack of preparedness of high school graduates for postsecondary education. Most will need remedial help in college. More than 70 percent of high school graduates enter two and four year colleges, but at least 28 percent immediately take remedial English or math courses. At some point during their college years, 53 percent of students will take one remedial English or math class if not more. For low-income and minority students, the percentage is higher. States require a certain number of English and math courses to be completed prior to graduation, however, the certainty of course content reflecting the knowledge and skills important for college success is not ensured.

Students find themselves taking high school courses lacking in rigor and challenging content, particularly in the areas of math and science. If asked, 39 percent of students who have gone on to a postsecondary institution will admit they were not adequately prepared for college and there were gaps in their overall preparation. College instructors estimate that 42 percent of their students are not adequately prepared. The quality and intensity of the secondary school curriculum are the most significant predictors of college success; and are more significant than race, socioeconomic status, secondary school grade point average, or ACT and SAT scores. These findings are particularly significant for minority groups enrolling in college. Students who engage in challenging secondary coursework will attend and persist in pursuing higher education at a greater rate than those who follow programs of study that are not rigorous in content. All states have English and mathematics standards and assessments at the high school level, yet assessment standards and tests often do not reflect the demands put on students in postsecondary education and in the workplace. High school curricula must be aligned with college entry requirements. The American Diploma Project states that the challenge ahead is to create a system of assessments and graduation requirements that considered together signify readiness for college and work. We, as Federal policymakers, have an essential role to play in making this a reality and creating college access for all.

In part, the misalignment between postsecondary institutions and high school stems from current governance systems in place for P–12 educational systems and higher education. Both systems are generally governed, financed and operated differently. This gap must be bridged between the two systems. Creating a pipeline of shared information between the two entities and the business community will promote an exchange of necessary and useful information. Working to align standards from the early grades through grade 12 recognizes that skill acquisition and content assimilation build one upon the other and acknowledges that high-school graduation and college success is a culmination of preparation originating in the beginning years of school. Aligning curricula

across school levels creates a more seamless education and ensures that students are prepared for each subsequent grade with particular attention to math, science, and engineering. Aligning P–12 and postsecondary education would reduce the number of students who arrive at college needing remedial coursework.

The need to develop high-quality data systems is also critical to improving high school student outcomes. Accountability for high school graduation numbers and drop-out rates is critical to addressing education reform in our high schools. Currently reports have indicated that the quality of high school graduation and drop-out data is often not reliable and does not reflect the actual numbers.

Tracking student growth over time using longitudinal student-unit databases will provide the most accurate information for policy decisions and assessments. Furthermore, information provided about student achievement over time can be linked to teachers, programs and schools serving those students. The National Governor's Association (NGA) recently convened a Task Force on State High School Graduation Data—which included representatives from the American Federation of Teachers, the Business Roundtable, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Education Commission of the States, the Educational Testing Service, the Education Trust, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Education Association, Standard and Poor's and the State Higher Education Executive Officers—to make recommendations about how States can develop a high-quality, comparable high school graduation measure, as well as complementary indicators of student progress and outcomes and data systems capable of collecting, analyzing, and reporting the data States need. The task force members concurred as a group on their mission and devised a compact to implement efforts to guide States in developing high quality data-systems ideally using a longitudinal student unit record data system. This compact was signed by 51 governors in all States and Puerto Rico. The ultimate goal is better outcomes for students. Better information can lead to better policies and program implementation. Our bill therefore includes incentives for States to develop or enhance such data systems.

The College Pathway Act supplies a remedy to the critical issue of the disconnect existing between high school outcomes and college expectations. Through the formation of partnerships between P–12 and higher education systems in the States, academic success in postsecondary education becomes the priority agenda item for reform. We anticipate that P–16 Commissions will bring about an increase in the percentage of academically prepared students, particularly low-income and minority students, and a decrease in the percentage of college students requiring remedial coursework, particularly with respect to math, science, and engineering.

The College Pathway Act of 2006 awards grants to States to establish P–16 Commissions in order to align P–12 outcomes with postsecondary institutions' expectations. The Commissions under the leadership of the governor or governor's designee, will convene stakeholders of the statewide P–12 education and higher education community, and may include parent groups, State legislative representatives, and particularly members of the business community. The commissions' goal to create a mission addressing college preparation will be the first and critical step of this process.

Many States across our country have already seen the wisdom of a P–16 commission and have been working on goals and implementation. The results, although preliminary for many States, are vastly encouraging. Our bill will provide support both to States with existing P–16 bodies, or States seeking to establish such commissions. It will give priority to the States also seeking to establish or enhance data systems.

The College Pathway Act of 2006 can offer States an opportunity to craft a vision that will reach all students over time so that their educational pathway of access to and success in college will be ensured.

I urge my colleagues to act favorably on this measure. I ask unanimous consent that the text of this bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2337

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''College Pathway Act of 2006''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Postsecondary education is an important aspiration for most students and the future strength of the United States economy and workforce will largely depend on the postsecondary educational attainments of all people of the United States, regardless of sex, race, or ethnic background.

(2) Parents and students recognize the value of postsecondary education. Ninety-seven percent of secondary school students expect to attend college, and more than 75 percent of secondary school graduates enroll in some postsecondary education within 2 years of secondary school graduation.

(3) Notwithstanding those expectations, only 32 percent of students graduate from secondary school adequately prepared to enter a 4-year institution of higher education. Students living in poverty and students of color are roughly half as likely to be college-ready.

(4) Despite the reality that most students will enter college after secondary school, secondary school graduation requirements are not aligned with the expectations of postsecondary education.

(5) Rather than beginning college-level work upon entering postsecondary education, many students (nearly 1 in 3) enroll in developmental coursework, and more than half will take at least 1 class of developmental coursework before leaving postsecondary education. Students who need to take a class of developmental coursework in college have less than a 40 percent chance of completing their course of study, and students who take 3 or more classes of developmental coursework face reducing their prospects of completing their course of study to less than 1 in 5.

(6) The quality and intensity of the secondary school curriculum—

(A) are the most significant predictors of college success; and

(B) are more significant than race, socioeconomic status, secondary school grade point average, or ACT and SAT scores.

(7) States around the Nation have developed secondary school academic standards, but there is often no relationship between those standards and institutional expectations for college-level study. Students, families, and school personnel need information to address the gap that exists between satisfying various kindergarten through grade 12 standards and meeting the standards that indicate success in higher education. The lack of clear information affects all students, but the effect is particularly grave for students living in poverty who are more reliant on schools and public sources of information to gauge their preparedness for college-level work.

(8) Numerous reports have cited the need to improve mathematics and science achievement in prekindergarten through grade 12.

(9) Current data systems are not designed to measure the efficacy of State actions intended to prepare students to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. State-level data systems usually contain only data related to kindergarten through grade 12, and often are not compatible with postsecondary education data systems.

SEC. 3. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this Act are the following:

(1) To broaden the focus of Federal, State, and local higher education programs to promote academic success in postsecondary education, particularly with respect to mathematics, science, and engineering.

(2) To increase the percentage of low-income and minority students who are academically prepared to enter and successfully complete postsecondary-level general education coursework.

(3) To decrease the percentage of students requiring developmental coursework through grants that enable States to coordinate the public prekindergarten through grade 12 education system and the postsecondary education system—

(A) to ensure that covered institutions articulate and publicize the prerequisite skills and knowledge expected of incoming postsecondary students attending covered institutions, in order to provide students and other interested parties with accurate information pertaining to the students' necessary preparations for postsecondary education;

(B) to establish and implement middle school and secondary school course enrollment guidelines—

(i) to ensure that public secondary school students, in all major racial and ethnic groups, and income levels, complete academic courses linked with academic success at the postsecondary level; and

(ii) to increase the percentage of students in each major racial group, ethnic group, and income level who graduate from secondary school and enter postsecondary education with the academic preparation necessary to successfully complete postsecondary-level

general education coursework, particularly with respect to mathematics, science, and engineering;

(C) to implement programs and policies that increase secondary school graduation rates; and

(D) to collect and analyze disaggregated longitudinal student data throughout P–16 education in order to—

(i) understand and improve students' progress throughout the P–16 education system;

(ii) understand problems and needs throughout the P–16 education system; and

(iii) align prekindergarten through grade 12 academic standards and higher education standards so that more students are prepared to successfully complete postsecondary-level general education coursework.

SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) IN GENERAL.—The terms ''local educational agency'', ''parent'', ''secondary school'', and ''State'' have the meanings given the terms in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

(2) ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS.—The term ''academic assessments'' means the academic assessments implemented by a State educational agency pursuant to section 1111(b)(3) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(3)).

(3) ACADEMIC STANDARDS.—The term ''academic standards'' means the challenging academic content standards and challenging student academic achievement standards adopted by a State pursuant to section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

(4) COVERED INSTITUTION.—The term ''covered institution'' means an institution of higher education that participates in a program under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.).

(5) DEVELOPMENTAL COURSEWORK.—The term ''developmental coursework'' means coursework that a student is required to complete in order to attain prerequisite knowledge or skills necessary for entrance into a postsecondary degree or certification program.

(6) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term ''institution of higher education'' has the meaning given the term in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002).

(7) P–16 EDUCATION.—The term ''P–16 education'' means the educational system from prekindergarten through the conferring of a baccalaureate degree.

(8) P–16 EDUCATOR.—The term ''P–16 educator'' means an individual teaching in P–16 education.

(9) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Education.

(10) STUDENT.—The term ''student'' means any student enrolled in a public school.

SEC. 5. P–16 EDUCATION STEWARDSHIP SYSTEM GRANTS.

(a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—From amounts appropriated under section 10 for a fiscal year, and subject to subsection (b), the Secretary shall award grants, on a competitive basis, to States to enable the States—

(1) to establish—

(A) P–16 education stewardship commissions in accordance with section 7; or

(B) P–16 education stewardship systems consisting of—

(i) a P–16 education stewardship commission in accordance with section 7; and

(ii) a P–16 education data system in accordance with section 8; and

(2) to carry out the activities and programs described in the State application and plan submitted under section 6.

(b) AWARD BASIS.—In determining the approval and amount of a grant under subsection (a), the Secretary shall give priority to an application from a State that desires the grant to establish a P–16 education stewardship system described in subsection (a)(1)(B).

(c) PERIOD OF GRANTS.—

(1) STATES ESTABLISHING P–16 EDUCATION STEWARDSHIP SYSTEMS.—Each grant made under this section to a State to establish a P–16 education stewardship system described in subsection (a)(1)(B) shall be awarded for a period of 5 years.

(2) STATES ESTABLISHING P–16 EDUCATION STEWARDSHIP COMMISSIONS.—Each grant made under this section to a State to establish a P–16 education stewardship commission described in subsection (a)(1)(A) shall be awarded for a period of 3 years.

SEC. 6. STATE APPLICATION AND PLAN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—A State desiring a grant under section 5 shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may reasonably require.

(b) CONTENTS.—Each application submitted under this section shall include, at a minimum, the following:

(1) A demonstration that the State, not later than 5 months after receiving grant funds under this Act, will establish a P–16 education stewardship commission described in section 7.

(2) For a State applying for a grant under section 5(a)(1)(B), a demonstration that the State, not later than 2 years after receiving grant funds under this Act, will implement, expand, or improve a P–16 education data system described in section 8.

(3) A demonstration that the State will work with the State P–16 education stewardship commission and others as necessary to examine the relationship among the content of postsecondary education admission and placement exams, the prerequisite skills and knowledge required to successfully take postsecondary-level general education coursework, the prekindergarten through grade 12 courses and academic factors associated with academic success at the postsecondary level, particularly with respect to mathematics, science, and engineering, and existing academic standards and academic assessments.

(4) A description of how the State will, using the information from the State P–16 education stewardship commission, increase the percentage of students taking courses that have the highest correlation of academic success at the postsecondary level, for each of the following groups of students:

(A) Economically disadvantaged students.

(B) Students from each major racial and ethnic group.

(C) Students with disabilities.

(D) Students with limited English proficiency.

(5) A description of how the State will distribute the information in the P–16 education stewardship commission's report under section 7(c)(4) to the public in the State, including public secondary schools, local educational agencies, school counselors, P–16 educators, institutions of higher education, students, and parents.

(6) An assurance that the State will continue to pursue effective P–16 education alignment strategies after the end of the grant period.

SEC. 7. P–16 EDUCATION STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION.

(a) P–16 EDUCATION STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each State receiving a grant under section 5 shall establish a P–16 education stewardship commission that has the policymaking ability to meet the requirements of this section.

(2) EXISTING COMMISSION.—The State may designate an existing coordinating body or commission as the State P–16 education stewardship commission for purposes of this Act, if the body or commission meets, or is amended to meet, the basic requirements of this section.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) COMPOSITION.—Each P–16 education stewardship commission shall be composed of the Governor of the State, or the designee of the Governor, and the stakeholders of the statewide education community, as determined by the Governor or the designee of the Governor, such as—

(A) the chief State official responsible for administering prekindergarten through grade 12 education in the State;

(B) the chief State official of the entity primarily responsible for the supervision of institutions of higher education in the State;

(C) bipartisan representation from the State legislative committee with jurisdiction over prekindergarten through grade 12 education and higher education;

(D) representatives of 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education in the State;

(E) representatives of the business community; and

(F) at the discretion of the Governor, or the designee of the Governor, representatives from prekindergarten through grade 12 and higher education governing boards and other organizations.

(2) CHAIRPERSON; MEETINGS.—The Governor of the State, or the designee of the Governor, shall serve as chairperson of the P–16 education stewardship commission and shall convene regular meetings of the commission.

(c) DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION.—

(1) MEETINGS OF COVERED INSTITUTIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Each State P–16 education stewardship commission shall convene regular meetings of the covered institutions in the State for the purpose of assessing and reaching consensus regarding—

(i) the prerequisite skills and knowledge expected of incoming freshmen to successfully engage in and complete postsecondary-level general education coursework without the prior need to enroll in developmental coursework, particularly with respect to mathematics, science, and engineering; and

(ii) patterns of coursework and other academic factors that demonstrate the highest correlation with success in completing postsecondary-level general education coursework and degree or certification programs.

(B) FINDINGS OF COVERED INSTITUTIONS.—The covered institutions shall communicate to the P–16 education stewardship commission the findings of the covered institutions, which—

(i) shall include the consensus on the prerequisite skills and knowledge, patterns of coursework, and other academic factors described in subparagraph (A);

(ii) shall address, at minimum, the subjects of reading, mathematics, science, grammar, and writing, and may cover additional academic content areas;

(iii) shall be descriptive of content and purpose, and shall not be limited to a simple listing of secondary course names; and

(iv) may be different for 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education.

(2) COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 18 months after a State receives a grant under section 5, and annually thereafter for each year in the grant period, the State P–16 education stewardship commission shall—

(A) develop recommendations regarding the prerequisite skills and knowledge, patterns of coursework, and other academic factors described in paragraph (1)(A); and

(B) develop recommendations and enact policies to increase the success rate of students in the students' transition from secondary school to postsecondary education.

(3) COMMISSION FINDINGS.—Not later than 3 years after a State receives a grant under section 5(a)(1)(B), the State P–16 education stewardship commission shall—

(A) compile and interpret the findings from the P–16 education data system; and

(B) include the compilation and interpretation of the findings in the report described in paragraph (4)(A).

(4) REPORTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after a State receives a grant under section 5, and annually thereafter for each year in the grant period, the State P–16 education stewardship commission shall prepare and submit to the Secretary a clear and concise report that shall include the recommendations described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (2).

(B) DISTRIBUTION TO THE PUBLIC.—Not later than 60 days after the submission of a report under subparagraph (A), each State P–16 education stewardship commission shall publish and widely distribute the information in the report to the public in the State, including—

(i) all public secondary schools and local educational agencies;

(ii) school counselors;

(iii) P–16 educators;

(iv) institutions of higher education; and

(v) students and parents, especially students entering grade 9 in the next academic year and the parents of such students, to assist the students and the parents in making informed and strategic course enrollment decisions.

SEC. 8. P–16 EDUCATION DATA SYSTEM.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 2 years after a State receives a grant under section 5(a)(1)(B), the State shall establish a State-level longitudinal data system that provides each student, upon enrollment in a public school or in a covered institution in the State, with a unique identifier that is retained throughout the student's enrollment in P–16 education in the State.

(b) FUNCTIONS OF DATA SYSTEM.—The State shall, through the implementation of the data system described in subsection (a), carry out the following:

(1) Identify factors that correlate to students' ability to successfully engage in and complete postsecondary-level general education coursework without the need for prior developmental coursework.

(2) Implement procedures to track developmental coursework enrollment rates.

(3) Implement procedures to assist with identifying correlations between course-taking patterns in public secondary education and increased academic performance in higher education.

(4) Implement procedures to assist with identifying the points at which students exit the P–16 education system, including the assimilation of valid and reliable secondary school dropout data.

(5) Incorporate data to track postsecondary degree and certification completion rates and student persistence patterns.

(6) Ensure that the data system is compliant with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (20 U.S.C. 1232g).

(7) Disaggregate the data described in paragraphs (1) through (5) by race, ethnicity, income level, sex, secondary school attended, and type of institution of higher education attended.

(c) EXISTING DATA SYSTEMS.—A State may employ, coordinate, or revise an existing data system for purposes of this section if such data system produces valid and reliable information that satisfies the requirements of subsection (b).

SEC. 9. REPORTS; TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) STATE REPORTS.—

(1) ANNUAL REPORT.—Each State that receives a grant under section 5 shall submit an annual report to the Secretary for each year of the grant period that shall include a description of the activities undertaken under the grant to improve academic readiness for postsecondary-level general education coursework and course completion.

(2) DISSEMINATION.—Each State shall prepare, publish, and widely disseminate the report described in paragraph (1) to the public in the State, including secondary schools, local educational agencies, school counselors, P–16 educators, institutions of higher education, students, and parents.

(b) SECRETARY REPORTS.—

(1) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Secretary shall submit an annual report to Congress that includes—

(A) findings from the State reports submitted under subsection (a)(1);

(B) a description of the actions taken by the Department of Education to assist States with creating P–16 education stewardship commissions and P–16 education data systems;

(C) a description of the actions and incentives planned by the States' P–16 education stewardship commissions—

(i) to help States align academic standards, courses, and academic assessments with postsecondary academic expectations, courses, and assessments;

(ii) to help States increase the percentage of minority and low-income students prepared to enter and succeed at the postsecondary level; and

(iii) to reduce postsecondary developmental coursework enrollment rates of minority and low-income students;

(D) a description of the actions and incentives planned to help States reduce postsecondary developmental coursework enrollment rates;

(E) an assessment of the effectiveness of P-16 education stewardship commissions in improving college readiness and eliminating the need for developmental coursework; and

(F) recommendations regarding how to make the P–16 education stewardship commissions more effective, and whether the establishment of such commissions should be encouraged throughout the United States.

(2) AVAILABILITY.—The Secretary shall make the annual report described in paragraph (1) available to the public and to each State and institution of higher education.

(c) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall provide, upon request, technical assistance to States and institutions of higher education seeking technical assistance under this Act.

SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act $55,000,000 for fiscal year 2007 and such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2011.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about a bill that will improve college access by creating a framework to ensure that high school graduates amass the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in college—the College Pathway Act. My colleague, Senator LIEBERMAN, and I have been working hand-in-hand to identify the degree to which high school students are unsuccessfully prepared for college and develop practical solutions to this issue. The bill we introduce today is the product of our combined efforts.

Today, 97 percent of secondary school students expect to attend college, however, high school students are not prepared academically for the rigors of college coursework. Although States around the country have developed high school standards, there is often a disconnect that exists between high school standards and college expectations. Today, 53 percent of post-secondary students require remedial English or mathematics. Graduation rates for those requiring remedial classes are less then 40 percent. And that is why Senator LEIBERMAN and I are working together in response to the concerns that too many students start college without the proper tools.

Part of the problem is that colleges and high schools generally have separate statewide governing boards for their pre-kindergarten through 12th grade and higher education systems. The College Pathway Act awards grants enabling States the opportunity of a voluntary establishment of pre-kindergarten through the 16th grade commissions in States, consisting of representatives of the pre-kindergarten through 12th grade and higher education communities, the governor's office, appropriate State legislators and members of the business community. These partnerships within the commission would promote academic success in postsecondary education, increase the percentage of academically prepared low-income and minority students, and decrease the percentage of college students requiring remedial coursework, particularly with respect to math, science and engineering.

This commission offers a framework for aligning lower, middle and high school curriculum and assessment standards with post-secondary expectations. Students who are properly prepared before entering college are far more likely to succeed in college. Indeed, many States across the Nation are looking to the pre-kindergarten through 12th grade concept to improve alignment. Federal funding for establishment of pre-kindergarten through 12th grade commissions would allow States to implement or expand their current programs. In addition, many States are attempting to improve data collection systems in order to better evaluate those programs that lead to success. Our bill would also offer support to those States which voluntarily seek to enhance and improve the effectiveness of their data systems. We believe that by promoting coordination of grades pre-kindergarten through 12th grade, States will better align education systems helping to ensure that all students are prepared to successfully engage in and complete post-secondary level coursework.

Our Nation must make a solid commitment to ensuring that every individual has the opportunity to pursue a higher education. We should pursue

policies that will prepare students to begin their college career. I believe that education is the great equalizer in our society that gives every citizen of our Nation the same opportunity to succeed in the global economy of the 21st century. That's why I will continue to target access to higher education for America's students. The College Pathway Act will help to further this goal.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I would like to voice my strong support as an original cosponsor of The College Pathway Act, introduced by my colleagues from Connecticut and Maine, Senators LIEBERMAN and SNOWE. I greatly appreciate their foresight in creating legislation that will help Hawaii and other states bring greater links between education at all levels, as well as with business and industry.

I know the field of education well, having served as a teacher, vice principal, principal, and school administrator in Hawaii before holding public office. I taught at the elementary, middle, and secondary levels, and continue to hold great interest in developments in these areas, as well as in early childhood and higher education. From these experiences, I have advocated that education should be an interconnected pathway, from pre-kindergarten through postsecondary levels and beyond, into the workforce.

We need all stakeholders in education and the labor force to work together, seamlessly. The LIEBERMAN-SNOWE bill will help to further this very aim in Hawaii and other States with existing entities, and to assist other States in meeting similar, meaningful goals through the creation of similar entities. By encouraging States to establish P–16, or as in Hawaii's case, P–20 commissions, to align lower, middle, and high school curricular and assessment standards with what is expected in higher education, we will better assure college readiness and reach a fundamental goal: greater rates of college completion.

To describe the Hawaii P–20 initiative in more detail, the initiative brings together public and private educators at all levels, working in collaboration with representatives of state government, the business community, labor, and educational support agencies to focus on improving learner achievement. Its vision statement says, all Hawaii residents will be educated, caring, self-sufficient, and able to contribute to their families, to the economy, and to the common good, and will be encouraged to continue learning throughout their lives.

The initiative, which recently unveiled its strategic plan, is a joint commitment of the Hawaii Department of Education, the Good Beginnings Alliance, and the University of Hawaii, working with a statewide P–20 Council to develop a seamless system of educational delivery. I encourage anyone with interest in this effort to view the details of the plan at www.p20hawaii.org. A main goal of the initiative is to prepare my State's learners to succeed in a society fast becoming more global, technological and complex. Ultimately, it seeks to improve the quality of life for all of Hawaii.

I am pleased to support this effort and work toward providing this and similar programs in other states with the resources to achieve their aims. The Lieberman-Snowe bill does this, and I look forward to working with my colleagues toward its enactment.

By Mr. SPECTER (for himself, Mr. COLEMAN, and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. 2340. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to preserve access to community cancer care by Medicare beneficiaries; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have sought recognition today to introduce the Community Cancer Care Preservation Act, which will ensure Medicare beneficiaries' access to community-based cancer treatment and provide Medicare reimbursement assistance for oncologists providing vital cancer care services.

Cancer takes a great toll on our friends, families, and our Nation. In the United States, cancer causes one out of every four deaths and was responsible for 570,000 deaths last year. In 2005, over 2 million new cases of cancer were diagnosed, the most prevalent of which were breast, prostate, lung, and colorectal.

While these statistics are daunting, the rate of cancer deaths in the United States has decreased since 1993. This decrease is the result of earlier detection and diagnosis, more effective and targeted cancer therapies, and greater accessibility to quality care provided by oncologists. These vital services have allowed millions of individuals to lead healthy and productive lives after successfully battling cancer.

In 2004, 42.7 million individuals were enrolled in Medicare; of those beneficiaries over 29 percent have had cancer during their lives, 12.5 million beneficiaries. With such a large percentage of our seniors facing this horrible disease, the need for access to community cancer care is critical.

Community cancer clinics treat 84 percent of Americans with cancer. Community cancer centers are free-standing outpatient facilities that provide comprehensive cancer care in the physician's office setting located in patients' communities. These clinics are especially critical in rural areas where access to larger cancer clinics is not available. They provide patients with earlier diagnosis, more effective cancer therapies, and innovative supportive care that reduces fatigue, nausea/vomiting, and pain. The accessibility of treatment in the hands of skilled community oncologists has decreased the cancer mortality rate.

On December 8, 2003, the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act was signed into law by President Bush. This legislation contained numerous provisions that were beneficial to America's seniors and medical facilities; however, it also provided a reduction to Medicare's reimbursement for oncology treatment. The provisions sought to bring a balance to the reimbursement for the cost of cancer drugs and services. Previous to the implementation of the law, CMS reimbursed the cost of cancer treatment drugs at a very high level. This level provided sufficient funding to supplement the costs of care, storage of the prescription drugs, and the costs of cancer care services, which were not being provided adequate funding. The law enacted reimbursement reductions for the cost of prescription drugs while increasing the funding provided for cancer care services; however, that increase did not sufficiently offset oncologists' losses from the reduction in cancer drug reimbursement.

The Congressional Budget Office estimated that Medicare reimbursements to oncologists would be reduced by $4.2 billion from 2004–2013. PricewaterhouseCoopers estimates that reductions will reach $15.7 billion over that time. This increased reduction will have a debilitating effect on oncologists' ability to provide cancer treatment to Medicare beneficiaries, especially those in the community setting.

For 2006, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) estimates that the beneficiary reimbursement for services provided by community cancer care will be cut by 6.6 percent, a $200 to $300 million reduction. However, this reimbursement reduction may be larger than estimated. CMS did not factor in the delay in drug manufacturer price increases for cancer therapies and the bad debt of beneficiaries who may not pay their Medicare 20 percent co-insurance payment. When accounting for these reductions, the overall cut to cancer care will likely exceed $300 million.

The Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act mandated a transitional increase of 32 percent in service fees in 2004, falling to 3 percent in 2005, and 0 percent in 2006. This was done to provide time for CMS to pay for essential unpaid medical services, such as pharmacy facilities and treatment planning. In 2005, CMS created a cancer care demonstration project as a quality enhancement initiative to examine the effects of oncology drugs on patients. This demonstration project also provided $300 million in critical funding because CMS had not increased the reimbursement for essential unpaid medical services. On June 29, 2005, I sent a letter with 38 other Senators to President Bush requesting an extension to the demonstration project through 2006. CMS, however, announced a new oncology demonstration project for 2006 that examines the quality of cancer care in relation to treatment guidelines, but at $180–$210 million less than the previous funding level.

Accordingly, I am introducing legislation to provide community oncologists with the tools to withstand the CMS reforms brought forth under the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act. The bill's $1.7 billion price tag, over the next 5 years, is a relatively small cost in the face of the vast reductions in CMS's reimbursement to oncologists. Let me briefly summarize the provisions of this legislation.

1. Sales Price Updates: Currently, CMS updates the prices for cancer treatment drugs quarterly. This delay in price updating forces community cancer clinics to often pay increased prices for prescription drugs for up to six months without increased reimbursement. This legislation requires the sales price for oncology drug reimbursement be updated as changes occur in the price to provide a more accurate reimbursement to oncologists for the cost of drugs. This will provide a reimbursement to oncologists that is fair and reflective of market costs.

2. Removal of the Prompt Pay Discount: The prompt pay discount is a discount from the wholesaler to the physician for prompt payment on prescription drugs. This is a benefit for physicians that operate an efficient and organized practice and allows them to gain extra revenue as an incentive for conducting business in that manner. The current average sales price for prescription drugs from CMS takes into account the prompt pay discount provided by wholesalers. The inclusion of these funds, which are not guaranteed unless the practice operates in a very efficient way, decreases the amount of reimbursement from CMS. My legislation would remove the discount from the CMS average sales price requiring CMS to reimburse oncologists at the price they pay for drugs without the inclusion of discounts.

3. Quality Care Demonstration Project Extension: The quality care demonstration project provided information to CMS that was gathered by oncologists about the effects of oncology drugs on patients. This project was altered and funds were reduced provided to conduct the informational interviews to oncologists. The bill would extend the 2005 quality cancer care demonstration project through 2006. The project collects information from cancer patients on the effects of cancer treatment including fatigue, nausea/vomiting, and the treatment of these symptoms.

4. Increase in Payments for Oncological Drug Storage: The CMS reimbursement for oncology prescription drugs does not provide adequate funding for storage and care needs. The prescription drugs for cancer care often require special provisions including refrigeration and handling as some drugs that are highly toxic. These special provisions result in an increased cost, which is why my legislation provides a two percent increase in payments to account for the storage and care of oncology drugs.

5. Reports Regarding Cancer Care: The legislation would also require a report from the Secretary of Health and Human Services on a plan to increase the number of cancer patients in clinical trails and a Congressional Budget Office Report on the effects of the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003 on cancer care. These reports will assist Congress and the Administration in its future decisions impacting cancer care.

As Chairman of the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (LHHS) Appropriations Subcommittee, I have sought to increase funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI). Since becoming Chairman of the LHHS Subcommittee, the funding for NIH has increased from $11.3 billion in fiscal year 1996 to $29.4 billion in 2006, an increase of 147 percent, while funding for the NCI increased from $2.3 billion in fiscal year 1996 to $4.9 billion in 2006, an increase of 113 percent.

On February 16, 2005, I was diagnosed with stage IVB Hodgkin's lymphoma and had my first chemotherapy treatment two days later. I had a total of 12 treatments, my last on July 22, 2005, and tests following that final treatment concluded that I am cancer free. As a recipient of cancer treatment for Hodgkin's lymphoma cancer, I have an acute understanding of the problems that confront patients as well as physicians that administer their care.

This legislation provides Medicare reimbursement assistance for community oncologists and ensures Medicare beneficiaries' access to community-based cancer treatment. I encourage my colleagues to work with Senators COLEMAN, ISAKSON and me to move this legislation forward promptly.

By Mr. DORGAN:

S. 2341. A bill to prohibit the merger, acquisition, or takeover of Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company by Dubai Ports World; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, the Commerce Committee is having a hearing this afternoon—and I have been at a portion of that hearing—dealing with the question of Dubai Ports World, which is a company largely owned by the United Arab Emirates. This is a company that has been given the green light by this administration to manage six of America's largest seaports.

This has caused a substantial amount of controversy and discussion. In the last couple of days some of that controversy has been resolved, at least in the minds of some, because the company owned by the United Arab Emirates has asked the administration for a 45-day review of the circumstances of this deal, and they will not take control of the management of the American ports for these 45 days.

It is rather unusual for a company to be asking that the United States Government do a 45-day review of the circumstances of whether a United Arab Emirates company should be managing America's ports. Speaking for myself, I don't need 45 days to understand this. I don't need 45 minutes to understand it. I know a bad idea when I see one.

The President has made up his mind. President Bush has said he will veto any legislation that is offered here in the Congress that would upset this deal which would allow the company owned by the United Arab Emirates to manage America's ports. If the President feels he should veto a piece of legislation, that is his right. He has not vetoed any bill since he became President of the United States, but if his proposition is he wants to veto a piece of legislation and turn over America's seaports, six of America's large seaports, to management by the United Arab Emirates, so be it. But I think the President would be making a very serious mistake.

Our country is under a terrorist threat. We get regular briefings on that in the Senate, and the American people know that from watching the news. We understand the terrorist threats take the form of threat to air travel because the terrorists, as we know, last used commercial jet airplanes to fly into the World Trade Center towers in New York City. We understand the threats at our airports. That is why when you go to the airport and try to board a plane they have you take off your belt, take off your shoes, and run you through a metal detector. There is great concern about the threat of terrorism and security at our airports.

There is also great concern about security at our seaports.

I have spoken, I am guessing, about a dozen times on the floor of this Senate about the security at our seaports since the time of the 9/11 attacks.

I recall shortly after 9/11 when a fellow from a Middle East country decided to ship himself in a container on a container ship. He got inside a container, and he got loaded on a container ship. Here was this man with a container. He had a cot to sleep on, he had a GPS device, a radio, a supply of water, and he was shipping himself, I believe, to Canada, and there was concern that he was a terrorist and he was going to enter the country by shipping himself in a container on a container ship.

I have spoken here, I suppose, almost a dozen times talking about the danger of having anywhere from 5.7 to 5.9 million containers coming into this country every year, millions of containers on a container ship coming into this country every year, and somewhere around 4 percent of them and perhaps as much as 5 percent are inspected; the rest are not.

I went to a port facility once. We don't have ports in North Dakota. But I went to a port facility to visit and see what the security was. They were showing me a container they had taken off a ship. The container they opened

happened to be frozen broccoli from Poland, bags and bags and bags of frozen broccoli. I said, How do you know what is in the middle of this container? I see there are bags of frozen broccoli. How do you know that is all that is here in the container? Well, we don't know. That is why we are inspecting this particular container. How many containers do you inspect? We know the answer to that. Out of every 100, 96 are not inspected.

That is a threat to our country's seaports.

What about a terrorist organization deciding they want to try to steal a nuclear weapon someplace? After all, there are tens of thousands of them—somewhere, we believe, between 20,000 and 30,000 nuclear weapons that exist in this world. Steal a nuclear weapon and put it in a container, on a container ship and run it up to a dock, appear at one of America's major cities. What about the prospect of that happening? Then we would not see 3,000 deaths. No, we would see 100,000 deaths or more.

Seaport security is a very serious issue.

Now, in the midst of all of these issues of national security, we hear that something called CFIUS—the Committee on Foreign Investments in the United States, composed of some 12 Federal agencies coming together as a committee, evaluating foreign investment in the United States—decided it is all right if this company called Dubai Ports World, a company owned by the United Arab Emirates, is allowed to manage six of America's largest ports, including ports in New York, New Jersey, Miami, Louisiana, and Maryland.

That is not all right with me.

I just came from a committee hearing where we had some people say, Well, you are going to offend somebody here. The United Arab Emirates is a country that has been very helpful to us in the fight on terrorism. The last thing we want to do is offend them.

What about offending common sense? Should we be offending common sense here in the Senate? I don't think so. Common sense would say to us when threatened by terrorist threats, security in this country ought to be security provided by the United States. We can't provide for our own security in our management of U.S. ports?

The United Arab Emirates is probably a perfectly wonderful country. It is not a democracy, I will tell you. And two of the hijackers on 9/11/2001 were UAE citizens. And the United Arab Emirates was only one of three countries that recognized the Taliban Government which played host to Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan.

Let me read something from the 9/11 Commission report. On page 137:

> Early in 1999, the CIA received a recording that Osama bin Laden was spending much of his time at one of several camps in the Afghanistan desert south of Kandahar. At the beginning of February, bin Laden was reportedly located at the vicinity of Sheik Ali Camp, a desert hunting camp being used by visitors from a Gulf State. Public sources have stated that those terrorists were from the United Arab Emirates.

I will not read all of this.

According to the reports, the military was doing targeting work to hit the camp where Osama bin Laden was thought to be, to hit it with cruise missiles. But no strike was launched. And Mr. bin Laden apparently soon moved on and the immediate strike plans became moot.

According to the CIA and defense officials, the reason the strike was not launched against bin Laden was that policymakers were concerned about the danger that a strike would kill a prince from the United Arab Emirates who was visiting with bin Laden.

The 9–11 Commission report also talks about an official airplane for the United Arab Emirates at a landing strip there. They believed the UAE officials were visiting with Mr. bin Laden. So apparently, any opportunity for this country to target Mr. bin Laden before 9/11 was in part fouled by the relationship between at least some in the Royal Family of the United Arab Emirates and Mr. bin Laden.

One of our Cabinet officers said, Well, this issue is not just about national security, but also about trade and about commerce.

Look, trade and commerce do not ever trump national security. If there are national security issues, then they have to be dealt with and have to be recognized.

We are told, Well, everyone signed off on this; there is not a problem here. But now we find out today that not everybody did sign off on this. Yesterday we found out that the Coast Guard expressed reservations about the deal in a secret report, which had already been made public. The report said:

> There are many intelligence gaps concerning the potential for DPW or PNO assets to support terrorist operations. That precludes an overall threat assessment of the potential DPW and PNO ports merger.

So don't tell me that the Coast Guard signed off on this. They raised questions about it, as they should have.

I have a GAO report that I showed a few moments ago in the Commerce Committee. This is the title of the July 2005 GAO report: ''The DOD Cannot Ensure its Oversight of Contractors Under Foreign Influence is Sufficient.''

If the Department of Defense cannot ensure proper oversight of foreign contractors, the Department of Homeland Security can? I don't think so. The Department of Homeland Security, after all, responded to Hurricane Katrina. Look at the mess they made with that. Now they are saying, even though the Department of Defense cannot ensure oversight of foreign contractors, Homeland Security is going to be able to do that with respect to the security of our ports? I don't think so.

So national security is an issue. And saying so is not a slap in the face at any country. It is just recognizing the obvious.

Something else that has not been talked about should be talked about. We have moved at a full gallop toward globalization. We are in a global economy, we are told. Well, the fact that we are in a global economy should not persuade us not to think. One of the questions ought to be raised by all is—aside from the national security interests, which are significant interests—one of the other questions is, why would our country not have the capability to provide its own port management, its own port security?

There are certain things we do that we know we must do. Again, go to the airport and see what they tell you about your shoes and belt and see a little 6-year-old boy spread-eagle against the wall being ''wanded'' and ask yourself: Why is that happening? Because we have decided there is a security threat at airports. Terrorists use a commercial airliner as a guided missile to destroy buildings in our country and to murder Americans. So we have issues of national security to respond to a threat with airport screening.

What about our seaports? Does anyone think there is any less danger with somewhere around 5.7 to 5.9 million containers coming into our country, with 96 percent of them not having been screened? Does anyone think there is less danger to America to have just one of those containers be pulled up slowly at an American pier or port or dock that has a weapon of mass destruction?

We are spending billions and billions of dollars building an antiballistic missile defense system that does not work, regrettably. We have spent billions of dollars and are spending billions more trying to hit a bullet with a bullet because we are concerned that a rogue nation or a terrorist will get hold of a ballistic missile, put on its tip a nuclear weapon, and send it to us somewhere around 15,000 miles per hour. By far, the more significant threat is for a ship to pull up at one of our docks at about 5 miles per hour, leaded with containers, most of which have never been inspected, containing in one circumstance a weapon of mass destruction. That is by far a more significant threat to our country.

I have spoken, I suppose, a dozen times over the years since 2001 about port security. Not because we have any ports in North Dakota, because we do not. But it is obvious to me that if you are going to begin to provide security for this country, we do not just do it by metal detectors at airports; we do it at seaports and rail security, as well. And with respect to seaports, it seems completely illogical to me from a national security standpoint that we would decide to turn over to foreign countries the management of our ports, our seaports.

People have said today: Are you kidding? This is done all the time, for God's sake. Get a life. This is going on

everywhere. You do not understand the global economy. We have had other countries managing our seaports.

This has become an issue that most American people recognize is a problem. But a number of Members in the Congress do not recognize it as a problem. Some do. But I heard opening statements at a committee hearing suggesting this debate is about racial profiling, it is about offending a good neighbor. Well, that is all nonsense. This is about demanding at least some level of common sense be used in establishing public policy.

The President says: We did the right thing. I have already made up my mind, he says, and we approved it. And I will veto anything that would overturn that approval.

Then he says, when asked by the company that is owned by the United Arab Emirates to review it for 45 more days, the President says: Yes, we will review it for 45 more days. But, again, he put out a statement today saying: I've already made up my mind.

At a committee hearing this afternoon, others on the committee said: Well, some of you have already made up your mind. Shame on you.

As I said, it would not take me 45 days to figure it out. It does not take 45 minutes to figure it out. We ought to, as a country, be able to find ways to manage our seaports. And we ought to, as a country, take responsibility for our own national security. After all, it is not every country in the world where you pin a little pin on the map that says: Here's target one, here's the bull's eye of the target for terrorists. They want to attack this country. This is where they want to attack. We understand that.

All of us feel fortunate we have not been attacked again since 2001. But we all know, as well, that there is much yet to do. Seaport security is one of those areas in which we have to do much better.

My colleague who sat behind me some years, Senator Fritz Hollings from South Carolina, would come to the Senate and speak at great length about this. He would offer funding for more seaport security. It was routinely turned down. All of us offered this and were routinely turned down. We did not have the money. And we are inspecting 4 to 5 percent.

Someday, God forbid, if something happens at a seaport, we will all stand and scratch our heads and say: Why didn't we try to find a way to do this better, more inspections? Why didn't we understand that is more vulnerable even than airport security? Why didn't we figure that out?

This is an opportunity. I understand this will be controversial. I understand the President is going to be upset if the Congress takes action.

I will offer legislation today that is very simple. It does not tiptoe around 45 days and all these things. It just says this should not happen.

If that offends someone, I am sorry. But I do not want to offend common sense. And it seems to me, in this country there is a deep reservoir of common sense at the local cafe or down at the hardware store to say it would make the most sense, given the fact we are targeted by terrorists, it would make the most sense for our country to take responsibility for itself. This is not about globalism. It is not about the global economy. It is not about offending someone. It is about deciding as a country to assume responsibility for your security.

Let me make one other point. Yes, we need friends. Yes, we need the United Arab Emirates to be our friend and other countries as well to cooperate with us. But wouldn't it have been nice, for example, if we had more cooperation when Dr. Kahn in Pakistan was arranging to have nuclear materials and nuclear plans and nuclear parts sent around to North Korea and to Iran and to other countries? Our children will pay for that, unfortunately. And most of that material went through the United Arab Emirates' ports.

Wouldn't it have been nice if we had more friends? We need more friends. But, it seems to me, we ought not buy friendship by deciding that we will put a company controlled by the United Arab Emirates in the position of managing America's ports. Once again, this is merely common sense.

The GAO report of last summer ought to be instructive to us. If the Department of Defense cannot ensure its oversight of contractors under foreign influence, how on Earth can Homeland Security ensure oversight of a contractor that is owned by a foreign government in the Middle East? How on Earth can we expect that to happen?

I come to the Senate to talk a lot about trade. In this age of globalism people say: You are just a xenophobic isolationist stooge who does not get it. The world has changed. It is a global world. Everyone does everything everywhere.

It seems to me it is not inappropriate even in a global economy to pursue our own interests from time to time, and that is especially true when it deals with the subject of terrorism. Does the global economy mean that you outsource or offshore everything? Is there anything you cannot do without?

Some 15 years ago, I used to question Carla Hills, the trade ambassador, at various hearings. Managed trade was anathema to her, and it has been to virtually every administration. Yet virtually every country we do trade with has managed trade. They have managed trade with a set of objectives. I used to continually ask Carla Hill: Is there anything the loss of which would give you problems?

For example, if, in a completely open system of trade we lost our entire steel industry—it was gone, no steel mill and no steel produced domestically—would that give you a problem? The answer was, no, whatever happens, happens. That is nonsense. There are certain things that a country must hang on to to remain a strong economic power, a world economic power.

Maybe this, also, in addition to the national security issues—which I think are very important—maybe it is also an opportunity to wake up and answer the question: What is appropriate in a global economy? Is everything on the table? Everything for sale? Everything up for trading and grabs? Is offshoring just fine, notwithstanding what it means to the American economy?

Perhaps, if we use this opportunity to ask those questions, we will have done this country a favor.

In the meantime, I will introduce the simplest piece of legislation introduced on this subject. It simply says: ''Just say no.''

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 384—DESIGNATING MARCH 2, 2006, AS ''READ ACROSS AMERICA DAY''

Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. REED, and Mr. LAUTENBERG) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 384

Whereas reading is a basic requirement for quality education and professional success, and is a source of pleasure throughout life;

Whereas the people of the United States must be able to read if the United States is to remain competitive in the global economy;

Whereas Congress, through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107–110) and the Reading First, Early Reading First, and Improving Literacy Through School Libraries programs, has placed great emphasis on reading intervention and providing additional resources for reading assistance; and

Whereas more than 40 national associations concerned about reading and education have joined with the National Education Association to use March 2, the anniversary of the birth of Theodor Geisel, also known as Dr. Seuss, to celebrate reading: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 2, 2006, as ''Read Across America Day'';

(2) honors Theodor Geisel, also known as Dr. Seuss, for his success in encouraging children to discover the joy of reading;

(3) encourages parents to read with their children for at least 30 minutes on Read Across America Day in honor of Dr. Seuss and in celebration of reading; and

(4) encourages the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 385—EXPRESSING THE GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION TO THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE ARMED FORCES WHO SERVE AS MILITARY RECRUITERS, COMMENDING THEIR SELFLESS SERVICE IN RECRUITING YOUNG MEN AND WOMAN TO SERVE IN THE UNITED STATES MILITARY, PARTICULARLY IN SUPPORT OF THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM

Mr. ENSIGN submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

S. RES. 385

Whereas the Armed Forces are an all volunteer force, which makes recruiting the necessary number of volunteers for each individual service a challenging task;

Whereas the military recruiters have enabled the individual branches of the Armed Forces to meet the demands of the modern battlefield through the enlistment of quality soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines;

Whereas military recruiters work long strenuous hours, in rural and urban areas of the country, and away from the traditional military support systems;

Whereas military recruiters, like many of their deployed colleagues, have forfeited and sacrificed time with their families and placed their mission above all else;

Whereas military recruiters support the global war on terrorism by filling our Nation's military ranks with qualified personnel needed to combat and eradicate terrorists through military power;

Whereas, in the past fiscal year, military recruiters provided the Nation with more than 200,000 new active duty, reserve, officer, and enlisted accessions;

Whereas military recruiters have provided young men and women across the Nation the opportunity to further their education through the use of congressionally mandated incentives such as the Montgomery GI Bill, and various college loan repayment programs, thereby allowing returning veterans greater opportunity to achieve their full potential as successful members of society;

Whereas military recruiters are the face and voice of the Armed Forces in communities in every State across the Nation, as well as Puerto Rico, Europe, Korea, and Guam;

Whereas military recruiters develop close working relationships with families, schools, business professionals, and numerous civic organizations;

Whereas military recruiters are an essential element of the Department of Defense and play a key role in the security of our Nation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commends the men and women of our Armed Forces who serve as military recruiters for their service to our country and their dedicated, professional, and noteworthy performance of duty during difficult times of sustained combat and the global war on terrorism; and

(2) reaffirms its commitment to supporting all aspects of the recruiting services of the Armed Forces, by providing sufficient legislative support and incentives in order that recruiters may continue to meet and exceed the personnel requirements of the Armed Forces.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 82—TO ESTABLISH A PROCEDURE FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT CONGRESSIONAL ETHICS OFFICE TO INVESTIGATE ETHICS VIOLATIONS IN THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. KERRY submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs:

S. CON. RES. 82

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),

SECTION 1. CONGRESSIONAL ETHICS OFFICER.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the legislative branch an independent authority to be known as the Congressional Ethics Office to be headed by a Congressional Ethics Officer.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Congressional Ethics Officer shall be appointed in accordance with paragraph (2).

(2) APPOINTMENT.—The majority leader of the Senate, the minority leader of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the minority leader of the House of Representatives, the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct of the House of Representatives, and the chairman and the ranking member of the Select Committee on Ethics of the Senate shall nominate the Congressional Ethics Officer at the beginning of a Congress. The Congressional Ethics Officer shall be confirmed by both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

(c) TERMS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Congressional Ethics Officer shall serve a term of 2 years and may be reappointed for 2 additional terms.

(2) DEATH OR RESIGNATION.—In the case of the death or resignation of the Congressional Ethics Officer a successor shall be appointed in the same manner to serve the remaining term of that Congressional Ethics Officer.

(d) REMOVAL.—The Congressional Ethics Officer may be removed only by resolution of the Senate or the House of Representatives.

(e) DUTIES.—It shall be the duty of the Congressional Ethics Officer to—

(1) receive requests for review of an allegation described in section 2(b);

(2) make such informal preliminary inquiries in response to such a request as the Congressional Ethics Officer deems to be appropriate;

(3) if, as a result of those inquiries, the Congressional Ethics Officer determines that a full investigation is not warranted, submit a report pursuant to section 2(f); and

(4) if, as a result of those inquiries, the Congressional Ethics Officer determines that there is probable cause, the Congressional Ethics Officer—

(A) may determine a full investigation is warranted and conduct such investigation; and

(B) shall provide a full report of the investigation which shall be available for public inspection to either the Select Committee on Ethics of the Senate or the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct of the House of Representatives.

(f) COMPENSATION OF CONGRESSIONAL ETHICS OFFICER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Congressional Ethics Officer shall be compensated at a rate equal to the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level IV of the Executive Schedule under section 5315 of title 5, United States Code, for each day (including travel time) during which he or she is engaged in the performance of the duties of the Congressional Ethics Officer.

(2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—The Congressional Ethics Officer and members of the Congressional Ethics Officer staff shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services for the Congressional Ethics Officer.

(g) STAFF.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Congressional Ethics Officer may, without regard to the civil service laws and regulations, appoint, and terminate an executive director and such other additional personnel as are necessary to enable the Congressional Ethics Officer to perform his or her duties. The staff of the Congressional Ethics Office shall be nonpartisan.

(2) STAFF COMPENSATION.—The Congressional Ethics Officer may fix the compensation of the executive director and other personnel without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code, relating to classification of positions and General Schedule pay rates, except that the rate of pay for the executive director and other personnel may not exceed the rate payable for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of that title.

(3) DETAILEES.—Any Federal Government employee may be detailed to the Congressional Ethics Officer without reimbursement, and such detail shall be without interruption or loss of civil service status or privilege.

(4) TEMPORARY SERVICES.—The Congressional Ethics Officer may procure temporary and intermittent services under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, at rates for individuals that do not exceed the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of that title.

(5) STAFFING.—Except at a time when additional personnel are needed to assist the Congressional Ethics Officer in his or her review of a particular request for review under section 2, the total number of staff personnel employed by or detailed to the Congressional Ethics Officer under this subsection shall not exceed 50.

(h) INAPPLICABILITY OF THE FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT.—The Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the Commission.

SEC. 2. REVIEW OF ALLEGATIONS OF MISCONDUCT AND VIOLATIONS OF ETHICS LAWS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term ''officer or employee of Congress'' means—

(1) an elected officer of the Senate or the House of Representatives who is not a member of the Senate or the House of Representatives;

(2) an employee of the Senate or the House of Representatives, any committee or subcommittee of the Senate or the House of Representatives, or any member of the Senate or the House of Representatives;

(3) an employee of the Vice President if such employee's compensation is disbursed by the Secretary of the Senate; and

(4) an employee of a joint committee of Congress.

(b) REQUEST FOR REVIEW.—Any person, including a person who is not an officer or employee of Congress, may present to the Congressional Ethics Officer a request to review and investigate an allegation of—

(1) improper conduct that may reflect upon the Senate or the House of Representatives;

(2) a significant violation of law;

(3) a violation of the Senate Code of Official Conduct (rules XXXIV, XXXV, XXXVII, XXXVIII, XXXIX, XL, XLI, and XLII of the Standing Rules of the Senate) or the ethics rules of the House of Representatives; or

(4) a significant violation of a rule or regulation of the Senate or the House of Representatives, relating to the conduct of a person in the performance of his or her duties as a member, officer, or employee of the Senate or the House of Representatives.

(c) SWORN STATEMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A request for review under subsection (b) shall be accompanied by a sworn statement, made under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States, of facts within the personal knowledge of the person making the statement alleging improper conduct or a violation described in subsection (b).

(2) FALSE STATEMENT.—If the Congressional Ethics Officer determines that any part of a sworn statement presented under paragraph (1) may have been a false statement made knowingly and willfully, the Congressional Ethics Officer may refer the matter to the Attorney General for prosecution.

(d) PROTECTION FROM FRIVOLOUS CHARGES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Any person who—

(A) knowingly files with the Congressional Ethics Office a false complaint of misconduct on the part of any legislator or any other person shall be subject to a $10,000 fine or the cost of the preliminary review, whichever is greater, and up to 1 year in prison; or

(B) encourages another person to file a false complaint of misconduct on the part of any legislator or other person shall be subject to a $10,000 fine or the cost of the preliminary review, whichever is greater, and up to 1 year in prison.

(2) SUBSEQUENT COMPLAINTS.—Any person subject to either of the penalties in paragraph (1) may not file a complaint with the Congressional Ethics Office again.

(3) BAN ON FILINGS PRIOR TO ELECTION.—The Congressional Ethics Office may not accept charges filed in the—

(A) 30 days prior to a primary election for which the Member in question is a candidate; and

(B) 60 days prior to a general election for which the Member in question is a candidate.

(e) SUBPOENA.—The Congressional Ethics officer may bring a civil action to enforce a subpoena only when directed to do so by the adoption of a resolution by the Senate or the House of Representatives, as appropriate.

(f) REFERRAL OF REPORTS TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS OF THE SENATE, THE COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS OF OFFICIAL CONDUCT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OR THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If, after making preliminary inquiries, the Congressional Ethics Officer finds probable cause that a violation of the ethics rules has occurred, the Congressional Ethics Officer shall submit to the members of the Senate, members of the House of Representatives, and the Department of Justice a report that—

(A) states findings of fact made as a result of the inquiries;

(B) states any conclusions that may be drawn with respect to whether there is substantial credible evidence that improper conduct or a violation of law may have occurred; and

(C) states its reasons for concluding that further investigation is not warranted.

(2) NO ACTION.—After submission of a report under paragraph (1), no action may be taken in the Senate or the House of Representatives to impose a sanction on a person who was the subject of the Congressional Ethics Officer's inquiries on the basis of any conduct that was alleged in the request for review and sworn statement.

SEC. 3. ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES.

The Congressional Ethics Officer shall—

(1) periodically report to Congress any changes to the ethics law and regulations governing Congress that the Congressional Ethics Officer determines would improve the investigation and enforcement of such laws and regulations; and

(2) provide an annual report to Congress on the number of ethics complaints and a description of the ethics investigations undertaken during the prior year.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, today I am submitting a concurrent resolution establishing an independent Congressional Inspector General to investigate ethics violations in the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Every Member of Congress must be held to the highest ethical standards. Those who violate the public trust must be held accountable for their actions. Unfortunately, our current system does not measure up. Too often, Congress has been unable or unwilling to effectively investigate or appropriately punish those Members who commit serious ethical violations.

In December 2005, an NBC/Wall Street Journal poll showed that just five percent of Americans believe all Members of Congress are honest and trustworthy. The same poll showed that most Americans believe that most Members of Congress are dishonest and are not trustworthy.

This is simply unacceptable. We have to restore the faith of the American people in the Congress. Thus, I am submitting a resolution to establish an independent Congressional Inspector General with the authority to investigate and punish violations of the ethics rules by Members of Congress, Congressional staff and the Capitol Police.

The Congressional Inspector General will make a preliminary investigation into all ethical misconduct allegations to determine whether there is probable cause that a full investigation is warranted. The Congressional Inspector General has expansive authority to investigate ethics allegations, including improper conduct that may reflect upon the Senate or House of Representatives, significant violations of law, violations of the Senate Code of Official Conduct or the ethics rules of the House of Representatives, and violations of Congressional rules or regulations relating to the conduct of Members in their performance of official duties. If a full investigation is warranted, a public report will be developed for the House and Senate Ethics Committees or the Justice Department describing any credible evidence of improper conduct or a violation of law.

To insure that this new ethics process is not abused, anyone who knowingly files a false ethics complaint will be subject to a $10,000 fine or the costs incurred by the investigation, whichever is greater. They could also be subject to up to one year in prison and will be banned from making further complaints.

The Congressional Inspector General will not be able to accept new charges filed 30 days prior to a primary election for which the Member of Congress in question is a candidate or 60 days prior to a general election for which the Member of Congress is a candidate.

The Congressional Inspector General will also provide periodic reports to Congress on how to update our ethics laws and how to improve the investigation and enforcement of current ethics laws. Finally, it would release an annual report of violations by Members of Congress and Congressional staff.

I also strongly support other legislation to develop independent oversight of the Congressional ethics process including the Congressional Ethics Enforcement Commission Act of 2006 that was introduced by Senator OBAMA earlier this year. I look forward to working with my colleagues to develop ethics reform legislation in the upcoming months.

We need to change the way business is done in Washington. We must convince the American people that our government responds to the needs of our people, not to special interests. This resolution will help restore the faith of the American people in their government. Together we can work to change our government for the better.

NOTICES OF HEARINGS/MEETINGS

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I would like to announce that the Committee on Indian Affairs will meet on Wednesday, March 1, 2006, at 9:30 a.m., in room 106 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a joint oversight hearing with the House Committee on Resources on the Settlement of Cobell v. Norton.

Those wishing additional information may contact the Indian Affairs Committee at 224–2251.

AUTHORITIES FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 28, 2006, at 9:30 a.m., to receive testimony on current and future worldwide threats to the national security of the United States.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 28, 2006, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing on the evaluation of the administration's FY 07 Budget for the Federal Transmit Administration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President. I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet on February 28, 2006, at 10 a.m. on USF Contributions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President. I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet on February 28, 2006, at 2:45 p.m., on Security of Terminal Operations at U.S. Ports.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February 28 at 10 a.m.

The purpose of this hearing is to review the proposed FY 2007 Forest Service Budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, Subcommittee on Education and Early Childhood Development, be authorized to hold a hearing during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February 28, 2006, at 10 a.m. in SD–430.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet on Tuesday, February 28, 2006, at 9:30 a.m., in room 485 of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct an oversight hearing on Off-Reservation Gaming: Land into Trust and the Two-Part Determination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet to conduct a hearing on ''Wartime Executive Power and the NSA's Surveillance Authority II'' on Tuesday, February 28, 2006, at 9:30 a.m., in the Dirksen Senate Office Building Room 226. The witness list is attached.

Witnesses

The Honorable R. James Woolsey, Vice President Global Strategic Security Division, Booz Allen Hamilton, McLean, VA; Harold Hongju Koh, Dean, Yale Law School, New Haven, CT; Ken Gormley, Associate Professor of Constitutional Law, Duquesne University School of Law, Pittsburgh, PA; Douglas W. Kmiec, Professor, Pepperdine University School of Law, Malibu, CA; Bruce Fein, Fein & Fein, Washington, DC; Robert F. Turner, Associate Director, Center for National Security Law, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA; Robert Levy, Senior Fellow in Constitutional Studies, CATO Institute, Washington, DC.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Rules and Administration be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February 28, 2006, at 9:30 a.m., to mark up an original bill to make the legislative process more transparent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February 28, 2006, to hear the legislative presentation of the Disabled American Veterans.

The hearing will take place in room 216 of the Hart Senate Office Building at 2 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia be authorized to meet on Tuesday, February 28, 2006, at 10 a.m. for a hearing entitled, ''Enhancing Educational and Economic Opportunity in the District of Columbia.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER AND POWER

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Water and Power be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February 28 at 2:30 p.m.

The purpose of the hearing is to receive testimony on the Bureau of Reclamation's Reuse and Recycling Program (title XVI of P.L. 102–575).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

APPOINTMENT OF ESCORT COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the President of the Senate be authorized to appoint a committee on the part of the Senate to join with a like committee on the part of the House of Representatives to escort the Honorable Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Italy, into the House Chamber for a joint meeting tomorrow.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL SIBLING CONNECTION DAY

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 381 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 381) designating March 1, 2006, as National Sibling Connection Day.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 381) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 381

Whereas sibling relationships are among the longest lasting and most significant relationships in life;

Whereas brothers and sisters share history, memories, and traditions that bind them together as family;

Whereas it is estimated that over 65 percent of children in foster care have siblings, and are often separated when they are placed in the foster care system, adopted, or confronted with different kinship placements;

Whereas children in foster care have a greater risk of emotional disturbance, difficulties in school, and problems with relationships than their peers;

Whereas the separation of siblings as children causes additional grief and loss;

Whereas organizations and private volunteers advocate for the preservation of sibling relationships in foster care settings and provide siblings in foster care with the opportunity to reunite;

Whereas Camp to Belong, a nonprofit organization founded in 1995 by Lynn Price, heightens public awareness of the need to preserve sibling relationships in foster care settings and gives siblings in foster care the opportunity to reunite; and

Whereas Camp to Belong has reunited over 2,000 separated siblings across the United States, the United States Virgin Islands, and Canada: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 1, 2006, as ''Siblings Connection Day'';

(2) encourages the people of the United States to celebrate sibling relationships on this day; and

(3) supports efforts to respect and preserve those sibling relationships that are at risk of being disrupted due to the placement of children into the foster care system.

READ ACROSS AMERICA DAY

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 384, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 384) designating March 2, 2006, as ''Read Across America Day.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 384) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 384

Whereas reading is a basic requirement for quality education and professional success, and is a source of pleasure throughout life;

Whereas the people of the United States must be able to read if the United States is to remain competitive in the global economy;

Whereas Congress, through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107–110) and the Reading First, Early Reading First, and Improving Literacy Through School Libraries programs, has placed great emphasis on reading intervention and providing additional resources for reading assistance; and

Whereas more than 40 national associations concerned about reading and education have joined with the National Education Association to use March 2, the anniversary of the birth of Theodor Geisel, also known as Dr. Seuss, to celebrate reading: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 2, 2006, as ''Read Across America Day'';

(2) honors Theodor Geisel, also known as Dr. Seuss, for his success in encouraging children to discover the joy of reading;

(3) encourages parents to read with their children for at least 30 minutes on Read Across America Day in honor of Dr. Seuss and in celebration of reading; and

(4) encourages the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2006

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand in adjournment until 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 1. I further ask that following the prayer and the pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved, and the Senate then resume consideration of S. 2271, the PATRIOT Act amendments bill, and that the time be equally divided until the 10 a.m. vote on passage. I further ask that following the vote, the Senate stand in recess until 12 noon for a joint meeting of Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROGRAM

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, today the Senate voted for cloture on the PATRIOT Act amendments bill. Tomorrow morning at 10 a.m., there will be a vote on passage of the bill. Following the vote, Senators will gather in the Senate Chamber at 10:30 and proceed as a body to the Hall of the House of Representatives for a joint meeting of Congress with Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi. Members should plan their schedules accordingly. Following that joint meeting, we will proceed to the PATRIOT Act conference report. It may be necessary to have a couple of procedural votes prior to the vote on invoking cloture on the PATRIOT Act conference report. I would expect those votes to begin sometime shortly after noon when the Senate reconvenes following the joint meeting.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:19 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, March 1, 2006, at 9:30 a.m.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE LIFE OF TED SMITH

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Mr. Ted Smith, a life-long resident of Chautauqua County and a truly remarkable man.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO TED SMITH

(By Manley J. Anderson)

Two well-known local public figures have shared their thoughts about R. Theodore ''Ted'' Smith who was an integral part of their lives for several years. Those paying remembrance and tribute to their late, longtime colleague are Joseph Gerace Sr., New York State Supreme Court Justice now serving as a judicial hearing officer; and Dr. Gregory T. DeCinque, Jamestown Community College president speaking for the area's academic community.

Gerace said he and Smith campaigned together years ago for the Chautauqua County Legislature, representing the Busti/North Harmony area. ''Ted in just about every respect was one of the most outstanding people I've ever met,'' the jurist said. ''He was the kind of public official we wish we had in all positions: honest, straightforward and caring about the community.''

''He was Mr. Environment,'' Gerace said, ''and I feel we may still be waiting for the sewer districts except for Ted Smith, who also was known as Mr. Integrity. We campaigned together for the Chautauqua County Legislature, knocking on doors, and Ted took on a county-wide assignment with the landfill, closing open dumps and developing a solid waste plan that was the envy of the area and so effective the private sector wanted to buy it.''

The jurist closed with, ''He was an all-around guy with a great sense of humor. He was truly the Mark Twain of our era and he always used humor to make the best of a situation.'' ''It is with deep sadness that I share with you that Ted Smith passed away late yesterday (Thursday) at Hamot Medical Center as the result of a heart attack he suffered Sunday evening,'' DeCinque said.

''Ted was among the early faculty who established JCC as the premiere community college in New York,'' he said. ''Whether as a faculty member, founding dean of the Cattaraugus County Campus, dean of academic affairs, or retiree, Ted's contributions to JCC are legend.''

DeCinque continued with, ''Ted led JCC through the development phase of many academic programs as well as the growth of our Cattaraugus County Campus, our outreach into Pennsylvania, and our Dunkirk center.''

The academician pointed out, ''Ted was recognized with the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1975 and the JCC Foundation's John D. Hamilton Award in 2001. He is among the select few to receive these highest honors associated with the college.''

DeCinque went on with, ''Ted was highly regarded throughout the state both as an educator and a political leader. His service on the Chautauqua County Legislature led to many improvements within the county, and I know he will be remembered as one of the best legislators we have had in Chautauqua County.''

He continued with, ''Following Ted's retirement, he returned to the classroom and continued his love affair with teaching. I had the privilege of participating in many of Ted's Student Success Seminars where I witnessed the relationship he was able to develop with students. In addition to teaching in his retirement, Ted carries out a number of research assignments for us that resulted in establishment of several of our newest academic programs including professional piloting, occupational therapy, and dental hygiene.''

DeCinque said, ''On a personal note, Ted was always there to provide me with insight and wisdom, and he often would send me short notes from Busti or Florida that were always on target and helpful. I will miss that guidance.'' The college leader said, ''JCC and our larger community have lost a dear friend and colleague, and our heartfelt sympathy goes out to Pat and the entire Smith family.'' He closed with, ''Information on services for Ted will be shared with you as it becomes available.

Ted was a man who fully understood how to live to its fullest and that, Mr. Speaker, is why I rise to honor him today.

IN MEMORY OF CPT SANDOR L. GORDON

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, with the death of CPT Sandor Lebron Gordon in a tragic car accident on Sunday, November 27, 2005, our State lost a true South Carolina hero.

Captain Gordon led a selfless life, demonstrated by his commitment to his family and his country. The son of Reverend and Mrs. Sammie L. Gordon of Orangeburg, SC, Gordon grew up in a home where love, hard work and concern for others were cherished and honored. It was these characteristics that made him successful in life.

As a husband, his wife and college sweetheart, the former Angela Nicole Strong called him her "very best friend." His son James praised his father for the love and concern he gave him and his little brother Simeon. My son Alan and the men of the 3d of the 178th Field Artillery Battalion who served with Captain Gordon in Iraq said of him "Sandor always had a smile to share, an ear to listen, and a hand to shake. He was a selfless humanitarian who volunteered to leave the safety of his base to take school supplies, clothes, food and water to the neediest Iraqi children living nearby."

Captain Gordon was a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Incorporated, the NAACP, and was voted "Top 20 under 40 Midlands Successful Businessmen" for the year 2005. A respected small businessman, Captain Gordon made the financial sacrifice to answer his Nation's call to duty in December 2003, and upon returning from Iraq a year later was awarded the prestigious Bronze Star Medal.

His family, friends, and the Iraqi children he lovingly helped will remember Captain Gordon for his selfless dedication to them, our country, and a free Iraq. He is deeply missed by all who knew him.

The Wilson family extends its deepest sympathy to the Gordon family.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA: WHERE ARE WE NOW AND WHAT DO WE DO NEXT?

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, February 7, I chaired a hearing on the current human rights situation in Burma, and what the U.S. and the international community can and must do to improve that situation.

After 40 years of brutal military dictatorships, the human rights situation in Burma is frightening. That nation's current military junta, in power for over 17 years, is an abysmal failure on every conceivable level.

It has ruined a beautiful and naturally rich land. According to the State Department's most recent Human Rights Country Report:

More than 4 decades of economic mismanagement and endemic corruption have resulted in widespread poverty, poor health care, declining education levels, poor infrastructure, and continuously deteriorating economic conditions. During the year, poor economic policymaking, lingering consequences of the 2003 private banking sector collapse, and the economic consequences of international sanctions further weakened the economy. The estimated annual per capita income was approximately $225. Most of the population of more than 50 million live in rural areas at subsistence levels.

The Heritage Foundation ranked Iran and North Korea as the only countries with more restrictive economies than that of Burma.

But economic misery is probably the least of the problems faced by Burma's long-suffering people.

Citizens still did not have the right to criticize or change their government . . . Security forces continued to carry out extrajudicial killings. Disappearances continued, and security forces raped, tortured, beat, and otherwise abused prisoners and detainees. Citizens were subjected to arbitrary arrest without appeal.—2004 STATE DEPARTMENT HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT.

There are more than 1,100 political prisoners in Burma, who are abused and tortured. Seven are reported to have died in custody last year, and just last month a 38-year-old democratic activist died in custody due to inadequate medical attention.

Over 15 years ago the National League for Democracy, led by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and other democratic forces, won an overwhelming victory in free elections, 82 percent. The junta refused to accept the results or to call Parliament into session. Instead it imprisoned many activists, including Aung San Suu Kyi, who has spent 10 years under house arrest. Her current house arrest is tantamount to solitary confinement. She has been cruelly kept away from her children, and her husband, who died abroad. For 15 years the junta has cynically proclaimed its intention to draft a new constitution via a national convention, with no participation by the people's democratic representatives. That national convention has again been adjourned, with no constitution, and no freedom, in sight.

Since 1999, the U.S. Secretary of State has designated Burma as a ''Country of Particular Concern'' under the International Religious Freedom Act for particularly severe violations of religious freedom.

According to the U.S. Department of State, Burma continues to be a Tier 3 Country for human trafficking, and ''the junta's policy of using forced labor is a driving factor behind Burma's large trafficking problem.'' The ILO has condemned Burma's use of forced labor, and the ILO representative in Burma has received death threats. Burma has threatened to quit the ILO. Burma regularly prosecutes those who complain about forced labor. Last October, Burma sentenced a 34-year-old woman to 20 months in prison for ''criminal intimidation'' of local officials. Her offense? She had the temerity to initiate the first successful prosecution for use of forced labor in Burma. She had lodged a complaint in 2004 against local government officials over their use of forced labor on a road construction project. She exercised her right to do this under new regulations introduced by the government to appease the International Labor Organization, ILO. She is now in prison, and her appeal was summarily denied.

Burma is high on the list of uncooperative drug-producing or transiting countries, and there is evidence of military and government involvement in the narcotics traffic. Burma produces about 80 percent of Southeast Asia's heroin, and is one of the largest producers of methamphetamines in the world. It exports its illicit narcotics throughout China and Southeast and Central Asia.

And as Burma's heroin circulates through Asia, so does HIV/AIDS, which Burma refuses to take seriously as a domestic problem, although the U.N. estimated in 1999 that over half a million adults had HIV. According to one estimate, Burma spent only $22,000 in 2004 to help AIDS victims. In 2005, the regime tightened restrictions on NGOs and U.N. agency staff providing humanitarian assistance in Burma. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria announced in August that it was terminating its $98 million program on the ground that ''its grants to the country cannot be managed in a way that ensures effective program implementation.'' The French contingent of medical aid group Medecin Sans Frontieres reportedly plans to withdraw from Burma because of restrictions imposed on access to villagers.

The military's self-justification for its decades of arbitrary rule is to protect Burma from ''instability.'' Yet for 40 years it has waged endless war on the nation's ethnic minorities, killing tens of thousands, driving hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of others into exile as refugees or within Burma as displaced persons. It has destroyed over 2,500 villages, and uses rape as an instrument of policy. And to wage these wars, it has resorted to conscription of children: more than 70,000 child soldiers may be serving, in horrible circumstances, in Burma's bloated army.

The U.N. Special Rapporteur for Human Rights, Sergio Pinheiro, has not been allowed into Burma for 2 years. In January 2006, U.N. Special Envoy to Burma Razali Ismail resigned his post after nearly 5 years, since the junta has not allowed him into the country for 2 years.

With such a record, it is no wonder that the U.S. has a wide array of sanctions in place against Burma, many of which must be renewed this year. And many wonder, can any progress be made? Yet in the midst of so much darkness, there has been light this year.

In September 2005, Nobel Laureates Archbishop Desmond Tutu and former Czech President Vaclav Havel released a major report documenting Burma's human rights problems as a threat to regional peace and security.

In December, with the strong support of the United States, U.N. Undersecretary for Political Affairs Ibrahim Gambari, in the unusual but significant presence of Secretary General Kofi Annan, personally gave the Security Council its first-ever briefing on the situation in Burma, a possible first step towards tougher international action. He went on record that the Burmese junta imprisons dissidents, ignores basic human rights, and is steering the country ''towards a humanitarian crisis.''

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN, which Burma joined in 1997, has finally moved from a posture of ''constructive engagement,'' without sanctions or diplomatic pressure, to a more proactive approach to promote change.

But most of all, we owe this progress to this administration. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, and even more importantly, President George Bush, have been relentless in making the world face up to the appalling disaster in Burma. We have just begun, and we have a long way to go, but we in Congress are determined to support these efforts to bring peace and freedom to the heroic Burmese people, who, in the face of so much persecution and suffering, still persist in their resolute struggle for justice.

The next logical step to take is for the U.S., which is currently President of the Security Council, to introduce a Security Council Resolution calling on Burma, in the strongest possible terms: to release Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners; implement a program for national reconciliation that includes the National League for Democracy; and grant immediate and unhindered access to all parts of Burma for U.N. relief agencies and other international humanitarian organizations.

Such a resolution should include a timeline for compliance and punitive sanctions if the SPDC fails to comply.

We heard testimony from Assistant Secretary of State Barry Lowenkron, of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. It was Mr. Lowenkron's first time before this House, and we look forward to a very fruitful collaboration on the vital issues he promotes. His Bureau has kept attention focused on Burma when most have forgotten it. We also heard testimony from Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, who is the chief executor of our President's policy to change Burma. Additional witnesses included: Mr. Bo Kyi, of the Assistance Association of Political Prisoners, a former political prisoner himself, who described his own torments, and the ongoing struggles of democracy activists in Burma and in exile; Naw Win Yee, a leading member of the Shan Women's Action Network, an organization comprised of refugee women living in Thailand that works for human rights, freedom and democracy in Burma and also works to elevate the roles of women in Burmese politics and society. SWAN produced a ground breaking report on the military regime's use of rape as a weapon of war in Burma that was subsequently corroborated by the U.S. State Department; Mr. Tom Malinowski, the Washington Advocacy Director for Human Rights Watch, who urged the U.S. to keep the pressure on the Burmese regime; and Ms. Anastasia Brown, the Director of Refugee Programs, Migration and Refugee Services for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, USCCB, who had just returned from a visit to the Burmese refugee camps in Thailand, and made an urgent and eloquent plea for quick action to resolve the problems of the resettlement of Burmese refugees. All the witnesses provided strong confirmation that Congress needs to stay closely involved in the ongoing human rights tragedy in Burma.

MOURNING THE LOSS OF ELI SEGAL

HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of my dear friend Eli Segal. I offer my sincerest condolences to his wife of 40 years, Phyllis, his brother, Alan, and his children, Mora and Jonathan. We have lost a tremendous political mind, tireless social advocate, a loving husband and father, and a selfless friend who, as President and Senator CLINTON said, ''lived his life as a man for others.''

Eli was born in Brooklyn in 1942, headed to Massachusetts for undergraduate work at Brandeis University, and graduated from the University of Michigan's law school in 1967, making an impact at each stop along the way. Washington, DC, though, is where Eli's footprint is most clearly visible.

Eli's work as a campaign strategist is well documented, from his time on the late Eugene McCarthy's staff in 1968 through his work for General Wesley Clark during the 2004 election. It was during George McGovern's campaign, though, that Eli hired a young man named William Clinton to run the campaign's Texas operations, and I am extraordinarily thankful that Eli made that decision. If not for that particular hire, I probably would not have had the chance to work so closely with Eli during the Clinton administration, and I would not be fortunate enough to count myself as one of the thousands of people whose lives were touched by Eli. Then again, if President Clinton had not hired Eli to help run his campaign

in 1992, it is entirely possible that none of us would have worked in the White House anyway.

Following his work on the campaign trail for President Clinton, Eli became an incredible asset to the administration, creating the AmeriCorps program and heading the Welfare to Work Partnership. These and other accomplishments are why he received the Presidential Citizens Medal for service to the Nation in 2000 and the respect of his peers long before then.

It was during this time that I came to know Eli well. The common bond of working together in the White House was obviously a contributing factor, but Eli and I became friends not because of circumstances, but because of character. He truly was an incredible person, and I consider myself to be privileged to have worked with him in the Clinton Administration. I consider it to be an even greater honor that we continued to be friends after our time in the White House.

Mr. Speaker, all of us who knew Eli Segal will always remember his warmth, compassion, and insight. Eli was taken from us too early, and we surely will miss him, but we were fortunate to have him in our lives while we did. Neither he nor his impact will be forgotten.

TRIBUTE TO EAST GARY MEMORIAL AMERICAN LEGION POST 100

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect and admiration that I wish to congratulate the members of the East Gary Memorial American Legion Post #100 as they celebrate their 75th Diamond Jubilee Birthday. To commemorate this special occasion, Post #100 will be having an anniversary dinner on Saturday, March 11, 2006 at the Post #100 American Legion Hall in Lake Station, Indiana.

The East Gary Memorial American Legion Post #100 was chartered in 1931. Since its inception, the members of Post #100 have dedicated themselves to the mission of serving veterans and the community. Post #100 members go above and beyond to serve veterans, as evidenced by their continued work with the Indiana Veterans Home in Lafayette, Indiana; the Knightstown Soldiers and Sailors Home in Knightstown, Indiana; and the Hines VA Hospital in Hines, Illinois, where they provide visitation and assistance to veterans in need. In addition, Post #100 has always been very active in various POW/MIA programs. Post #100 has also taken an active role in promoting local public service by sponsoring a law enforcement officer/firefighter/EMT competition, of which present Commander John Wrolen serves as District Chairman and State Co-Chairman.

Currently, Post #100 and its members also support the following youth programs: American Legion Baseball, Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, the Special Olympics, and several programs that focus on patriotism and American government. In particular, they are active in Hoosier Boys' and Girls' State, a program that aims to educate high school juniors on the structure of American government and its processes. Post #100 also provides flag etiquette classes for grade-school children and sponsors the Americanism in Government program, as well as oratorical programs. These competitions test the knowledge and public speaking abilities of tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students, allowing the winners to advance to compete at district, State, regional, and national levels.

Throughout the past 75 years, American Legion Post #100 has installed 37 commanders, 4 of which have gone on to serve as first district commanders. These men are: Ralph Becktel (1934), Jay Hott (1968), Hank Cook (1992), and John Wrolen (2001). At their 75th anniversary celebration, Post #100 will honor all living past commanders for their service. They are: Robert Pifferitti, Albert Kinsey, Alfred Hanson, Jr., Robert Wilson, John Wrolen, Terry Szostek, Richard Davies, Ronald Blaney, and Evin Eakins. All of these past commanders and district commanders should be honored for their service and dedication to veterans and the community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in congratulating the members of the East Gary Memorial American Legion Post #100 on the 75th anniversary of their noble organization. These giving and selfless individuals continue to dedicate their time and unrelenting efforts to serve local veterans and their community. I am proud to represent them in Congress.

RECOGNIZING JOSHUA CARPENTER, EDEN'S ''YOUTH OF THE YEAR''

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Joshua Carpenter, a young man who was named town of Eden 2006 ''Youth of the Year.''

Josh has demonstrated leadership and outstanding service to his school, community, and at the Boys and Girls Club of Eden in particular. Joshua became an active member of the Boys and Girls Club the year of its inception in 2002. He and his peers benefited from the experiences they shared at the club; therefore, Joshua decided that he would like to work at the Boys and Girls Club to share these experiences with other young members. He brings energy and enthusiasm to each activity and acts as a mentor for others.

In addition to the work he does with the Boys and Girls Club, Carpenter is actively involved in the community where he lives. He participates in the ICC Church Youth group and volunteers at the PTA-sponsored festivals as well as at family events that are held at the school.

Joshua is an outstanding Eden High School senior. He has a keen interest in learning about other cultures and expands his awareness through his participation in the Model United Nations Club. He was named to the National Honor Society during his junior year and remains active in several NHS-sponsored programs. Additionally, Josh is a leading member of the tennis team.

I am proud to honor Joshua Carpenter today, an outstanding young man and an emerging leader in the community. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to highlight the achievements of Joshua Carpenter and I am pleased to join with members of the community to congratulate him on being named the 2006 ''Youth of the Year.'' I wish him continued success and happiness in all of his future endeavors.

CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF ELLA BRIDGES STEGMAIER

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today I am happy to congratulate Paige and Christian Stegmaier of Chapin, SC, on the birth of their new baby daughter. Ella Bridges Stegmaier was born on February 16, 2006, at 3:10 p.m., weighing 7 pounds and 8 ounces and measuring 20 inches. Ella has been born into a loving home, where she will be raised by parents who are devoted to her well-being and bright future. Her birth is a blessing.

THE INTERNET IN CHINA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I chaired a hearing on the Internet in China regarding an issue that is deeply troubling to me, and I believe, to the American people: that American technology and know-how is substantially enabling repressive regimes in China and elsewhere in the world to cruelly exploit and abuse their own citizens.

Over the years, I have held 25 hearings on human rights abuses in China, and while China's economy has improved somewhat, the human rights situation remains abysmal. So-called economic reform has utterly failed to result in the protection of freedom of speech, expression, or assembly. The Laogai system of forced labor camps is still full with an estimated 6 million people; the Chinese government permits a horrifying trade in human organs; the PRC's draconian one-child-per-couple policy has made brothers and sisters illegal and coerced abortion commonplace; and political and religious dissidents are systematically persecuted and tortured.

Similarly, while the Internet has opened up commercial opportunities and provided access to vast amounts of information for people the world over, the Internet has also become a malicious tool: a cyber sledgehammer of repression of the government of China. As soon as the promise of the Internet began to be fulfilled—when brave Chinese began to e-mail each other and others about human rights issues and corruption by government leaders—the Party cracked down. To date, an estimated 49 cyber-dissidents and 32 journalists have been imprisoned by the PRC for merely posting information on the Internet critical of the regime. And that's likely to be only the tip of the iceberg.

Tragically, history shows us that American companies and their subsidiaries have provided the technology to crush human rights in

the past. Edwin Black's book IBM and the Holocaust reveals the dark story of IBM's strategic alliance with Nazi Germany. Thanks to IBM's enabling technologies, from programs for identification and cataloging to the use of IBM's punch card technology, Hitler and the Third Reich were able to automate the genocide of the Jews.

U.S. technology companies today are engaged in a similar sickening collaboration, decapitating the voice of the dissidents. In 2005, Yahoo's cooperation with Chinese secret police led to the imprisonment of the cyber-dissident Shi Tao. And this was not the first time. According to Reporters Without Borders, Yahoo also handed over data to Chinese authorities on another of its users, Li Zhi. Li Zhi was sentenced on December 10, 2003 to eight years in prison for ''inciting subversion.'' His ''crime'' was to criticize in online discussion groups and articles the well-known corruption of local officials.

Women and men are going to the gulag and being tortured as a direct result of information handed over to Chinese officials. When Yahoo was asked to explain its actions, Yahoo said that it must adhere to local laws in all countries where it operates. But my response to that is: if the secret police a half century ago asked where Anne Frank was hiding, would the correct answer be to hand over the information in order to comply with local laws? These are not victimless crimes. We must stand with the oppressed, not the oppressors.

I was recently on a news show talking about Google and China. The question was asked, ''Should it be business' concern to promote democracy in foreign nations?'' That's not necessarily the right question. The more appropriate question today is, ''Should business enable the continuation of repressive dictatorships by partnering with a corrupt and cruel secret police and by cooperating with laws that violate basic human rights?''

I believe that two of the most essential pillars that prop up totalitarian regimes are the secret police and propaganda. Yet for the sake of market share and profits, leading U.S. companies like Google, Yahoo, Cisco and Microsoft have compromised both the integrity of their product and their duties as responsible corporate citizens. They have aided and abetted the Chinese regime to prop up both of these pillars, propagating the message of the dictatorship unabated and supporting the secret police in a myriad of ways, including surveillance and invasion of privacy, in order to effectuate the massive crackdown on its citizens.

Through an approach that monitors, filters, and blocks content with the use of technology and human monitors, the Chinese people have little access to uncensored information about any political or human rights topic, unless of course, Big Brother wants them to see it. Google.cn, China's search engine, is guaranteed to take you to the virtual land of deceit, disinformation and the big lie. As such, the Chinese government utilizes the technology of U.S. IT companies combined with human censors—led by an estimated force of 30,000 cyber police—to control information in China. Web sites that provide the Chinese people news about their country and the world, such as BBC, much of CNN, as well as Voice of America and Radio Free Asia, are regularly blocked in China. In addition, when a user enters a forbidden word, such as ''democracy,'' ''China torture'' or ''Falun Gong,'' the search results are blocked, or you are redirected to a misleading site, and the user's computer can be frozen for unspecified periods of time.

Cisco has provided the Chinese government with the technology necessary to filter Internet content through its creation of Policenet, one of the tools the regime uses to control the Internet. Cisco holds 60 percent of the Chinese market for routers, switches, and other sophisticated networking gear, and its estimated revenue from China, according to Derek Bambauer of Legal Affairs, is estimated to be $500 million annually. Yet Cisco has also done little creative thinking to try to minimize the likelihood that its products will be used repressively, such as limiting eavesdropping abilities to specific computer addresses.

Similarly, Google censors what are euphemistically called ''politically sensitive'' terms, such as ''democracy,'' ''China human rights,'' ''China torture'' and the like on its new Chinese search site, Google.cn. Let's take a look at what this means in practice. A search for terms such as ''Tiananmen Square'' produces two very different results. The one from Google.cn shows a picture of a smiling couple, but the results from Google.com show scores of photos depicting the mayhem and brutality of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. Another example: let's look at ''China and torture.'' Google has said that some information is better than nothing. But in this case, the limited information displayed amounts to disinformation. A half truth is not the truth—it is a lie. And a lie is worse than nothing. It is hard not to draw the conclusion that Google has seriously compromised its ''Don't Be Evil'' policy. It has become evil's accomplice.

Not surprisingly, Americans, not just Chinese, are also the victims of this censorship. On an informal request from the Chinese government, Microsoft on December 30, 2005 shut down the blog of Zhao Jing because the content of Zhao's blog on MSN Spaces was offensive to the PRC. Zhao had tried to organize a walk-off of journalists at the Beijing News after their editor was fired for reporting on clashes between Chinese citizens and police in southern China. However, Microsoft shut down the blog not only in China, but everywhere. It not only censored Chinese access to information, but American access to information, a step it has only recently pulled back from. Like Yahoo, MSN defended its decision by asserting that MSN is committed to complying with ''local laws, norms, and industry practices in China.'' Regrettably, I haven't been able to find an MSN statement on its commitment to global laws, norms, and industry practices protecting human rights in China.

Standing for human rights has never been easy or without cost. It seems that companies have always resisted having to abide by ethical standards, yet we have seen the success of such agreements as the Sullivan principles in South Africa and MacBride principles in Northern Ireland. I, and many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, would welcome leadership by the corporations to develop a code of conduct which would spell out how they could operate in China and other repressive countries while not harming citizens and respecting human rights. But I believe our government also has a major role to play in this critical area, and that a more comprehensive framework is needed to protect and promote human rights. This is why I have introduced HR 4780, the Global Online Freedom Act of 2006, to promote freedom of expression on the Internet.

There are some encouraging and innovative public and private efforts already underway in this area. Electronic Frontier Foundation, for instance, allows Windows-based computers to become proxies for Internet users, circumventing local Internet restrictions. Through the efforts of the U.S. Broadcasting Board of Governors' fund of a mere $100,000, VOA and Radio Free Asia's Web sites are accessible to Chinese Internet users through proxy servers because of the technology of Dynaweb and UltraReach.

Earlier this month, the technology firm Anonymizer announced that it is developing a new anti-censorship technology that will enable Chinese citizens to safely access the entire Internet filter-free. The solution will provide a regularly changing URL so that users can likely access the uncensored Internet. In addition, users' identities are apparently protected from online monitoring by the Chinese regime. Lance Cottrell of Anonymizer said it ''is not willing to sit idly by while the freedom of the Internet is slowly crushed. We take pride in the fact that our online privacy and security solutions provide access to global information for those under the thumb of repressive regimes.''

In conclusion, I am hopeful that the hearing was the beginning of a different sort of dialogue—a discussion on how American high-tech firms can partner with the U.S. government and human rights activists to bring down the Great Firewall of China, and on how America's greatest software engineers can use their intelligence to create innovative new products to protect dissidents and promote human rights.

I would also like to recognize and honor the work of Dr. John S. Aird, a distinguished American whose immeasurable contributions as a scholar, population expert, and defender of human rights have changed the lives of so many over the course of his career.

It was with great sadness that I learned of Dr. Aird's death last October. His passing represents a grave loss for all of us who are committed to ensuring human rights around the world, and his tremendous work in this and other fields will not be forgotten.

Dr. Aird, former Senior Research Specialist on China at the U.S. Census Bureau, served for 28 years as that organization's resident expert on the population of China. He was a forthright and vehement critic of the Chinese government's coercive one-child family planning policy.

During his retirement, Dr. Aird worked as a full-time volunteer. He provided expert testimony in immigration courts for 415 families, helping Chinese citizens fleeing their country's coercive family planning programming to secure asylum in the United States.

John S. Aird was truly one of the most informed and outspoken opponents of China's one-child policy. He testified before this and other Congressional committees on numerous occasions, and I believe my colleagues would join me in saying that his insights were consistently persuasive and well-considered, and proved invaluable to our work on human rights in China.

RECOGNIZING R.S. OWENS & COMPANY

HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the exceptional craftsmanship of R.S. Owens & Company, the manufacturers of the Academy Awards for over 20 years. I am proud to have "Oscar" as a constituent, and I hope my colleagues will join me in watching the work of R.S. Owens & Company arrive in Hollywood from Chicago.

With the Oscars soon approaching, television sets around the Nation will be tuned in to watch movie stars as they stroll down the red carpet, hoping to receive the Academy Award, an internationally recognized symbol of excellence in film. While the main attraction of the night may be the directors, actors, and film makers receiving the awards, the 13½ inch, gold-plated statuettes hold an important place in the night's event and traditions.

R.S. Owens is the Chicago-based award-manufacturing company responsible for producing the world-renowned Academy Award. Since they were recommended for the manufacturing of the award in 1983, the academy has selected R.S. Owens to produce the statuettes year after year, in recognition of their fine work in the field of award design and production and of their exemplary dedication to the craft.

R.S. Owens has been involved in awards manufacturing since 1938. It began, as many great things do, as a small idea from an enterprising man, Owen Siegel. His idea has grown from a small dream into one of the most successful award manufacturing companies in the United States.

While so many companies in the manufacturing field have turned to automated machine work, R.S. Owens has remained grounded primarily in handwork. The company employs workers who are masters in their craft, and take great pride in their work—pride that is evident in the quality of award they continually produce in a field where the product is so closely scrutinized as to allow no errors in workmanship.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I recognize the excellent craftsmanship of R.S. Owens & Company in their production of the Academy Award. The company's fine work and dedication make it an excellent example of flourishing businesses throughout Chicago. It is an honor to know that such an innovative and responsible company calls Chicago its home. On behalf of the Fifth District of Illinois and the city of Chicago, I congratulate R.S. Owens on their continued excellence in their field, and look forward to the showcase of this year's batch of awards at the ceremony this March.

TRIBUTE TO PASTOR CATO BROOKS, JR.

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and sincerity that I wish to honor Pastor Cato Brooks, Jr. of the Tree of Life Missionary Baptist Church In Gary, Indiana, and his wife, Mrs. Bettye Brooks. The members of the Tree of Life Missionary Baptist Church will be honoring Pastor and Mrs. Brooks throughout the month of March for their many years of service to the congregation.

Pastor Brooks was born in Forrest City, Arkansas, where he attended Steward Elementary School and Lincoln High School. During high school, Pastor Brooks proved himself to be a stellar athlete, having been honored as an All-State football and basketball player. For his efforts in athletics, in 1999, Pastor Brooks was honored by his hometown and inducted into the Hall of Fame. Following high school, Pastor Brooks attended Southern University in Baton Rouge, LA and then answered the call to serve a tour of duty in the U.S. Army. Upon completion of his tour, he returned to school at the University of Kansas, seeking a degree in Sociology. Pastor Brooks has also attended the Mid-America Baptist Seminary, Ouachita Baptist University, and Indiana Christian University, where he earned a bachelor's and a master's Degree, as well as a doctorate of divinity. Pastor Brooks also received his Ph.D. in Communiology from California Western University of Palo Alto, CA.

Pastor Brooks began his ministry on January 26, 1969. He served as Pastor of the Greater Friendship Missionary Baptist Church in Little Rock, Arkansas from 1970 to 1977 before relocating to serve as Pastor of the First Baptist Church in East Chicago, Indiana; 18 months later, Pastor Brooks organized the Tree of Life Missionary Baptist Church, serving a congregation of only 26 members, where he continues to serve today as Senior Pastor. He is also the Chairman of the Tree of Life Community Development Corporation and Care Center and a former Chaplain for the Gary Police Department.

Pastor Brooks has also achieved many accolades and accomplishments throughout his lifetime. To name a few, Pastor Brooks has been recognized by the NAACP, A Walk Without Fear, for his efforts in the civil rights movement, and on May 23, 2004, he was elected Moderator of the Northern Indiana Missionary Baptist District Association. In addition, Pastor Brooks published his first book, Studies in Ephesians, in September 2003.

The youngest of 9 children, Bettye Brooks was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, where she attended the Little Rock public schools. She later attended Arkansas Baptist College, Henderson State Teachers' College, Philander Smith College, and Indiana University Northwest. Mrs. Brooks has a degree in Business Administration and is a certified Personnel Management Specialist, Housing Counselor, and Housing Development Professional.

Mrs. Brooks has held several positions in government and community service throughout her professional career. She has been a Grants Management Supervisor for the City of Little Rock, a State Planner for the State of Arkansas, serving under then-Governor Bill Clinton, a personnel director for Pulaski County, AR, a Regional Program Specialist for the National Urban League, and an Employment Specialist for the Lake County Job Training Corporation.

After coming to Tree of Life in 1991, Mrs. Brooks became the Executive Director of the Tree of Life Community Development Corporation. In this capacity, she and her housing development partner have successfully rehabbed over 600 housing units in Gary, East Chicago, and South Bend, Indiana. In addition, Mrs. Brooks serves as the administrator for Treasure's Child Development Center and was recognized for her efforts in 1993 with the Athena Award by the Gary Chamber of Commerce. Mrs. Brooks also serves in many other capacities within the church and the community. She is a Sunday School teacher, a trustee, Executive Director of Development and Training, Finance Coordinator, and First Cook at the church. She is also a past president of the Ernie Pyle PTA and the Inter-Denomination Association of Minister Wives' and Widows' of Gary and Vicinity.

Most impressively, the Brooks's never let their accomplishments get in the way of their family. Pastor and Mrs. Brooks are also the proud parents of 6 children and 13 grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in congratulating Pastor and Mrs. Cato Brooks, Jr. as they are honored for their service and ministry throughout the month of March. Their years of service have touched and improved the lives of all whom they have served. Their unselfish and lifelong dedication is worthy of the highest commendation, and I am proud to represent them in Congress.

HONORING DR. LILLIAN VITANZA NEY FOR BEING AWARDED THE PAUL HARRIS FELLOW AWARD

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Lillian Vitanza Ney of Jamestown, NY, for being awarded the Paul Harris Fellow award, the Rotary Club's highest honor.

The Paul Harris Fellow recognition is given to show appreciation for contributions to the Rotary Club's charitable and education program. A contribution of $1,000 was given on behalf of Dr. Ney.

Dr. Ney is a graduate of Jamestown High School and Wells College. She earned her medical degree from State University at Buffalo. She serves as wellness director, cardiology director, medical education director and vice president of medical affairs at WCA Hospital and is a member of several professional organizations.

Dr. Ney is also highly involved in the community she served as a city councilwoman including being the first female city council president. She was one of the founding members of the Jamestown Area Youth Orchestra and is a board member for several community organizations.

Dr. Ney has shown great dedication and excellence in her work and community. That is why, Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor her today.

CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF ELIZABETH CARROLL ESKEW

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today I am happy to congratulate Lisa and Tucker Eskew of Alexandria, VA, on the birth of their new baby daughter. Elizabeth Carroll Eskew was born on February 23, 2006, at 3:56 p.m., weighing 7 pounds and 1 ounce. Elizabeth has been born into a loving home, where she will be raised by parents who are devoted to her well-being and bright future. Her birth is a blessing.

ELLEN JOHNSON-SIRLEAF ELECTED AS FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT OF INDEPENDENT AFRICA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on January 16, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was sworn in as the first elected female president in the history of independent Africa. Mrs. Sirleaf had run against Charles Taylor in 1997, but lost, at least partly due to the impression that Taylor would return to war if he failed to win the election. Following the election, Mrs. Sirleaf spent a great deal of time outside Liberia, and many observers felt her gender and her supposed lack of common touch would prevent her from ever being elected President.

In 2005, former international soccer star George Weah captured the imagination of many inside and outside Liberia, who felt that his connection with Liberia's youth made him an almost inevitable winner, despite his lack of education and political experience. However, in the run-off election between the two, Mrs. Sirleaf employed modem campaign techniques, including polling, message development and targeted campaigning to achieve a stunning victory. Her connection with women voters may have made not only the difference in her election, but also may pave the way for other female candidates throughout Africa.

Now that she is leading this West African nation, the question is: What can she do to turn it around from the chaos and poverty into which it had fallen? From its independence in 1847 until 1980, Liberia was ruled by the descendants of former slaves from the United States. They managed to turn this nation into an economic engine, using the country's wealth of natural resources. Abundant sources of water and fertile soil supported rubber, palm oil and tropical fruit plantations, as well as some of the richest timber supplies in Africa. Liberia's mountains contained some of the highest quality iron ore in the world, and there were significant deposits of diamonds and gold.

Unfortunately, the so-called Americo-Liberians denied the descendants of the indigenous people their benefit from Liberia's natural wealth and their fair share of political power. The 1980 coup by then-Sergeant Samuel Doe led to the ascendancy of indigenous ethnic groups, but it also led to a poisonous political atmosphere and rampant official corruption. In late 1989, Charles Taylor, a former member of the Doe government and an escapee from a prison in America, began an insurgency that eventually toppled the Doe government in 1990. Several years of factional fighting devastated the capital city of Monrovia, as well as much of the country. Following a rather shaky cease-fire, a 1997 election brought Charles Taylor to power. By that time, more than 150,000 of his countrymen had died in the fighting, and more than half the population had been displaced.

The Taylor regime was a disaster for Liberia. Taylor and his government looted the treasury and Liberia's natural resources. Political opponents were jailed, or in the case of Sam Dokie and his family members, they were killed. However, Taylor also was a catastrophe for its West African neighbors. Rebels who had been supported by Taylor have destabilized Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire.

Taylor's crimes against his own people stimulated an insurgency that eventually led to his negotiated exile in Nigeria. His crimes against the region led first to United Nations sanctions in 2001 for his support of the Revolutionary United Front rebels in Sierra Leone and subsequently to an indictment for war crimes by the UN-sponsored war crimes tribunal in Sierra Leone in 2003.

The issue of Taylor's extradition to the Sierra Leone Special Court remains high on the agenda of the U.S. Government. Nevertheless, there are internal issues facing the new government in Liberia that also are pressing, and that was the main focus of our hearing last week on Liberia and the impact of its election on West Africa.

During the Taylor regime, and apparently also during the transitional government headed by Gyude Bryant, corruption became a way of life in Liberia. Illegal logging and mining and just plain theft of government resources were commonplace. In fact, the transitional government officials reportedly took furniture, computers and even rugs and light fixtures when they left office just a couple of weeks ago. In one of her first acts as President, Mrs. Sirleaf fired the entire staff of the Ministry of Finance for corruption and told the officials to stay in the country pending an audit. The ministry and the Central Bank significantly differ as to the amount of money on hand for government operations.

Those funds are desperately needed to repair Liberia's roads, water systems and power supply—all of which suffered from years of warfare and neglect. The Sirleaf government will have to examine all contracts to determine if they are in the best interest of the nation and rationally exploit Liberia's resources. Too many of the population of 3 million remain displaced, and 85 percent of Liberia's people are unemployed and 80 percent live below the poverty line. About 70 percent of the population survives on agriculture, which remains disrupted due to the lingering impact of the war.

If Liberia is to recover from its long nightmare, the United States will have to take the lead among the international community to assist in that restoration. That will require focus and consistency in America's engagement.

Liberians feel a kinship to America that Americans do not share with Liberia. Nevertheless, our country's relationship with Liberia is quite real and very important for the welfare of its 3 neighbors. The Bush administration and Congress must take these facts into account in developing policies and programs to respond to Liberia's new, post-election realities.

IKE WEATHERLY ESSAY WINNERS

HON. MIKE PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning on the last day of Black History Month to congratulate Chandler Boys, Brynden Danner and Tristen Horton. These three fine students from Anderson, Indiana were recently named winners in the Ike Weatherly Essay Contest.

Ike Weatherly was a school board member and respected community leader in East Central Indiana. The Essay Contest held in his honor is part of the curriculum to help students better understand the achievements of African-Americans in our Nation's rich history.

Chandler, Brynden and Tristen wrote carefully crafted and insightful essays detailing the accomplishments of three of American history's Black leaders. I had the pleasure of speaking with each of them when they appeared on the "WHBU Morning Show with Leland Franklin and Bret Busby" last week.

Chandler Boys of Eastside Elementary wrote about Medgar Evers, a 1950s civil rights leader and Army veteran who taught the importance of education, religion and hard work.

Brynden Danner of Liberty Christian School wrote about the struggles faced by Charles Cooper, the first Black athlete drafted by the Boston Celtics.

And Tristen Horton of Erskine Elementary wrote about Lonnie G. Johnson, an Air Force veteran and NASA scientist who is noted as the inventor of the super soaker water gun.

Mr. Speaker, I again congratulate Chandler, Brynden and Tristen for their fine work in honoring America's Black leaders and wish to submit their essays into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

MEDGAR EVERS

(By Chandler Boys)

Medgar Evers was born on July 2, 1925 in Decatur, Mississippi. Medgar would grow up in the Depression of the 1930's. His father worked in a sawmill. His mother was a laundress. He was the youngest of four children. In their home they believed in education, religion, and hard work. Medgar went to all black schools. Medgar and his siblings had to walk a long way to school. They did not have many school supplies. Their schools had few teachers, many students, small classrooms, and old books.

In 1942, Medgar joined the United States Army. He joined the Army to see the world. He was in World War II. He fought in France and Great Britain with a segregated group. When he returned home from the war he registered to vote. But angry whites wouldn't let him.

Evers returned to school on the G.I. bill. He finished high school and college. He met his wife, Myrlie Beasley, during this time. During school he was elected into many student offices and joined many sports teams.

In December 1954, he was elected to be the NAACP state field secretary. His family moved to Jackson. Myrlie was made the secretary. Evers faced many challenges. He investigated racial murders and cases of abuse

of black victims. He tried to convince local youth to get more involved. Statewide membership of the NAACP chapters almost doubled from 1956 to 1959.

On June 12, 1963, Medgar Evers was shot in the back in his driveway. He was coming home. He died later that night. On June 22, 1963 Byron Beckwith was arrested for shooting Evers. Beckwith had two trials with all-white juries. They ended with a hung jury. In February 1994, Beckwith was found guilty and sentenced to life in prison. Beckwith died there. Medgar Evers was a hard working man. He was loved very much by his family.

THE STAR WHO COULDN'T SHINE

(By Brynden Danner)

Charles H. Cooper was an N.B.A. basketball star who was never allowed to let his talent shine. On April 25, 1950, Cooper was the first black player to be drafted by the Boston Celtics. He played on a N.B.A. team for six hard years where race was more important than his skills.

Owners of white only hotels refused to rent a room to Cooper separating him from his teammates on long trips. When they played games in the southern states, the Celtics were told to leave Cooper behind. Cooper's teammates supported his right to play and that made the violence grow more and more.

Black players received very little national attention. Even though Cooper played four years for Boston, one year for the Milwaukee Hawks and one year for the Fort Wayne Pistons he was never recognized for his great athletic talent.

Cooper ended his career with a bad feeling about basketball. All of the racial teasing hurt him very deeply. He decided not to have bad feelings about people who treated him so badly. In 1961 Cooper got his masters degree in social work. Nine years later he was named the first black person to head a city government agency. He became the director of parks and recreation in Pittsburgh. At the time of his death in 1984, he was an officer of Pittsburgh National Bank.

Chuck Cooper is an inspiration to me because he suffered many hard times in his life but never gave up. His story will always be a great lesson for me to remember.

LONNIE G. JOHNSON, WATER GUN MAKER

(By Tristen Horton)

Lonnie G. Johnson invented the world famous water gun, the super soaker. For years Lonnie G. Johnson has been inventing things for NASA and other organizations; but he has achieved his greatest fame with his squirt gun, the super soaker.

Johnson started a childhood of creating with inventing things out of old appliances. In his senior year of high school, he won an around the world competition for a remote controlled robot he had built out of junkyard scraps. He went on to more formal training at Tuskegee University where he first earned a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering and then M.S. in Nuclear Engineering. Soon after, Lonnie G. Johnson joined the U.S. Air Force. In the Air Force, he became advanced in space systems.

I am really happy he invented the super soaker water gun because it's just plain fun.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT E. RICH

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor prominent Buffalo businessman Robert E. Rich who passed away peacefully on Wednesday, February 15, 2006. He was a loving and dedicated husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. He was an inspiring colleague and friend. He was an athletics enthusiast. He was an innovative and legendary entrepreneur and founder. And, he was a generous and compassionate community and industry advocate.

Mr. Rich began his path to frozen food industry fame in 1935 as owner and operator of Wilber Farms Dairy. In 1945, while serving as the war food Administrator in Michigan, he learned about successful research at the George Washington Carver Institute on the use of soybeans to create innovative food products. After investigating the use of soybeans, he developed the world's first non-dairy whipped topping. Rich's industry-leading reputation was as a family-owned business dedicated to treating customers around the world like family. He was also committed to continuing the company's aggressive worldwide growth while maintaining its headquarters in Buffalo, NY.

In 1965, Mr. Rich was a charter member of a group which attempted to bring a National Hockey League franchise to Buffalo. In 1972, through Rich Products, he purchased the naming rights of the new football stadium for the Buffalo Bills. In 1988, he authorized the purchase which kept the Buffalo Bisons, the Triple-A affiliate of the Cleveland Indians, in town. Under his chairmanship of the Bisons, the city constructed Pilot Field, which is now Dunn Tire Park, which has become a source of city pride and national attention.

Rich founded and headed up the University at Buffalo's Christmas Scholarship Fund which made 30 annual scholarships available to outstanding scholar-athletes. In 1991, he was inducted into the inaugural class of the Greater Buffalo Sports Hall of Fame.

Mr. Rich continued his commitment to his Buffalo home in 1989 with the decision to renovate and redevelop the historic 1200 Niagara Street complex on the banks of the Niagara River on the city's West Side. Today, the state-of-the-art facility is home to the Rich Research Center, hailed as the industry's finest, the Rich Renaissance Niagara Atrium and Conference Center, site of weddings, banquets and business meetings, the Rich Wellness Center, and the Rich's Family Center, Western New York's first on-site child daycare center which celebrated its 10th anniversary in 1999.

In 2004, Rich's made a significant pledge to the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation to establish the Robert E. Rich Aspiring Entrepreneurs Scholarship. Four scholarships each year support the continued education of undergraduate students pursuing careers in the restaurant and foodservice industry.

In 2005, Rich Products celebrated its 60th birthday posting annual sales in excess of $2.5 billion. The company sells more than 2,300 products in more than 85 countries and employs more than 7,000 Associates worldwide, including more than 1,300 in its headquarters in Buffalo, NY.

Frozen food industry pioneer, architect of the nation's largest family-owned frozen foods manufacturer, sportsman, and community leader all describe Robert E. Rich. Rich Products will continue to grow and thrive as a family business under the ongoing leadership of his son, Bob Rich Jr. But Western New York will sorely miss Robert E. Rich.

IN MEMORY OF CORRIN FITTS BOWERS

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, all South Carolinians mourn the loss of the late Corrin Fitts Bowers of Estill who was the devoted husband of the beloved Mary Eleanor Bowers who served with distinction as Office Manager in the Second Congressional District Office for ARTHUR RAVENEL, FLOYD SPENCE, and JOE WILSON.

The following obituary ran in The State newspaper on February 23, 2006:

Corrin Fitts Bowers, 77, died February 22, 2006, surrounded by his loving family. He was born July 5, 1928, in Luray, South Carolina, to Grover Ford Bowers and Corinne Fitts Bowers. He was the grandson of Louisa Johnston and Dr. Paul Ford Eve Bowers and Francis Gray and Eugene deTreville Fitts, all of Luray.

He attended school in Luray and Estill, where he finished high school in 1945. He attended both the University of South Carolina and Newberry College. He was the owner of the hat that became the Bronze Derby, Newberry and Presbyterian Colleges' much contended sports trophy.

He was a lifelong farmer who farmed the family land and grew cotton, corn, peaches and watermelons. He served for many years on the Production Credit Board in Walterboro. He served as a member of Hampton County's ASCA as well as the State Board under President Jimmy Carter. In Estill, Mr. Bowers was the Democratic Committee Chairman for 10 years. In 1960 he placed in the ''Outstanding Young Farmers Award'' and won the State Cotton—5 acre contest. He served for many years on the S.C. District Housing Committee #2 as the chairman. He served as the first President of the Estill Jaycees and Co-Chairman of the 1964 Watermelon Festival, which was held in Estill. Mr. Bowers was instrumental in bringing astronauts Gus Grissom and John Young to Estill on Mendel Rivers' Day. He was one of the founders of Patrick Henry Academy, serving as the first temporary chairman. He served on the board of Patrick Henry for many years and remained a Trustee until his death.

Corrin Bowers was a member of Lawtonville Baptist Church and served as an active and inactive deacon there for 50 years. He taught Sunday School, Training Union and was chairman of the Building Committee several times. Mr. Bowers served on one pastor search committee and sang bass in the church choir.

Corrin and his family were avid hunters who loved to entertain. He and his two brothers, Grover and ''Det,'' were the Lowcountry jitterbuggers. A girl cousin once said, ''You have not lived if you haven't been to a dance with one of the Bowers boys.'' Corrin was a charter member of the Monday Night Couple's Bridge Club for 56 years. He was also a member of Estill Supper Club as well as the Estill Lions Club.

Corrin Bowers is survived by his wife of 56 years, Mary Eleanor Wiggins Bowers; his brother, Grover Ford Bowers (Macie); a son Corrin Fitts Bowers, junior (Sallie) of Estill, daughters, Sharon Bowers Green (Roy) also of Estill, and ''Liz'' Bowers Palles (Mitch)

and Graham Bowers Solana (Mark) of Savannah, Georgia; three granddaughters, Mary Crane Palles of Columbia, Louisa Sims Bowers of Estill and Mary Tippins Solana of Savannah; eight grandsons, John C. Green (Deana) of Jacksonville, Florida, Corrin J. Green (Hanna) of Columbia, South Carolina, and Andrew N. Green, Mitchell D. Palles III, and Corrin Fitts Bowers III, all of Columbia; Joe, Henry and Gray Solana of Savannah; one guardian son, Thomas W. Folk, junior (Jan) of Barnwell; two greatgrandsons, Patrick Bowers Green and William Fitts Green of Jacksonville, Florida; four nieces, Martha B. Simons (Paul) of Aiken, Laurie W. Hanna (Chris) of Estill, Stephanie W. Bates (Rob) of Chapin, and Tracy Wiggins of Columbia; seven nephews, deTreville Bowers (Polly) and Dr. Ford Bowers (Susan) both of Chapin, South Carolina, Ransey Bowers (Mary Wells) and Tison Bowers (Julie) of Columbia, Bill Bowers (Val) of Savannah, Georgia, Grover Bowers III (Derbi) of Okatie, South Carolina, and Bob Wiggins (Rachael) of Estill, South Carolina; one brother in law, R.G. ''Bro'' Wiggins (Kay) of Estill, South Carolina. First cousins, Betty Fitts, Cecilia Baker of Estill, Mary Eleanor Rouse, Robert and Mary Bowers of Luray; Paul Bowers of Allendale; Frances F. DeLoach of Beaufort; Deloris F. Jenkins of Barnwell, SC., Franklena Geiger of Atlanta, Georgia and Araminta E. Harris of Salisbury, N.C. He was predeceased by his brother, deTreville Bowers and survived by his wife, Evelyn Pendarvis Bowers Kuebler. The pallbearers for Corrin Bowers are his grandsons with his nephews standing nearby, in a group. The honorary pallbearers include: Harry Hanna, Montague Laffitte, Dr. Luke Laffitte, Clarke Baker, Paul Peeples, Dr. J.D. Rouse, junior, Ashley Bush, Dr. Harrison L. Peeples, Lester Cook, Richard Mixson, George Barber, Coy Johnston, Bill Ratcliff, Bill Stewart, Clyde Eltzroth, Harold Mack, Bill Sprague, Homer Peeples, Mendel Davis, Billy Wier, Billy Yonce, Bart Waller, Randolph Murdaugh III, Lee Bowers, Karl Bowers, Hughsie E. Long, Tony Reardon, Hugh T. Lightsey, Damian Centgraf, John D. Carswell, his faithful employees and his kind and loving caregiver Jerrod Steven Wilson. Visitation will begin at 3 p.m. Thursday, February 23, 2006, at 362 Wyman Blvd. in Estill, South Carolina and continue until 1 p.m. Friday when Mr. Bowers will be taken to the church.

Funeral is 3 p.m. Friday, February 24, 2006, at Lawtonville Baptist Church with Reverend. Dr. James Norris, officiating.

Burial: Lawntonville Cemetery.

The family requests in lieu of flowers, memorials be made to Lawtonville Baptist Church Parsonage Building Fund, P.O. Box 1057, Estill, SC 29918.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF CERESE TEEL

HON. CHARLES W. "CHIP" PICKERING

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Speaker, last month, Cerese Teel retired as executive director of the Oktibbeha County chapter of the American Red Cross. Through 7 years of ice storms, wind storms and the mother of all storms—Hurricane Katrina—Cerese served her community with diligence and a noble spirit.

During her time as executive director, she oversaw the chapter's expansion as they moved into new headquarters and purchased and outfitted an emergency response vehicle. She opened and operated emergency shelters and provided leadership to more than 1,300 volunteers from the area.

Mr. Speaker, I hope Congress joins me in recognizing the public service of Cerese Teel. The strength of our Nation dwells not in the halls of the Capitol but the hearts of our people. Cerese loved her neighbors and served them. Mississippi has been blessed by her work and we honor her for her dedication, vision and compassion.

IN MEMORY OF SAMUEL B. WARD, JR., LONGTIME CHESTER HEIGHTS FIRE CHIEF WITH A LEGACY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, COMPASSION, COURAGE, AND DEDICATION

HON. CURT WELDON

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great sadness and tremendous gratitude to honor the life of my good friend, Samuel B. Ward, a longtime Chester Heights Fire Chief, veteran, engineer and community leader. As his family, friends and neighbors mourn the passing of Sam Ward, I want to take a few moments today to remember his work and the difference he made in the community he served so bravely and selflessly.

Mr. Ward was born in Chester, but grew up in Chester Heights, a community with whom he had a life-long affiliation. After enlisting at the end of World War II, he attended Pennsylvania Military College, now Widener University, where he played football and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Engineering.

Commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Ordinance Corps, he was detailed to the Infantry and served in Korea as a Heavy Mortar Platoon Leader and Executive Officer, earning his Combat Infantry Badge. After returning from Korea, he was assigned to the Tank and Automotive Command in Michigan before leaving the military and returning to Chester Heights.

After his military service, he returned to the fledgling Chester Heights Volunteer Fire Company, and was elected to positions of increasing leadership including Engineer, Assistant Fire Chief, and finally Fire Chief, a position he held for 35 years.

Firefighting is a matter of life and death, and individuals like Sam Ward assume an enormous responsibility when they accept the job of running a fire department. They are responsible for the lives, homes, and livelihoods of thousands of citizens throughout their community. And on a day-to-day basis they become directly responsible for the health and welfare of all the men and women they supervise. Chief Ward discharged his enormous responsibilities with real distinction. During his 35 years as chief, a good department became even better. Chief Ward was respected for his commitment to public safety and his ability to get things done.

An innovator in the fire service, he developed the first workable portable Air Bank in the county, a system which recharges the air packs worn by firefighters. As chairman of the Delaware County Radio Committee, his work laid the foundation for the county-wide fire response radio and the 911 service.

Within the community, Mr. Ward served the borough of Chester Heights in numerous capacities, including Fire Marshal, Council Member and President of Borough Council. In later years, he used his expertise from the fire service to serve as Coordinator of Emergency Preparedness.

Mr. Ward's service activities also included a very active role in the Boy Scouts of Troop 260, where as a boy he earned his Eagle Scout. His leadership on the troop committee provided opportunities for boys of the area to experience adventure activities and other projects to enhance their scouting life. His other community involvement included various service organizations, including the Lions, Jaycees, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Concordville Rotary.

Mr. Ward worked throughout his career as a metal fabricator, eventually founding his own business, which had a reputation for quality and innovation for more than 34 years.

He married the former Mary Frances Ahearn, his high school and college sweetheart, in 1951, who died in 1995. He is survived by one daughter, Joan and four sons, Steven, James, Lawrence and Joseph, and one sister, Polly (Madeline); and seven grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, the 7th Congressional District has lost an exceptional public servant, and I have lost a good friend. I wish Chief Ward's family, my heartfelt condolences and may they find comfort in knowing that the many people he impacted deeply value his dedication and generosity and the example of his life and work. Chief Samuel B. Ward exemplified the spirit of service that has made this country great. This man was a genuine community leader. He not only did his job well, he loved it, and the community he served. We are safer because of his life and service. I am personally grateful to have known Chief Ward as a friend, and mourn his passing.

SUPPORT FOR JAVITS-WAGNER-O'DAY PROGRAM

HON. LYNN A. WESTMORELAND

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with my colleagues a startling statistic—the 50 percent unemployment rate of people with disabilities in this country. For those with severe disabilities, the number is even graver at 70 percent.

It is easy to focus on the disability of a person, not the ability. But people with disabilities want to work, and can work. We must recognize the potential of all Americans, and provide the opportunities needed to allow people with disabilities to become self-sufficient, independent, tax-paying citizens.

To that end, I am proud to support employment opportunities for people with disabilities, particularly through the Javits-Wagner-O'Day, JWOD, Program.

The JWOD Program uses the purchasing power of the Federal Government to buy products and services from participating, community-based nonprofit agencies dedicated to

training and employing individuals with disabilities.

The people who are blind or who have other severe disabilities who work under the JWOD Program are given the opportunity to acquire job skills and training, receive good wages and benefits and gain greater independence and quality of life. This program allows people with disabilities enjoy full participation in their community and can market their JWOD-learned skills into other public and private sector jobs.

In the United States, the program serves 40,000 people with disabilities and generated approximately $280 million in wages earned and nearly $1.5 billion in products sold. In Georgia alone, approximately 1,000 people with disabilities earned nearly $3 million in wages last year as a result of JWOD.

It is with great pleasure that I recognize the great contributions of American workers with disabilities and I encourage others to do so on February 23, which is National Disability Day. More importantly, let us all remember everyday that every person has ability. Everyone has something to share for the greater good. America truly works best when all Americans work. I commend the JWOD Program, its supporters, and its participants for making a difference where it is needed most.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN ''JACK'' EMERSON

HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay special tribute to John "Jack" Emerson who passed away on December 29, 2005 at the age of 64. Jack was a loving father and husband, an outstanding public servant, and friend and mentor to many, including myself.

I ask unanimous consent to enter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the eulogy given by Jack's good friend Barry Balan on January 3, 2006.

Jack Emerson, a devoted husband, caring father, man of compassion, civic leader, mentor and colleague. A man I am proud to call my friend.

There are not enough words to describe this man, who has made such an impact on this community and all who met him. Knowing Jack for 26 years, I will give you a glimpse into the man who has made a difference in so many people's lives.

The Lowell Sun called Jack a man of vision, but I believe he was also a visionary. Webster defines a visionary as not founded on fact, imaginary, and impractical, having idealistic goals or aims incapable of realization.

He had the uncanny ability to take something that was idealistic and incapable of realization and make it real. Thus was born the Chelmsford Sewer Project. People told him that it was impractical, it would cost too much, and it would bring too much growth to this suburban community of Chelmsford. It would change life as people knew it. Jack, in his own inevitable way took up the challenge and for four long years he went on cable TV to every church, synagogue, civic group, or gathering of two or more people, to sell the town on the sewer project. In 1984, town meeting rewarded his efforts and appropriated the first funds for the project by a unanimous vote then again in 1985, 1987, 1989 and 1996.

Jack, although small in stature, pursued this project with the vigor of a small army.

He had the boundless energy, as seen by the different positions he held throughout his political and non-political activities. Jack was elected to the Sewer Commission in 1980.

He became a selectman in 1982; his mom was so proud of him at that accomplishment that she would introduce Jack to everyone she met, this is my son ''the selectman.'' He is and will continue to be Chairman of the Chelmsford Sewer Commission. He holds the distinction of being the longest continuous serving chairman of any board in the town of Chelmsford.

At one time in the mid eighties, Jack was the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, Chairman of the Sewer Commission, and Assistant Director of Public Health in the same year. You could say he had the whole town wrapped up in his hands. Jack was on the Board of Registrars, Dog Pound Committee, Town Meeting Representative, Lowell Regional Transit Authority Board, and member of the Chelmsford Elks, Advisory Board of Camp Paul and Good Friends Incorporated, and Catholic Charities. How Jack did all this is beyond comprehension. The only solution I can find is it must have been his mom's chicken soup that kept him going. (She made the best.)

I first met John Patrick Emerson, Jr. (known affectionately by his friends as ''the Flea'') in Jack's Diner. I started going there when I first moved to town, (yes, I am a blow-in, but so was Jack—he moved here from Lowell in the fifties, so I feel I am in good company.) I would go in for my morning coffee and happen to sit next to this man who was holding court, discussing politics and this sewer project. It was Jack Emerson. He introduced himself, we talked, and the rest was history. We enjoyed each other's company and over the years we became best of friends.

I learned more about Jack's passion to establish a sewer program for the town of Chelmsford and how he felt the need to help people less fortunate than himself. Jack convinced me to run for the sewer commission in 1984 and we have been together since that first campaign.

Speaking of politics, some people may be surprised to know Jack Emerson was a Democrat (as was his Dad before him and presently his brothers Packy and Danny and his sister Ellen, although Jack would say Ellen's politics were even further to the left than his.) Jack was as passionate about his politics as he was about helping people. Jack would rather cast a ballot for a yellow dog before he would vote for anyone who was not a Democrat.

Although he was a Democrat, he did transcend party lines when it came to helping the people of Chelmsford.

He was a master at reading people and situations. Before going to town meetings for a crucial vote on the project, Jack would say ''all we have to do is be up front with the voters, if we tell them the facts and are honest and tell the why, we should have no problem, they will give you the vote we need and you know they did. That philosophy has held fast throughout Jack's career and is still held by his friends on the commission.

In 1996, Jack walked up to the town meeting floor microphone and said he needed forty-nine million dollars to proceed with the project and that if need be, he was prepared to give a lengthy presentations to show them how it would be used. In three minutes the motion was seconded and passed unanimously. That was Jack; prepared, truthful, trustworthy.

In his earlier years, Jack was a mason or as he would say, a bricky. (Jack belonged to local 31 in Lowell) He was a strong union man (as was his dad). Whenever Jack ran for political office he would make sure that the union bugs would appear on all his literature and anyone he backed for political office must have the union bug on their literature as well or got his wrath.

Jack was a good listener, he read a lot, he always updated himself on current events, he was also, to say the least, an impatient driver.

When I say Jack was a good listener I mean he would evaluate the situation, ask the right questions and decide on the approach on how to handle the problem. As someone said to me the other say, if you called Jack Emerson with a problem, you knew he would take care of it.

Jack would read the papers and political journals and the project contracts. He would go over the contracts with a fine tooth comb and inevitably would find errors. Whether it was misspelled words, wrong sentence structure, or pricing errors. Jack was involved in all aspects of the project.

Wherever we went Jack had to drive, it was like his security blanket. If you have ever driven with him, you know it is quite an experience. No need to call it road rage, just ''Jack'' rage. Thankfully, we all survived.

I have given you some of the background of Jack Emerson the man, some of which you already know, some you might have read in the newspapers. Now I want to tell you about something you may not know about Jack Emerson the Person.

I had the privilege and honor of being his friend for 26 years; we talked or saw each other almost everyday. So I can talk from experience.

You know anyone that loved animals had to be a good person. Jack loved his dogs. Through the years he had 6 dogs, Cocoa, Cory, Courtney, Toto, Chelsea and Commish. He loved them, but his all time favorite was Cocoa. They were so close that when Jack developed Pancreatitis, so did Cocoa. Cocoa is the first dog in the country, or maybe even the world to have a pump station named after him. The Cocoa Emerson Pump Station located next to the town dog pound on Old North Road.

In 1959, Jack graduated Chelmsford High School where he had many friends, though none as close as Sam Parks, Paul Lehayes, and Bobby Hughes. They remain close friends to this day.

Jack's charity knew no bounds, whether it was giving to the Secret Santa Fund, or being his own Santa by adopting a family at Christmas, or Thanksgiving. His charity did not stop all year long; he was involved with Good Friends, Inc., Camp Paul and Catholic charities. He was most affected when children were involved. Jack was the most caring and giving person I have ever met.

He was a fun loving person with sharp with and a keen sense of humor. He loved music from the fifties and sixties; it was one of his passions. On one occasion he had the radio on in the wagon playing ''Tuti Fruti Alaroody''. I asked him how he liked the type of music the kids of today enjoy. He said hard rock, rap, and heavy metal just don't make any sense, so I said Tuti Fruti Alaroody does, we both had a laugh over that.

Jack had many talents, one of them being dancing. I think if he had a second vocation, he would have been a dance instructor. He loved dancing. Once he got on the dance floor and started his feet moving, he would dance all night.

Jack was an avid golfer as are his two brothers. He was a member of Mt. Pleasant Golf Club for over 30 years. He and his brothers would often play in tournaments. When

Jack, George and Danny were playing golf together, you might think World War III had broken out. Its amazing to me they all survived. On the golf course they were fierce competitors, but off they had each other's love and admiration. One year at Mt. Pleasant, Jack and Briana entered the father-daughter golf tournament and came in first. Jack thought he had another natural golfer in the Emerson family.

Briana breaking with Emerson tradition decided to take up dance instead of golf and Jack supported her in that endeavor.

He was devoted to his family, his mom Betty and his dad John Sr., he loved his brothers; Charlie, Packy and Danny (Dennis) and his sister Ellen. He loved all his nieces, nephews and cousins. If they needed a helping hand, Jack was there and they were there for Jack.

I mentioned how he loved children, well Briana, Joe Maher and I had the great honor of being with your father in the hospital when you were born, all you had to do was look at his face and you could see his excitement and energy. When the nurse came in and said ''Mr. Emerson, you're a daddy'' Jack jumped out of his chair and ran down the hall to see his beautiful baby daughter. Briana, you are the light of his life, he loved you so much. He would talk about your dance recitals and especially the last one he saw you perform. He was really not up to par that night, but he knew he wanted to see you dance again.

You have grown up to be a beautiful young lady with the compassion and love that was part of your father. You now carry the banner for dad. And as you grow up and have children of your own, I know the legacy he has left will be carried forward.

One evening Peggy's brother, Connie Stone, brought his friend home, by the name of John Emerson. Connie introduced his sister to John and it started a relationship that lasted 40 years. Peggy, what can I say, your devotion to Jack was unquestionable; you have been Jack's backbone. At times it was very difficult for you, through all his ups and downs with his health, but I know Jack loved you and adored you; you were his wife, his friend and his nurse. I often told Jack that he married a saint. He would retort, ''Barry, what are you talking about.'' I would tell him ''who else would put up with you but a saint.'' He would say ''you know, you're right.'' Peggy, you have a beautiful daughter who you have nurtured into a wonderful young woman and I know you will look forward to the day that you tell you grandchildren all about their grandfather the selectman.

You cannot put down in words what Jack Emerson has meant to this community, his family, his friends and the people he has helped along the way. Jack Emerson leaves a legacy that few people can claim. He started a project that few people thought would succeed, and because of his tenacity, it has succeeded, And along the way his success was recognized at the local and national levels.

He was awarded the collection systems by the New England Environmental Association in 1994. In 1995 the national organization, Water Environmental Association presented him with the national award in New Orleans. He was voted man of the year for his accomplishments by the Chelmsford Chapter of the Elks. In 2000 he was voted into the Chelmsford Hall of Fame. On October thirtieth of this year, at an emotional ceremony, Jack had just been released from the hospital the day before; he was recognized by his fellow Democrats and received the Greater Lowell Area Distinguished Democrat award. His legacy lives on in his wife, daughter, friends and the people of Chelmsford.

If they gave out awards for Mr. Chelmsford it would be to Jack. If they had a hall of fame for good people, Jack would be your first choice. If they gave out a friend of the year award, Jack's name would be on the plaque. And if they gave out awards for devoted husband and father, Jack would be the first in line.

Well my friend, you have come to the end of a long hard fought journey. You put up the good fight as always. It's time for us to say so long, but not goodbye. You will be able to rest knowing that what you started will be carried on. We, your community will watch over Peggy and Briana, as I am sure you will be watching over us. Say hello to your mom, dad, brother Charlie, and all your friends who are with you. I know if God needs a waste water system, you'll be the guy to start the project. So Mr. Chairman, you will be deeply missed by all who knew you. I love you. So long old friend.

Peggy has asked me to read a prayer that Jack liked. It was read at his dear friend Ira Park's mass:

I'd like the memory of me to be a happy one
I'd like to leave an afterglow of smiles when life is done
I'd like to leave an echo Whispering softly down the ways,
Of happy times and laughing times and bright sunny days
I'd like the tears of those who Grieve, to dry before the sun
Of happy memories that I leave When life is done.

TRIBUTE TO DR. NANCY DICKEY

HON. CHET EDWARDS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a champion for medical research and health care innovation in this country, Dr. Nancy Dickey, president of the Texas A&M University Health Science Center. The principled work of Dr. Dickey is testament to excellence in medicine and scientific research that will undoubtedly save countless lives.

While the pursuit of excellence characterizes the mission of the students and faculty of the Texas A&M Health Science Center, it is their passionate commitment to the care of their fellow human beings that defines them and forges their vision for the future. There is no question that the architect of that vision is Dr. Nancy Dickey.

As a graduate of Texas A&M, it is my privilege to honor the work of Dr. Nancy Dickey and I personally want to thank her for the shining example to us all and wish her well in her future endeavors.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to enter into the RECORD a speech by Dr. Dickey that serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of vital medical research in this country and the groundbreaking work of the Texas A&M University Health Science Center.

TEXAS A&M INAUGURAL CONVOCATION SPEECH BY PRESIDENT AND VICE CHANCELLOR DR. NANCY W. DICKEY

Today we are making history.

We are assembled at this convocation not only to celebrate our accomplishments and honor our outstanding faculty, but also to affirm the honorable principles that guide us toward our vision of excellence in medicine and the healthcare professions. Let this day forever be remembered as the day that the Texas A&M Health Science Center branded upon the world's canvas our promise to change the lives of people around the globe with the most outstanding health education, compassionate care and superior science as we confidently fulfill the obligations of our sacred oaths.

Let no one doubt that our faculty is composed of men and women who are devoted healthcare professionals, educators and researchers of extraordinary competence and integrity. We believe that every human life is precious and that this great institution and its members are obligated and committed to providing everyone with the best care and leadership possible. Our care for the body is strengthened by our faith in the intrinsic worth of every human soul. Therefore, our current practices provide important and lifegiving care to individuals, insight and direction to communities, and research that provides the hope that tomorrow will be better than today.

Those of us who have dedicated our lives to the health professions, indeed our vocations, believe that we are making a difference. We all benefit from an understanding of the past, the experiences of the present and the intellectual curiosity that discovers and invents those things that will enrich and strengthen our future. We believe firmly in our mission, and we are convinced that our faculty, staff and students are transcending all expectations as they make the world a better place in which to work and live. Our efforts have just begun, and the fruits of our labor shall have no end.

What then are the guiding principles of our organization that lead us to distinction in education programs, prominence in scientific research, and innovation? And, what are the guiding principles that make our care of those who suffer illness more compassionate, comprehensive and successful?

We pursue excellence in all we do. We are committed to providing the best care imaginable for all Texans. We have a special calling and duty to serve with sincerity and compassion the rural and under-served populations in the great State of Texas. When one person in our state is without needed care, we all suffer. If we know anything from quantum physics, it is that everything in the universe is connected in one way or another. Therefore, we intend to see to it that our connections are cared for with expertise and excellence.

We are convinced that the myriad of multiform fibers composing the human body make it stronger, just as the diverse population of our state make our mosaic stronger, better and more beautiful. We take pride in the cultural diversity found in Texas and we are privileged to serve with tenderness and understanding all people, regardless of race, religion, cultural heritage or gender. We do not limit our inquiries or services based upon preconceived ideas or outdated conceptions of who is and who is not worthy. Every person is worthy, and we are eternally invested in the solemn American promise of serving everyone fairly, equally and honorably.

We will never compromise our integrity or our academic freedom. We are steadfast in our enduring commitment to honor and decency in all we do. And, our good reputation is best assured by transparency and accountability in our every transaction and relationship. Our academic freedom fosters the necessary environment to promote lively discourse and scientific inquiry. We cherish the freedom to express informed viewpoints without fear, and we will never shrink from our duties and responsibilities to our colleagues and fellow citizens.

We trust in active collaboration and continued professional development. Our research, teaching and services are strengthened and enhanced by our relationships at

the personal and institutional levels. We take pride in our colleagues' work and we champion the growth and development of all those whose commitment to the health professions is intertwined with our enlightened vision and valorous mission.

Our principles of excellence, service to all, diversity, integrity, academic freedom, collaboration and lifelong learning form the foundation from which the high vision and important mission of Texas A&M's Health Science Center is to rise to even greater national importance. We are unshakable in our commitment to these principles because they define who we are.

And, let me speak for a moment about who we are. The Health Science Center has an outstanding faculty, including sixteen Regents' Professors and four Distinguished Professors. We have faculty who have received national and international awards and grants, faculty who represent the cutting edge in their areas of study, and faculty who serve on national boards and organizations, thereby influencing public policy in significant ways. And, we have, if I may say so in all modesty, the first woman President of The American Medical Association.

Our faculty does not have the advantages of organizations and institutions with long histories and traditions, but their genius, efforts and results demonstrate fully the wealth of talent and brains we possess and of which we are so very proud. In fact, I am humbled by the many gifts possessed by our faculty.

Our students are very special indeed. We graduate very bright healthcare professionals who are not only devoted to caring for their patients and communities, but who also see themselves as guardians of the public good. They embrace their destinies as leaders and gladly accept their important roles as citizens of a larger community.

We must never forget that professional, cultural and social competence go hand in hand. We teach our young people the values and behaviors that are consistent with their expectations and responsibilities in their professions. We seek and enroll students from all walks of life whose inherent compassion and desire to serve ensure that they will adopt the best, tryout the unusual, and leave our institution with mature confidence in their extraordinary abilities to meet the challenges and opportunities their professions present now and tomorrow. And, as a result of our commitment and our students' determination to be leaders, we are confidently and proudly producing tomorrow's leaders in the healthcare professions.

Texas A&M Health Science Center has adopted and published its vision, mission and principles, with the appropriate goals, objectives and strategies attached thereto in honor of this inaugural convocation. The Pathways to Excellence 2015 is our declaration of our belief in who we are and what we are to become. We take pride in its publication, we honor those who helped write it, and we are devoted to seeing it carried out.

In closing, let me state emphatically that I am merely one of many here today. I am humbled and inspired by your devotion, labor and dreams. Our future is joined, and we march forward individually and collectively toward a future that is based upon ethics and science with the care of others foremost in our hearts and minds.

In a world where business claims more and more of our professions, we must never forget that love and compassion must attend the care and service that we provide. Our doctors, scientists and educators must not live in sterile environments ignorant of the daily toils of those whom they serve. We are devoted to the precept that all people, regardless of geography, economic status or cultural differences, deserve the benefits of compassionate care, superior science and exceptional education.

Our health care professionals must maintain and build upon their intellectual curiosity. The future belongs to those who are willing to be a part of the world, learn something new everyday, challenge the status quo, break down unethical barriers, demonstrate integrity at every juncture, and lead by supreme example.

Our faculty and students have a splendid destiny before them because they have the gifts and the will to forge a future in which they will make the world a better and more humane place. This is the future of which I dream, this is the future that is possible, and this is the future that you will bring about. This is our commitment to and our hope for the Texas A&M University's Health Science Center.

TRIBUTE TO BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, Black History Month gives us an opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the historical accomplishments of African Americans. This year's national theme—"Celebrating Community: A Tribute to Black Fraternal, Social, and Civil Institutions"—reminds us that the strength of the African American community is rooted in its fraternal and civic organizations.

I have been privileged to have the opportunity to work with many of African American fraternal and social organizations that are active in my congressional district. They all do important work that makes a tangible difference to the quality of life in our community.

This year is the 100th anniversary of Alpha Phi Alpha, and I would like to take this opportunity to highlight this fraternity's activities and initiatives in my district. Alpha Phi Alpha is dedicated to serving others and to inspiring and empowering people to achieve success in all aspects of their lives. One of its distinguishing achievements is the establishment of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Foundation Project, which will pay tribute to one of the most influential figures in American history who worked to lead our nation towards greater justice and unity. The group's deep commitment to community empowerment through its numerous programs supporting education—its scholarship and mentoring programs and its efforts to inspire and motivate black youth through its Career Fairs and Black Youth Achievement recognition programs—have made a difference to countless young people.

For many years, I have welcomed the opportunity to attend the Montgomery County Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity's annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Breakfast program. This event, the success of which is evident in the consistent growth in the number of attendees and the county-wide praise it receives, is a service to Montgomery County. This gathering provides an opportunity for our community to rededicate itself to achieving equality and justice for all.

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity's impressive list of members includes Justice Thurgood Marshall and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The important and productive work of Alpha Phi Alpha and other organizations began decades ago, yet there is still much work to be done. We must redouble our efforts to provide the African American community, and all of our communities, with the tools needed to ensure that each individual has the opportunity to achieve his or her full God-given potential. During Black History Month, we must recommit ourselves to supporting the ideals of Alpha Phi Alpha and other great institutions as we continue to strive for a better America."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and missed rollcall votes Nos. 12 and 13. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall vote No. 12 and "no" on rollcall vote No. 13.

NATIONAL DISABILITY DAY RECOGNITION

HON. TOM PRICE

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, recently we recognized National Disability Day. I'd like to share with my colleagues the many barriers to employment that people with disabilities face, such as transportation, environment, and stereotyping, though 11 years have passed since the landmark passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

People with disabilities continue to battle a 50 percent nationwide unemployment rate, and for those with severe disabilities, the rate is a shocking 70 percent. The key to changing this statistic is to focus on the ability of an individual, rather than the disability.

Hiring a deserving, qualified individual with a disability is not a charity. It's a smart economic decision. When a person with a disability is employed, they are transformed from a welfare recipient to a tax payer, and that positive economic benefit ripples out to all tax-paying citizens.

The Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program in particular has been a critical force in assisting people with disabilities and creating self-sufficient, independent productive members of society. The JWOD Program uses the purchasing power of the Federal Government to buy products and services from community-based nonprofit agencies dedicated to training and employing individuals with disabilities. The people employed on JWOD contracts acquire valuable job skills and training, receive good wages and benefits, and gain greater independence.

The program serves 40,000 people with disabilities nationwide. Last year it generated approximately $280 million in wages earned and nearly $1.5 billion in products sold. In Georgia alone, approximately 1,000 people with disabilities earned nearly $3 million in wages last year as a result of JWOD.

This is a program that truly makes a difference in the nation and in Georgia. I'm

proud to recognize its impact on National Disability Day.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT ON JOINT RESOLUTION

HON. JANE HARMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, last week I stood at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, the largest container port complex in the nation, with my good friend Senator SUSAN COLLINS, the chair of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

We both have championed the fight to strengthen security at our ports. As of last week, neither of us had been briefed on the review conducted by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, CFIUS, into the sale of stevedoring and terminal operations of many major eastern seaboard and Gulf Coast ports to a state-owned firm from Dubai. This sale would not only affect the six major US port terminal facility leases that have been reported, but additional operations in 15 other locations, including ports shipping military materiel.

Last week, we stated our concerns about the announced sale and our plan to issue a Joint Resolution of Disapproval.

Today, I am introducing in the House the Joint Resolution which Senator COLLINS introduced yesterday, S.J. Res. 32. This resolution would do three things. First, it officially disapproves of CFIUS's initial review of the Dubai Ports World deal. Second, it requires CFIUS to rescind its previous decision and conduct a formal 45-day investigation. Third, it requires that CFIUS brief the Congress before allowing the deal to proceed, if in fact that is the decision after a full, complete and proper evaluation of the national security risks posed by this arrangement.

Since Senator COLLINS and I announced our intentions last week, there has been some progress. Dubai Ports World has agreed to a secondary review, the Administration has agreed to a 45-day assessment of the sale, and, beginning this week, some committees of Congress will now be briefed.

But the bad news is that this process got as far as it did, and that it took deep bipartisan concern to have Congress brought into the loop. When our country considers these important deals, Congress should be on the front lines, not the back bench.

And as we heard yesterday from a Senate briefing, the U.S. Coast Guard cited their concerns over the deal at the time. The U.S. Coast Guard plays a critical role in ensuring the security of our ports, and their reservations make me question why this deal was approved as quickly as it was.

This issue has also served to highlight the fact that our Nation's ports remain inadequately protected.

As a member of both the House Intelligence and Homeland Security Committees, I have consistently worked to improve our national security, and believe much remains to be done. When we focus 9 out of 10 transportation security dollars on aviation security, we fall into the trap of fighting the last war instead of the next one. Fighting terror requires that we look forward, and what keeps me up at night is the possibility of a radiological bomb or human terrorist entering our ports in an uninspected container.

When it comes to port security, we should have solid answers, not lingering questions. In this Era of Terror, there remains a constant threat to our homeland. We don't have the luxury of waiting to harden the obvious vulnerable targets.

I have visited the Los Angeles/Long Beach port complex many times. I have authored and co-authored bipartisan port security legislation. Representative DAN LUNGREN and I will introduce a comprehensive bill soon to ensure a coordinated approach to maritime and cargo security through the authorization of key security programs and initiatives, as well as a dedicated funding grant program to shore up security gaps that exist at our Nation's ports. Senators COLLINS, LIEBERMAN, and COLEMAN have introduced similar legislation in the Senate, and both bills will be the subject of hearings in this Congress.

This resolution on CFIUS is prudent; so are our efforts to legislate enhanced port security. I urge its support.

TRIBUTE TO MINNESOTA STATE REPRESENTATIVES NEVA WALKER AND KEITH ELLISON

HON. MARTIN OLAV SABO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. SABO. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to celebrate Black History Month by recognizing distinguished Minnesota legislators who are civil and human rights leaders: Minnesota State Representatives Neva Walker and Keith Ellison.

Representative Neva Walker was born and raised in Minneapolis, and attended the University of Minnesota. A "community baby," as referred to by elders, Walker comes from a family deeply involved in the community, especially the Sabathani Community Center which is a pillar of the community and a source of assistance to many. Walker grew up with this sort of activism, and she now embodies it herself.

Representative Walker was encouraged to run for office when lobbying Minneapolis City Hall on housing issues. When she learned that no African American woman had served in the Minnesota Legislature, this firmed her resolve to run for office. In 2000, Neva Walker was elected to the Minnesota House where she continues to address disparities of all kinds: health, poverty, racial profiling and out-of-home placement.

Representative Walker has a son, and is the youngest of seven children herself. In addition to her service in the State House, Rep. Walker contributes with many community involvements such as the Blaisdell YMCA board, the "GirlsBEST" initiative through the Women's Foundation of Minnesota, and the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board. She takes every opportunity reach out to people, speaking to groups that range from children in daycare to college students.

"I consider myself a seed planter," Walker said about her efforts. "I'm always trying to educate and bring useful information to people, especially youth, people of color and women."

Representative Walker believes it critical to get civil rights issues back into the public's eye. Disparities in poverty and the justice system are too great to stand idly by, she said.

Representative Keith Ellison was born in Detroit, attended Wayne State University and then came to Minneapolis to attend the University of Minnesota Law School. As a student, he first got involved in the anti-Apartheid movement. He and his wife have four children.

"I was raised in a household where I was encouraged to question things," he said. His grandfather had worked for voting rights, and Ellison grew up listening to stories of those experiences. Ellison's activism continued, and evolved into his profession as a trial lawyer, working on death penalty cases in Louisiana, as well as indigent defense work. Today at the Ellison Law Office, his legal work consists of criminal cases, civil rights cases and family law.

Ellison was first elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives in 2002. He said that instead of cajoling and persuading government leaders to pursue worthy programs, he was determined to work for change from inside the system.

"When you're a community activist, you propose change," he said. "But when you're in office as a public official, you make the change." As one of two black Representatives in Minnesota, Ellison believes he helps to improve the level of engagement for people of color in the state. "I think all people need to have equal access to their government."

He continues to work on issues of environmental justice, equal justice in the courts, voting rights, and public safety. He is also a co-founder of the Environmental Justice Advocates of Minnesota, which deals with environmental hazards posed by pollution.

Ellison believes that the civil rights movement forever changed America, but that Americans must still work for economic, health, educational and social equality for all people.

Mr. Speaker, Neva Walker and Keith Ellison are dedicated public servants who are making unique contributions to their communities, working for all people, but especially African Americans and other people of color, women, and the poor. They are committed to bringing the promise of America to all its people, and work day in and day out to achieve that ideal. I commend them for their activism and their service in the Minnesota Legislature, and their dedication to making their communities, our State, and our world a better place.

IN MEMORIAM THEODORE R. "TED" SWEM

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, on February 7th, America lost one of its conservation leaders with the passing of Theodore R. Swem—known to everyone as "Ted"—whose long career was marked by the highest standards of dedication to the public interest.

Born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on December 6, 1917, he attended Coe College, in Iowa

and received his Bachelor of Science in Forestry from Iowa State University in Ames. After completing one year of graduate work at the Biology School at Harvard University, he went to work for the Colorado State Game and Fish Department, and eventually became the Coordinator for the Federal Aid to the Wildlife Restoration Program.

In 1946, he went to work at the Regional Office of the Bureau of Reclamation, where he was responsible for wildlife, recreation, and land use planning in reclamation projects in a four state region.

During the 1950s, Ted worked with other conservationists to encourage Colorado legislators to enact legislation to establish a state park system. Thanks to the efforts of Ted and this group, today all Coloradans—and our visitors as well—can enjoy State Parks throughout Colorado.

In 1957, Ted joined the National Park Service and steadily ascended to various planning positions, eventually becoming the Assistant Director for Cooperative Activities in 1964. In this capacity, he was responsible for studying potential areas, and master planning existing areas of the National Park System, Wilderness, Federal Agency and State Assistance, Park Practice and the International Affairs Programs of the Service.

The large number of additions to the National Park System during the middle and late 1960s reflect the magnitude of this activity.

In September 1969, Ted became Superintendent of the National Capital Region of the National Park Service. In March 1971, he became the Assistant Director to the Director.

From 1972 to 1976, Ted was responsible for the National Park Service program activity in Alaska as related to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, and was key to development of National Park areas in Alaska.

During this period, he became Chairman of the Alaska Planning Group for the Department of Interior and coordinated the multi-agency effort that produced the 28 ''Four System'' legislative proposals and related Environmental Impact Statements as submitted to Congress by the Secretary of the Interior, Rogers C.B. Morton, in December 1973. In February 1976, Ted retired from the National Park Service.

Ted's work thus set the stage for enactment of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, which was signed into law by President Carter on December 2, 1980. This Act is often called the most significant land conservation measure in the history of our nation. The statute protected over 100 million acres of federal lands in Alaska, doubling the size of the country's national park and refuge system and tripling the amount of land designated as wilderness.

While with the National Park Service Ted was Chairman of the United States Section, Joint Japan-United States Panel on National Parks and Equivalent Reserves. He was also a member of the Canadian-United States Committee on National Parks; a Board Member of the Wilderness Society Governing Council; a member of the International Union Conservation of Nature; and Chairman of the Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas.

After his retirement he was president of the Wilderness Society Governing Council from 1978 to 1980; a Board Member of American Rivers, Inc.; and Management Consultant to Silvertip Consulting and the Defenders of Wildlife.

He was the recipient of the Meritorious and Distinguished Service Award of the Department of Interior, was recognized in 1981 by the Japanese Government by receiving the 50th Anniversary Award for his distinctive work in their behalf, and received the Robert Marshall Award from the Wilderness Society on their 50th Anniversary—the Society's highest award presented to a private citizen.

Ted also received the Alaska National Parks Conservation Leadership Award and recognition for his initial work on the making of the Klondike Goldrush an International Park between the United States and Canada.

At the time of his death, he was living in Colorado, where he had served on the Bureau of Land Management Land Disposal Committee for Clear Creek County, and performed work on the Task Force for Evergreen Lake, as well as on some of the Open Space areas in Jefferson County.

Ted and his wife Helen were married 57 years. Their four children now live in Denver, Alaska, and Brazil. I hope the sadness of their loss is tempered by pride in their father's record of achievement and the many lasting gifts he has left to our country and the world.

RECOGNIZING FEBRUARY AS NATIONAL MARFAN AWARENESS MONTH

HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in recognition of February as National Marfan Awareness Month and to pay tribute the thousands of people across the nation who are living with the Marfan syndrome and related connective tissue disorders.

The National Marfan Foundation is celebrating it's twenty-fifth anniversary this year and continues to dedicate itself to saving lives, and improving the quality of life for individuals and families affected by Marfan syndrome and related disorders by raising awareness, providing support and fostering research.

This year marks the 15th annual National Marfan Awareness Month, a national awareness campaign which focuses on Marfan syndrome, a genetic disorder of the connective tissue that can affect the skeleton, eyes, heart and blood vessels. Because of the disorder, the aorta, the large artery that carries blood away from the heart is weakened and prone to enlargement and rupture, which is often fatal.

It is estimated that 200,000 people in the U.S. are affected by the Marfan syndrome or a related connective tissue disorder. Marfan syndrome is often hereditary, but 25 percent of affected people are the first in their family to have the disorder. It affects both male and females and all ethnicities. Thousands do not even know that they are affected and if left undiagnosed, it can result in an early sudden death from aortic dissection.

There is no cure for Marfan syndrome, but with an early diagnosis, proper treatment and careful management of the disorder, the life span can be extended into the 70s. Without a diagnosis and treatment, people may die as early as their 20s, 30s or 40s.

In addition, to National Heart Month, February was designated National Marfan Awareness Month because of President Abraham Lincoln's Birthday. Lincoln is believed to have been affected by Marfan syndrome because of the many outward signs of the disorder he portrays. People with this condition are frequently taller than other non-affected members of their family with disproportionately long limbs, fingers and toes. They often have an indented or protruding chest bone, a curved spine, flat feet, a high arched palate and loose joints.

Other famous people with the Marfan syndrome include Jonathan Larson, the Tony Award-winning playwright of the Broadway musical Rent; Flo Hyman, captain of the U.S. Olympic Volleyball team who won a gold medal in 1984, Charles de Gaulle, Rachmaninoff, and Mary Queen of Scots.

Mr. Speaker, according to the National Marfan Foundation, in my district in Pennsylvania there are approximately 190 families that have to live with this disorder and the fear of dying at an early age.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, approximately 14,000 people die each year of aortic aneurysms and dissections, 20 percent of which can be contributed to those carrying a genetic disorder such as the Marfan syndrome.

Due to lack of medical awareness about the disorder, many people still die undiagnosed and untreated.

I rise today to commend those working in my district and State who work tirelessly on this issue in the hopes of one day finding a cure for Marfan syndrome.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join me and the National Marfan Foundation in raising awareness of this potentially life threatening disorder. I look forward to working with members on both sides of the aisle to increase federal support for critical research and prevention programs aimed at improving the quality of life for Marfan syndrome patients and their families.

IN MEMORY OF EDWARD R. CUMMINGS

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life of Edward R. Cummings of Maryland and lament his untimely passing. Mr. Speaker, we all know of the many unsung heroes that make this great institution work, the staff and advisers who labor in obscurity but without whom we could not do our work to represent the American people. It is even more so in the Executive Branch, where an individual can spend a whole career and never be introduced to the wider public, laboring not for the recognition that drives so many in the public sphere but instead toiling to uphold the public interest to and to serve his country. Our government cannot function without such individuals and it is they who can bring order and sanity to an ever changing kaleidoscope of figures who pass through the United States Government as elections occur and administrations change.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday this Nation lost such a person, a remarkable public servant and a remarkable human being, Edward R.

Cummings. Mr. Cummings served his country for over 30 years, first with the U.S. Army and then with the U.S. Department of State. Mr. Cummings earned a bachelor's degree from Johns Hopkins University in 1972, and then became an active military officer in 1972, where he completed training to become an airborne ranger, one of this Nation's elite forces. Instead of what surely would have been a distinguished career in armed combat, Mr. Cummings took another path and with the support of the U.S. military, entered George Washington University Law School. He studied a variety of subjects that were directly relevant to legal work in the international sphere, such as international law, Chinese law, human rights law, diplomatic and consular law, and United Nations law, and served on the G.W. international law journal. In 1975, he graduated first in his class of 317 students.

Mr. Cummings was on active duty with the U.S. Army until 1979, graduating from judge advocate general's schools, and serving in the Office of the Judge Advocate General where he represented the Department of Defense at a number of international negotiations related to the Law of War. He remained in the Army Reserve from 1979 to 2000, assigned to the War Crimes and Prisoners of War Branch of the Office of the Judge Advocate General. He retired as a lieutenant colonel.

In 1979, because of his distinguished representation of the Defense Department and his exceptional contributions to the U.S. delegations in which he participated, Mr. Cummings was invited to join the Office of the Legal Adviser of the U.S. Department of State where, over the course of nearly twenty five years, he has served as an attorney and adviser to numerous U.S. officials throughout the Government. Among other positions, he has been the Assistant Legal Adviser for Politico-Military Affairs, Assistant Legal Adviser for Nonproliferation, Assistant Legal Adviser for Arms Control and Verification, and Counselor for Legal Affairs at the U.S. Mission in Geneva. From 2000 to the present, he has served as the U.S. Head of Delegation to negotiations relating to the Convention on Conventional Weapons. Appointed to the Senior Executive Service in 1987, Mr. Cummings has received numerous awards for superior service to the Department of State and has written on such subjects as the law of belligerent occupation, war crimes, arms control, international humanitarian law, and extradition.

But this description of his career does not do justice to his accomplishments. Last year, after he was diagnosed with the pancreatic cancer that killed him yesterday, George Washington University Law School organized a symposium entitled Lawyers and War in honor of Mr. Cummings, which was held on September 30, 2005. Mr. Cummings was fortunate not only to hear a set of knowledgeable remarks, but to hear the gratitude of his colleagues and proteges and to reflect on the amazing set of accomplishments that he participated in. Whether it was negotiating status of forces agreements to protect our troops abroad, helping draft the first set of comprehensive sanctions against South Africa during the apartheid era, supporting and then leading negotiations to control the use of conventional weapons that might cause unnecessary suffering, or aiding in the positive developments in international human rights and international humanitarian law, Mr. Cummings made an invaluable contribution to this nation and to humankind.

Let me just cite three accomplishments that can be directly related to Mr. Cummings that may not be his most important but have special significance to some of my colleagues in this body. First, Mr. Cummings was instrumental in fashioning the compromise that allowed the United States to become a party to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. For those who did not follow that debate, most countries around the world wanted to ban the recruitment of any individual under the age of 18. However, because the United States recruits students in high school, the U.S. military insisted that the age be reduced to 17. This position put the United States in the posture of preventing an international consensus and seeming to be in league with those who were not committed to banning this terrible abuse at all. It was Ed Cummings who originated the idea of allowing voluntary recruitment of 17 year olds but not allowing them in combat until they were 18, creating an international consensus that put the focus where it always should have been, on militias that conscript 12, 13 and 14 year olds.

Mr. Cummings also worked for decades on enhancing the substance and image of the laws of war. One life long accomplishment in this area was the recent decision by the countries that are party to the Geneva Conventions to create a new symbol in addition to the red cross and red crescent to allow the Israeli society, the Magen David Adom, to become an official member of the Red Cross community. This success, which will do much to erase a small but important irritant in this country's relation to the International Committee on the Red Cross, was due in large part to Mr. Cummings 20 year dedication to achieving this end.

Another of his major accomplishments was his success in persuading the international community to agree on the extension of the Conventional Weapons Convention to all forms of armed conflict, whether international or internal in character. It has been in the savage internal armed conflicts of past decades that the civilian population has suffered most from the indiscriminate use of conventional weapons, and Mr. Cummings efforts will help to mitigate and limit this lamentable carnage.

These three examples of a much deeper and richer career represent all that was exceptional about Mr. Cummings's service to this country. Using his full grasp of the complex issues he dealt with, his deft understanding of the U.S. military and the mechanisms of government, his keen eye for cutting through the issues to find a way through controversy, his strong personal relationships with individuals across our government and around the world, and his unwavering commitment to accomplish his mission, Mr. Cummings was able to accomplish these three difficult goals, thereby increasing both stature and national security of the United States. There are countless other successes of this sort which would take up pages of this record if they were described in full.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Cummings was an extraordinary human being. His colleagues and friends speak personally and movingly about his commitment to others as individuals and as attorneys. If the law remains a place where law school is but a starting point and it is the learning from one's colleagues that is the most important basis for success, Mr. Cummings has served as ''master'' to many ''apprentices'' who are now serving their own distinguished careers in many walks of life (although Mr. Cummings would have dismissed those terms, calling everyone ''colleagues''). This is a legacy that will last beyond Mr. Cummings final horizon. And with his personal warmth and his many avocations such as opera, mountain climbing and skiing, Mr. Cummings was admired by all who knew him.

Mr. Speaker, it is tragic that just at a time when Mr. Cummings was considering moving on to a new stage in his career and life, he was diagnosed in December 2004 with an untreatable form of pancreatic cancer which took him from us just yesterday. From all reports, his efforts to combat this illness and to show grace in the face of death itself demonstrated once again why Mr. Cummings is respected and loved, and our heart goes out to his wife and life partner, Clair, during this difficult time.

While Mr. Cummings was a clear example to all of us of a life well-lived, his tragic end is still a loss for all of us. We can only be thankful that this fellow traveler was able to do so much for his friends and acquaintances and for his country while he was with us.

IN HONOR OF EARLINE MILES

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a woman who can only be described as truly American, Earline Miles.

Ms. Miles began her academic career by attending I.M. Terrell High School. From here, she graduated from Huston-Tillotson College in Austin, Texas then obtained her law degree from the Thurgood Marshall School of Law in Houston, Texas. Ms. Miles then turned her sights to education by becoming an instructor at Tarrant County College teaching business law.

Ms. Miles was involved in the civil rights movement in which she was a strong advocate of equality for all people. During her employment in Fort Worth, Texas, she was a determined worker for minority hiring initiatives. It was through Ms. Miles' hard work that countless disadvantaged people were able to now find employment.

Ms. Miles' community has benefited a great deal through her involvement in many organizations. She has done extensive volunteer work through her community. Even though Ms. Miles is now retired, she still dutifully works for her community by collecting food, clothing, and essential supplies for the homeless.

Today, we honor Earline Miles for her commitment to education and her dedication to helping others. She will always be remembered for her kindness and generosity to others, and may she serve as a role model for others in the future.

TRIBUTE TO DENNIS WEAVER—HOLLYWOOD ACTOR AND AVID ENVIRONMENTALIST

HON. JOHN T. SALAZAR

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to offer my condolences to the family and friends of Dennis Weaver, who have recently suffered the tragic loss of a great man. Mr. Weaver passed away on Friday, February 26th at his home in Ridgeway, Colorado.

Mr. Weaver was perhaps most famous for his role as Chester Good on ''Gunsmoke'' and for the T.V. series ''McCloud,'' though he appeared in many T.V. movies, films, and even released his own country music album. As a fan of Western classics, I was continually impressed by Mr. Weaver's talent on screen and his ability to bring laughter and happiness to millions of Americans.

The passing of Mr. Weaver strikes a more personal chord because he was such an involved member of the Colorado community. In addition to his work as an actor, Mr. Weaver was also a dedicated activist for many environmental and humanitarian causes. He assisted in founding Love is Feeding Everyone, a program which currently helps to feed 150,000 hungry people a week in Los Angeles County. He has been honored by Haven Hills, a shelter for battered women, and the Pacific Lodge Boys' Home. In addition, he was on the Advisory Board of the ''Center for Environmental Solutions,'' and even resided in his own environmentally friendly solar-powered house that he and his wife built in my Congressional District.

Though I only had the good fortune of meeting Mr. Weaver once, I was struck by his sincerity and his dedication. His talent as an actor is to be admired and his role in the community has been invaluable. He will be greatly missed, not only by his close friends and family, but also by the millions of lives he touched through his work onscreen and his role in the community.

HONORING CSEA ON ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the members of the California State Employees Association on the 75th anniversary of the organization's founding.

CSEA currently represents over 140,000 California state employees and retirees. Members include a wide variety of hardworking state employees, from front line service providers to university professors. California residents depend on CSEA members for a wide variety of state services, members ensure everything from a safe drinking water supply to the speedy processing of our tax returns. Without their hard work the business of the state would not get done.

It is a testament to the organization's importance and leadership that it continues to thrive 75 years after its formation. Since its inception, CSEA has been instrumental in making certain state workers have the protections and benefits they deserve. CSEA helped create the first retirement system for state workers, advocated for a mandated forty hour workweek and helped obtain voter approval of the Merit System for state service, all of which has contributed to a well qualified and motivated state workforce.

CSEA has also contributed to the health care of public sector employees. Since 1938, they have provided state workers with medical insurance, as the state did not provide such benefits until 1962. Today, CSEA serves its members by offering California state employees access to affordable homeowner's, life and dental insurance.

As an organization, CSEA has also played a pivotal role in ensuring state and university employees are entitled to collective bargaining. CSEA successfully lobbied for passage of the Dills Act and the Berman Act in the 1970s, both of which extended collective bargaining rights to public employees.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to congratulate CSEA President J.J. Jelincic, as well as the association's thousands of members on CSEA's 75th anniversary. I ask all my colleagues to join me and honor CSEA, as well as the fine work that California state employees do everyday

TRIBUTE TO CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF THE CITY OF FORTUNA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 100th anniversary of the city of Fortuna in Humboldt County, California.

Originally named Slide, later Springville, Fortuna, was incorporated on February 20, 1906. Meaning ''good fortune,'' it is an appropriate name for this unique and vibrant community situated on the banks of the beautiful Eel River in the heart of the Eel River Valley.

After its incorporation the town became well established with a city council, a night watchman and a fire and water committee. The Eel River Valley Lumber Company and the Humboldt Milling Company were two of Fortuna's largest employers and in 1909 the prominent Rohner family donated land for the first city park. Fortuna became a regular railroad stop between Eureka and San Francisco in 1914. The railroad provided an important link to the rest of the world and allowed travelers easy access to this verdant region.

Fortuna was known for its agricultural excellence and fish from the Eel River, but timber was the proud and primary industry of the area. Logging and lumber mills provided many jobs and the area became more populated as the town became more prosperous. People moved to Fortuna with the prospect of good jobs and a pleasant town in which to raise their families.

Fortuna remains a family community with a rich cultural heritage, excellent schools and beautiful parks. The citizens are proud of their town and volunteer to enrich Fortuna's daily life. Known as the ''Friendly City,'' Fortuna is host to a wealth of events, including the annual Fortuna Rodeo, Auto Expo, Paddle to the Headwaters, a vibrant farmer's market and Daffodil Festival.

Fortuna contributes to the economic vitality of the region and is an important partner in Humboldt County. As Fortuna continues to grow and flourish it will certainly enjoy another one hundred years of prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate at this time that we recognize the city of Fortuna on the occasion of its 100th anniversary.

IN RECOGNITION OF DENTON BIODIESEL INDUSTRIES OF GREATER DALLAS

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor to recognize Denton Biodiesel Industries of Greater Dallas and its achievement of being awarded the 2005 Project of the Year by the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Landfill Methane Outreach Program. The award acknowledges outstanding landfill gas recovery projects that make energy out of this otherwise harmful air pollutant.

Biodiesel fuels are primarily composed of renewable and recycled vegetable oils. This project serves as an innovator since it is the nation's first public-private partnership of its kind for biodiesel production. This relatively new Biodiesel Industry has the largest network of company-owned and operated biodiesel production facilities in the world.

I am proud to represent a company that is so strongly committed to quality products and a positive work environment. I congratulate Denton Biodiesel Industries and wish them continued success in their future endeavors.

VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY: RESIGN FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR COUNTRY

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce into the RECORD an opinion piece by Bob Herbert in the February 16, 2006 edition of The New York Times entitled ''Mr. Vice President, It's Time to Go.''

Anyone who has been a long-time reader of Mr. Herbert's columns in the Times as I have knows Mr. Herbert has deplored the unshared sacrifice of this war, the fact that it is one small percentage of the people of this country who bear the burden of the war. He has been consistent in his criticism of the hubris of this administration and the secrecy surrounding everything it does. This is the most secretive administration in the Nation's history. Mr. CHENEY is if not the designer of this secrecy policy, is certainly the most prominent member of the administration using the policy which he clearly believes allows him to keep secrets not only from the Congress, but also from the President.

Before the hunting incident now before the public's very interested eye, there are many

examples of Mr. CHENEY's policy of not telling anyone anything. Going as far back as Mr. CHENEY's meetings with the Energy mogul's who helped him shape this country's lopsided energy policies in which Exxon Mobile posted the greatest profits ever made in the history of this country last year when energy prices were so high some of America's poor have to depend on the charity of Hugo Chavez of Venezuela to make it through the winter.

Mr. CHENEY is so secretive he implemented and managed a system of CIA prisons and torture cites in Europe called ''black sites'' which violated not only our laws and treaties but those of the European Union. And practically no one in the Congress of the United States knew anything about these prisons until the Washington Post disclosed their existence.

Mr. I. ''Scooter'' Libby just disclosed at his perjury trial that Mr. CHENEY gave him classified information to give to the press. That was classified information about an undercover secret service agent, Valerie Plame.

Since the Congress and the public know only egregious examples of what exposures by whistles blowers and the press has made in the interest of the public's greater good, we, the American people, know nothing of the Vice President's doings of the last 6 years. That is a scary thought.

This hunting accident, in which Mr. CHENEY defied all White House protocol by not informing the President, the White House Press Office, the Police or Sheriff until at least 24 hours after the shooting, has reinforced the opinion that Mr. CHENEY is out of control. That is, he is above the law, rules and regulations of ordinary mortals. He doesn't even have to do what the President wants him to do. He isn't just above the law; he is the law.

The story had many conflicting versions as they were told by the owner of the ranch, the doctors treating the shooting victim, Scott McClelland and finally, CHENEY himself. This has opened the White House to increasingly hard questions about the inconsistencies in these stories. The White House can't reconcile these differences because, it appears, Mr. CHENEY feels he doesn't have to explain anything to the President or the White House Press Secretary. Mr. CHENEY is an official who works for the people of the United States. But don't try to tell him that. It doesn't fit with his view of himself or the way he carries out his office of Vice President.

Mr. Herbert points out in his op-ed piece: ''The shooting and Mr. Cheney's high-handed behavior in its immediate aftermath fit perfectly with the stereotype of him as a powerful but dangerous figure who is viewed by many as a dark force within the administration. He doesn't even give lip service to the idea of transparency in his private of public life . . .''

DICK CHENEY is a constant reminder of those things the White House would like most to forget: the bullying, the intelligence failures, the inability to pacify Iraq (Mr. CHENEY told Tim Russert: ''I really do believe, that we will be greeted as liberators,'' he said) the misuse of classified information and the breathtaking incompetence that spread through the administration.

I agree with Mr. Herbert's conclusion: ''Mr. Cheney would do his nation and his president a service by packing his bags and heading back to Wyoming. He's become a joke. But not a funny one.''

[From the New York Times, Feb. 16, 2006]

MR. VICE PRESIDENT, IT'S TIME TO GO

(By Bob Herbert)

It's time for Dick Cheney to step down—for the sake of the country and for the sake of the Bush administration.

Mr. Cheney's bumbling conduct at the upscale Armstrong Ranch in South Texas seemed hilarious at first. But when we learned that Harry Whittington had suffered a mild heart attack after being shot by the vice president in a hunting accident, it became clear that a more sober assessment of the fiasco at the ranch and, inevitably, Mr. Cheney's controversial and even bizarre behavior as vice president was in order.

There's a reason Dick Cheney is obsessive about shunning the spotlight. His record is not the kind you want to hold up for intense scrutiny.

More than anyone else, he was fanatical about massaging and distorting the intelligence that plunged us into the flaming quagmire of Iraq. He insisted that Saddam Hussein had chemical and biological weapons and was hot on the trail of nukes. He pounded away at the false suggestion that Iraq was somehow linked to Al Qaeda. And he spread the word that the war he wanted so badly would be a cakewalk.

''I really do believe,'' he told Tim Russert, ''that we will be greeted as liberators.''

Well, he got his war. And while the nation's brave young soldiers and marines were bouncing around Iraq in shamefully vulnerable Humvees and other vehicles, dodging bullets, bombs and improvised explosive devices, Mr. Cheney (a gold-medal winner in the acquisition of wartime deferments) felt perfectly comfortable packing his fancy 28-gauge Perazzi shotgun and heading off to Texas with a covey of fat cats to shoot quail.

Matters went haywire, of course, when he shot Mr. Whittington instead.

That was the moment when the legend of the tough, hawkish, take-no-prisoners vice president began morphing into the less-than-heroic image of a reckless, scowling incompetent who mistook his buddy for a bird.

This story is never going away. Harry Whittington is Dick Cheney's Monica. When Mr. Whittington dies (hopefully many years from now, and from natural causes), he will be remembered as the hunting companion who was shot by the vice president of the United States. This tale will stick to Mr. Cheney like Krazy Glue, and that's bad news for the Bush administration.

The shooting and Mr. Cheney's highhanded behavior in its immediate aftermath fit perfectly with the stereotype of him as a powerful but dangerous figure who is viewed by many as a dark force within the administration. He doesn't even give lip service to the idea of transparency in his public or private life. This is the man who fought all the way to the Supreme Court to keep his White House meetings with energy industry honchos as secret as the Manhattan Project. (Along the way he went duck hunting at a private camp in rural Louisiana with Justice Antonin Scalia.)

This is also the man whose closest and most trusted aide, Lewis ''Scooter'' Libby, has been indicted for perjury and obstruction of justice as a result of the investigation into the outing of a C.I.A. undercover operative, Valerie Wilson.

Mr. Cheney is arrogant, defiant and at times blatantly vulgar. He once told Senator Patrick Leahy to perform a crude act upon himself.

A vice president who insists on writing his own rules, who shudders at the very idea of transparency in government, whose judgment on crucial policy issues has been as wildly off the mark (and infinitely more tragic) as his actions in Texas over the weekend, and who has now become an object of relentless ridicule, cannot by any reasonable measure be thought of as an asset to the nation or to the president he serves.

The Bush administration would benefit from new thinking and new perspectives on the war in Iraq, the potential threat from Iran, the nation's readiness to cope with another terror attack, the development of a comprehensive energy policy and other important issues.

President Bush's approval ratings have dropped below 40 percent in recent polls. Even Republicans are openly criticizing the administration's conduct of the war, its response to Hurricane Katrina and assorted other failures and debacles.

Dick Cheney is a constant reminder of those things the White House would most like to forget: the bullying, the intelligence failures, the inability to pacify Iraq, the misuse of classified information and the breathtaking incompetence that seems to be spread throughout the administration.

Mr. Cheney would do his nation and his president a service by packing his bags and heading back to Wyoming. He's become a joke. But not a funny one.

CELEBRATING THE SESQUINTENNIAL OF THE SAN MATEO SHERIFF'S OFFICE

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to celebrate the San Mateo County Sheriff's Department on their Sesquicentennial Anniversary. The Department is the oldest and largest law enforcement agency in San Mateo County, California, located in my Congressional District.

The San Mateo County Sheriff's Department history begins with the formation of the County of San Mateo in 1856. Residents of the Peninsula watched as John W. Ackerson was sworn in as the first sheriff of San Mateo County. He had three total staff members, an Undersheriff, bailiff of the Courts and a jailer. There weren't even patrol duties for the office.

Mr. Speaker, today, from those humble beginnings, the San Mateo Sheriff's Office has grown to a force of 450 officers and is responsible for everything from patrolling the county to running the courts and the correctional facilities. They have exemplary task forces, specializing in narcotics, regional terrorist threat assessment and emergency services among others. Today, the Sheriff's Office is still the Chief Law Enforcement Agency of the County of San Mateo.

Mr. Speaker, since 1993 the Sheriff's Office has been most ably led by Sheriff Don Horsley. In fact, Sheriff Horsley picked out the badge marking the 150th anniversary of the Sheriff's Office. The commemorative badge replicates the Old West style that Sheriff Ackerson would have worn. I dearly appreciate their extraordinary service that they provide to the County and I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to the San Mateo Sheriff's Office for the honorable duty they have performed for the last 150 years.

HONORING MICHEL A. LAJOIE FIRE CHIEF, LEWISTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Chief Michel A. Lajoie of the Lewiston Fire Department. Chief Lajoie began his career as a firefighter in the Lewiston Fire Department in 1970. After taking a short break to pursue a career in the automotive industry in 1972, Michel Lajoie returned to the Lewiston Fire Department in 1976 and rose through the ranks of lieutenant, captain, and deputy chief, before finally becoming chief in 1994. This year he retires, having served over 30 years in Lewiston.

Chief Lajoie exemplifies what it means to be a public servant. In addition to managing a department of 79 uniformed and civilian personnel, he has earned an Associate Degree in Fire Science from Southern Maine Community College and is a graduate of the Androscoggin Leadership Development Institute. Chief Lajoie is a member of a Standing Ad-Hoc Committee for the State of Maine Bureau of Labor Standards and has been instrumental in the continued review and updating of the standards and requirements governing the State of Maine's Fire Service.

His colleagues in Maine selected Chief Lajoie as Fire Chief of the Year in 2003 and also nominated him for Fire Chief of the Year in 2003 for the Fire Chiefs Magazine. Chief Lajoie has served as President of the New England Division of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, representing the fire service and the Fire Chiefs throughout the States of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. He also has served as President of the Maine Fire Chiefs Association, representing the fire service and Fire Chiefs throughout the State of Maine and he currently holds Board positions in several professional associations.

I am proud to honor Chief Lajoie as he embarks on a very well deserved retirement. The City of Lewiston and the State of Maine will miss him.

HONORING OPEN CITIES HEALTH CENTER

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the ground-breaking work of the Open Cities Health Center. In a fitting celebration of African American History Month, Ms. Mary Stokes and Mrs. Timothy O. Vann will be remembered and celebrated at an awards ceremony on February 24, 2006. These two pioneering African-American women founded the center, providing the vision to provide culturally competent health care—a vision that has grown into a vital resource in the Twin Cities community for nearly four decades.

The Open Cities Health Center has become one of the largest nonprofit community health centers in the Twin Cities. The center was one of the first in the State of Minnesota to focus on providing health care to low-income residents, predominantly people of color. A group of Saint Paul residents began the center in a church basement in Saint Paul's Rondo neighborhood in 1967. Stokes and Vann addressed the health needs of our most at-risk citizens when no one else would. The all-volunteer clinic started out by providing immunizations and basic health education to African-Americans.

Today, due in part to Federal and local government grants over the years, the center has greatly expanded its outreach and become a well-known, multi-lingual clinic that continues to serve the African-American community as well as members of the East African, Southeast Asian, and Caucasian communities. The center provides a wide array of important physical, mental health, and dental services to residents from all over the Twin Cities.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in paying tribute to the vital work of the Open Cities Health Center. We must all work together to increase access to screenings and preventive care treatment for all Americans. I commend the Open Cities Health Center for working to eliminate the damaging health disparities that continue to exist among racial and ethnic groups.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH E. THIRIOT

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Joseph E. Thiriot for 33 years of teaching in Nevada and a lifetime full of goodwill and service to the community. Joseph is recognized today at the dedication of Joseph E. Thiriot Elementary School which opened September 19, 2005.

Joseph was born August 20, 1906, in Provo, UT. When he was 13 he moved to Nevada and graduated from a one-room schoolhouse in Pahranagat Valley in Lincoln County. He earned a teaching degree from Brigham Young University in 1930 and a masters of arts from Northwestern University. He then taught school in Lincoln County from 1932 to 39. The following year, Joseph and his wife, Ellen, also a longtime Las Vegas High School teacher, moved to Las Vegas, where they raised three children, all Las Vegas High School graduates. He finished his teaching career in 1966, after 26 years at Las Vegas High School. Some of the subjects that Joseph taught include drama, english literature, grammar, stagecraft, play production, debate, public speaking, chorus and typing. He also headed the Debate team and the Glee Club.

Joseph's students remember him for the fun and exciting classes that he taught and the long hours he put in after school to direct large productions, have extra rehearsals for the next choir concert or to help prepare for an upcoming debate. During these long hours students not only received help for their respective activity but benefited from the example he showed as an outstanding educator and citizen. He had a dedication to educate his students both in and out of the classroom that will not be forgotten.

Outside of school, Joseph is very active in the community. He and his wife were longtime costume and makeup directors for the Helldorado parade and other local events. He also cofounded the Las Vegas Little Theater in 1945, helped to form the Las Vegas Classroom Teacher Association, and championed the construction of the old Las Vegas High School auditorium in 1953, where the first classes of what is now University of Nevada, Las Vegas were held. Joseph long performed as a member of the Westerner Quartet and was, for 11 years, a member of the internationally renowned Desert Chorale. An avid collector of rocks and gems, even at the age of 99, when he visits area schools to talk to students on behalf of the Las Vegas Gem Club, he at times meets youngsters whose grandparents were his former students.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize Joseph E. Thiriot. He has lived his life full of integrity, enthusiasm, and hard work, dedicating it to education, family, students, and the community. He has been a mentor and inspiration to hundreds of students and to his family and I congratulate him today at the dedication of Joseph E. Thiriot Elementary School.

HONORING OF FRANK STATON

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a man who can only be described as truly American, Frank Staton.

Originally a California native, Mr. Staton moved to Fort Worth, Texas during his early childhood years. After graduating from I.M. Terrell High School and Wiley College in Marshall, Texas, Mr. Staton embarked on his career as an educator in Fort Worth. Mr. Staton worked for the Fort Worth Independent School District for more than 40 years. It was at this school district where he had served as a teacher, coach, and as a specialist on drug education for youths.

During Mr. Staton's tenure as an educator, he served as a board member of The Fort Worth Transportation Authority and was involved with United Community Centers, Longhorn Council of the Boy Scouts of America, American Heart Association, Safe Haven, the Fort Worth Classroom Teachers Association, and other organizations.

Needless to say, Mr. Staton has touched the lives of countless individuals as well as the community at large through his tireless efforts to promote education. Mr. Staton is now retired, but he still remains active in Our Mother of Mercy Catholic Church since 1939.

Today, we honor Frank Staton for his commitment to education. He will always be remembered for his kindness and generosity to others, and may he serve as a role model for others in the future.

RECOGNIZING THE ATHLETES OF THE XX WINTER OLYMPICS FROM COLORADO'S THIRD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

HON. JOHN T. SALAZAR

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and commend the twelve Winter Olympic athletes from Colorado's Third District.

Their devotion to country and athletic excellence is truly exemplary and is deserving of our fullest respect and gratitude. And so, I honor the following persons as great athletes, great Coloradoans, great Americans . . .

Gretchen Bleiler from Aspen, who competed in the Women's Snowboarding competition; Jason Smith from Basalt, who competed in the Men's Snowboarding competition; Lanny and Tracy Barnes from Durango, who competed in the Biathlon competition; Rebecca Dussault from Gunnison, who competed in the Cross-Country Skiing competition; Clint Jones from Steamboat Springs, who competed in the Skiing Jump competition; Caroline Lavive from Steamboat Springs, who competed in the Alpine Skiing competition; Todd Lodwick from Steamboat Springs, who competed in the Nordic Combined Skiing competition; Travis Mayer from Steamboat Springs, who competed in the Freestyle Skiing competition; Tommy Schwall from Steamboat Springs, who competed in the Skiing Jump competition; Johnny Spillane from Steamboat Springs, who competed in the Nordic Combined Skiing competition; and Ryan St. Onge also from Steamboat Springs, who competed in the Freestyle Skiing competition.

Their hard work and determination has earned them the title of Olympic athletes and sports heroes. They have made all of us in Colorado and the United States very proud. Once again, I would like to extend a hearty congratulations to all of them.

HONORING MT. OLIVE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH ON ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in tribute to the congregation of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church on the 50th anniversary of their church. This congregation has served the Del Paso Heights neighborhood and Sacramento region since 1956. As members of the Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist congregation gather to celebrate 50 years of community service, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in saluting this outstanding congregation.

The Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church was founded in Del Paso Heights in February of 1956. The Church was established and organized by Reverend Je Petiway, Reverend Powell and Reverend Eddie Phillips. Reverend Mack Smith was the parish's first Pastor and the church became a member of the St. Johns District association. The church bought its current facility in October 1956 and became incorporated in 1959.

Reverend White Henderson became Pastor in 1960 and took steps to greatly expand the church. Under his leadership a new edifice was constructed and a chapel was purchased and relocated to its current site. The church continued to expand in 1968 when Reverend Eugene Washington became Pastor. His leadership and guidance resulted in the construction of additional classrooms and a social hall.

Throughout the history of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, the congregation has been dedicated to making a positive impact on the lives of Sacramento residents. The Church has always been a comforting place of refuge for people in need, providing assistance spiritually, mentally and physically. During the current tenure of Pastor Washington, the church has established numerous ministries in the Sacramento region. These outreach programs have included prison ministry, convalescent ministry, youth outreach and counseling programs.

Mr. Speaker, I am truly privileged to congratulate the congregation of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church as they gather to celebrate their 50th church anniversary. The Sacramento region has greatly benefited from having their strong community leadership and compassionate hearts. I ask all of my colleagues to join with me today in wishing Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church continued success and happiness in all future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING AL AND KATHY MAZZA OF SONOMA, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize two extraordinary individuals who have jointly been named the City of Sonoma's 2006 Alcalde and Alcaldesa, or Honorary Mayors.

Al and Kathy Mazza are the ultimate power couple. Al was the Fire Chief for the City of Sonoma when he met and married Kathy, a city employee, 18 years ago. Between them, there has scarcely been a special event or project in which they have not been involved.

Al was born and raised in Sonoma. After he retired as Fire Chief, he was elected to the City Council, where he twice served as mayor.

He has been President of the Sonoma Fire Chief's Association and developed the Sonoma Valley Firemed System, which integrated existing emergency response agencies into one system.

His civic activities include membership in the Chamber of Commerce, the ''Field of Dreams'' Committee to build ball fields for city youth, the Sonoma Valley Athletic Club and Sonoma Valley Little League.

Kathy worked for the City of Sonoma for 17 years. Since her retirement, she has served as Vice President of the Sonoma Plaza Foundation's Red & White Ball, which has raised more than $750,000 for downtown improvements and to local non-profit organizations.

Kathy has also been actively involved with the Valley of the Moon Teen Center and the Sonoma County Mental Health Clinic.

Both Al and Kathy were instrumental in leading the citizen's committee that successfully turned out voters to approve a parcel tax to help pay the operating expenses of the local hospital four years ago.

Mr. Speaker, Al and Kathy Mazza represent the character and spirit of the City of Sonoma and it is therefore appropriate that we honor them today as the 2006 Alcalde and Alcaldesa.

IN MEMORY OF DR. PHILLIP O'BRYAN MONTGOMERY, JR.

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give tribute to Dr. Phillip O'Bryan Montgomery, Jr. from Dallas, Texas in the 26th Congressional District of Texas, for his lifelong contributions to his community and to medicine. Dr. Montgomery passed away on Saturday, December 17, 2005.

I would like to recognize and celebrate Dr. Montgomery's life today. Dr. Montgomery graduated from Southern Methodist University with a BS in engineering in 1942 before attending medical school at Columbia University in 1945. Upon completing his internship at the Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital in Cooperstown, NY, Dr. Montgomery became a Captain in the Army Medical Corps.

When Dr. Montgomery returned to Dallas, he became a tenured professor of pathology in 1961 at UT Southwestern Medical School. From 1962–1963, he was President of the Dallas County Hospital District Medical Staff. In addition, Dr. Montgomery was the Executive Director of the Cancer Center and ultimately named the Ashbel Smith Professor of Pathology in 1991. During his time as Special Assistant to the Chancellor of the University of Texas, he was responsible for planning the campuses of UT Dallas, University of Houston Medical School, University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, and the expansion of UT Southwestern Medical School Campus.

Dr. Montgomery had published over 100 scholarly papers in the course of his prolific career. One of these published papers of his evolved out of an experiment on NASA's Skylab in which he himself was the principal investigator of living cells in zero gravity. Dr. Montgomery was an avid traveler who had a very devout love of nature. His magnetic and vivacious personality has allowed him to be sorely missed by friends and family.

I respected him as a fellow doctor and was honored to represent him here in Congress. I extend my sympathies to his family and friends.

CELEBRATION OF GRENADA'S INDEPENDENCE

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to the tri-island state of Grenada which celebrated its 32nd anniversary of independence Tuesday, February 7 and to enter

into the Record a Caribnews editorial celebrating how the country has overcome obstacles to persevere during its young existence.

Grenadians are resilient people who are dealing with trying times. As the editorial reads, ''Like many of its neighbors in and out of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, OECS, Grenada is facing some serious economic and social challenges. Crime has reared its ugly head and the galloping economic expectations of its young people are adding to the list of worries which need urgent attention.'' The editorial continues, ''As if those weren't enough, it has a pile of debt on its books to manage and reduce it.''

Despite these social issues and a violent political uprising in 1983 that subsequently led to a U.S. military presence and later the disastrous results of Hurricane Ivan, the people of Greneda have never faltered in showing the will to advance their country. Today, Grenadians continue to embrace their current stable parliamentarian, democratic government and highly respect the civil liberties afforded to them. As the editorial explains, ''Grenada, a nation, which has had more than its fair share of difficulties, has shown an amazing ability to see the glass as being half full when others looking on consider it half empty.''

It is this glowing optimism and resolve that makes the island of ''spice'' such a treasured nation in our global community. Mr. Speaker, please join me again in congratulating Grenadians in the United States, abroad and in their native homeland on their thirty-second anniversary of their glorious independence.

MUCH TO CELEBRATE ON ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE

One of the most heart-warming scenes is that of a small country, rising from the ashes left behind by natural and national disasters, picking up the pieces, if you will, and showing neighbors, even the wider world the stuff of which resilience and legends are made.

Grenadians are one such people. After Hurricane Ivan struck in 2004 and devastated the land of ''spice,'' killing 39 persons, leaving thousands homeless and wiping out almost all of its infrastructure while coming close to tearing out the soul of its inhabitants, a collective will emerge once again, determined to rebuild and make the country of 90,000 people even better than before.

Although Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique, the tri-island state, is far from reaching its goal of a complete recovery, it is well on the way, so much so that Standard & Poor's, Wall Street's premiere credit rating firm, recently hailed the efforts to return the country's finances to a manageable and sound foundation.

That's quite an achievement in less than two years.

Aided by Caribbean help, international assistance and led by Dr. Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister, the government reached out to civil society, the trade unions, the church and other limbs of society. In the process, the administration marshaled the energy of the young and the middle-aged and the wisdom of the senior folk to chart a new course and write a new chapter in the nation's colorful history.

So, when it observed the 32nd anniversary of independence on February 7 with church services, military parades, special games and other activities, it was clear that Grenada had much to thank God for and to celebrate.

Grenada, the most southerly of the chain of Windward Islands, has traveled this road of disaster and rehabilitation before. Almost a quarter of a century ago, October 1983 to be precise, the People's Revolutionary Government turned on itself, killing its leader, Maurice Bishop and several of his ministers and senior government officials. The resulting turmoil, including a dust-to-dawn curfew imposed by the military triggered an invasion or a U.S. ''rescue mission,'' depending on your point of view. The country then set out to rebuild itself and by any measure, it had succeeded. Its housing stock improved by leaps and bounds; the infrastructure expanded and upgraded; the health and education profiles brightened; and the economy was on a growth path.

Then along came Ivan.

Like many of its neighbors in and out of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, OECS, Grenada is facing some serious economic and social challenges. Crime has reared its ugly head and the galloping economic expectations of its young people are adding to the list of worries, which need urgent attention. As if those weren't enough, it has a pile of debt on its books to manage and reduce.

But it has many things going for it as well. The nation has a stable political environment that's based on the rule of law and parliamentary democracy. Its respect for people's civil liberties hasn't been tarnished by any abusive practices and the main opposition forces led by the National Democratic Congress are keeping Dr. Mitchell and his government on their toes.

As in the case of its OECS neighbors Grenada must make good on its pledge to join the Caribbean Single Market later this year. It should have come home to Grenadians by now that they can't afford to remain outside of the CSM and survive in a globalized world. It must also move to recognize the Caribbean Court of Justice, CCJ, as the judicial body of last resort, a move that would end its long-standing relationship with the Privy Council in London. Just as important, it must continue to place education high on its agenda. The investment in education, which got a major boost during the days of the People's Revolutionary Government, is paying off in the form of a strong human resource base.

Grenada, a nation, which has had more than its fair share of difficulties, has shown an amazing ability to see the glass as being half full when others looking on consider it half empty. That positive approach to life has worked well for its people in the past and we are confident that with more international and regional help it would do so again.

Grenadians abroad, whether in New York, Miami, London, Toronto, Birmingham or Port of Spain have been a well of support from which the country has drawn some of its succor. They too deserve praise at this time of celebrations.

Happy Independence anniversary.

CELEBRATING THE OPENING OF THE LINCOLNVILLE CENTRAL SCHOOL AND THE RUFUS KNIGHT BELL

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, early in November I had the pleasure of attending the opening of the Lincolnville Central School in Lincolnville, ME. In Lincolnville, as in so many small towns across this country, the local elementary school is an important part of the community.

As Lincolnville opens a modern new school building, it honors its past by displaying an old bell, formerly housed in the old school building. The old bell will be a reminder of the many teachers, staff, and students who were a part of the old school. It will challenge the Lincolnville community to continue its long tradition of quality education.

The school bell is named for Rufus Knight, a former teacher at the old Lincolnville school. The bell was honored in a poem by his great-grandson, John A. Knight, which was read at the school opening:

This is the bell that called to us to drink at springs of learning.
This is the voice of the silver tongue that satisfied our yearning.
The tocsin sound of wisdom this ancient bell awakened and horizons of us rural folks no longer were forsaken.
The light of education Our knowledge is expanding. This ancient bell awoke in us deep thoughts of understanding.
And, for many generations we did study and excel with the beauteous sounding of this old bell.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE WORK OF HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATE JOHN P. SALZBERG, PH.D.

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor John Salzberg, Ph.D., as he retires from his lifelong work of promoting human rights around the world.

Thousands of torture survivors and human rights advocates around the world are forever indebted to the tireless work of Mr. Salzberg throughout his 30–year career in the field of human rights. John Salzberg completed his doctoral dissertation in human rights in 1973 from New York University. Following his education, John spent several years working for former Congressman Don Fraser, D–MN, as staff on the House Subcommittee on International Organizations. In this capacity, John Salzberg aided in the groundbreaking work on human rights undertaken by Congressman Fraser, which led to the creation of a Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs in the State Department in 1976. John traveled with Congressman Fraser on what was the first official human rights investigation mission to South Korea and Indonesia in the late 1970s. In addition, while working for Congressman Fraser, John assisted in the drafting of the legislation which mandated the annual human rights report now issued by the State Department each year.

After working for Congressman Fraser, John went on to work at that same Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs for 4 years, to ensure it fulfilled the mission intended by Congressman Fraser's legislation.

Most recently, John used his knowledge of the legislative and policy process, and his dedication to justice and equality, as an advocate for the Center for Victims of Torture. John began working for the Center for Victims of Torture in 1992, first as a volunteer and then as its representative on Capitol Hill. As an advocate for victims of torture, John was a major force behind the drafting, promotion and eventual passage of the Torture Victims Relief Act

in 1998, and its reauthorization in 2005. This legislation provides needed resources to centers and organizations around the world that work to assist victims of torture in their rehabilitation and in rebuilding their lives.

John is a soft-spoken, humble, and extremely effective man dedicated to seeing an end to human rights abuses in the world. In his retirement, the human rights community is losing a true champion. Thank you, John Salzberg, for your 30 years of service on behalf of the millions of victims of cruel and inhumane human rights abuses around the world.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO CHANCELLOR JAMES H. SHORE, M.D.

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. James Shore for his devoted service as the first chancellor of the University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center (UCDHSC). Dr. Shore has provided unwavering leadership to the UCDHSC campus through a period of significant transition.

Since 1985, Dr. Shore has committed his considerable skills, time and energy to the University of Colorado in a variety of leadership posts, including interim executive vice chancellor for the Health Sciences Center, interim director of the University of Colorado Hospital, superintendent of the Colorado Psychiatric Hospital, and chairman of the Department of Psychiatry. Dr. Shore has also served as chair of the University of Colorado Hospital Board, and is a member of the board of directors for the Children's Hospital and the Fitzsimons Redevelopment Authority.

I would like to recognize Dr. Shore for his tireless efforts to positively affect campus culture and environment, as well as for his significant influence on its current and future leaders by modeling management skill, civil discourse, active listening, time management and a keen sense of timing. As chancellor, he actively supported diversity by reorganizing the Health Sciences Center's Diversity Program, securing additional scholarship funds and encouraging all schools to increase the recruitment of a more diversified student body, faculty and staff. He also received the United States Public Health Service Commendation Medal for his work with American Indians.

Dr. Shore's contributions to the development and building of the formidable Fitzsimons campus cannot be overstated. He was instrumental in securing legislative authorization for $202 million in certificates of participation, led the development of the initial Fitzsimons master plan, and has played a key role in accelerating the move process. Dr. Shore championed the raising of $2.3 billion in capital resources from multiple sources, including State, Federal, gifts, campus cash, and partner allocations. He also worked tirelessly to secure the move of the Children's Hospital to Fitzsimons.

With Dr. Shore at the helm the growth of total institutional revenue of the Heath Sciences Center increased from $330 million in fiscal year 1997 to more than $602 million in fiscal year 2004. Most recently, his leadership in chairing the consolidation feasibility process has led to the establishment of the University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center, creating the leading research university in the Rocky Mountain region with over $350 million in extramural funding.

Dr. Shore and his wife Chris truly believe in the role of the new Fitzsimons campus and generously contributed to the Fitzsimons Development, helping to build the Shore Family Forum, a state-of-the-art auditorium located in the Nighthorse Campbell Native Health Building.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize Dr. James H. Shore for his extraordinary leadership and distinguished service to the University of Colorado.

RECOGNIZING LORI WALKER

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Lori Walker for her commitment to the people and city of Flower Mound, TX. Mrs. Walker is a very active and respected member of her community who was recently selected as "Citizen of the Year."

The honor and dedication of Mrs. Walker to her community serves as an example to us all. Her service extends from volunteering on the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors to overseeing children's religious education as a Sunday school teacher for the Triesch United Methodist Church.

Additionally, Mrs. Walker's efforts extend to assisting government officials. She served as executive assistant for Congressman TOM DELAY in Washington, DC, and continued her political career by working in San Francisco as a field representative for U.S. Senator John Seymour and for our local Texas State Senator Jane Nelson as her district director and campaign manager.

It is the servant leadership of Mrs. Walker, and those like her, which truly makes our Nation great. Once again, Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize Flower Mound's "Citizen of the Year," Lori Walker.

HONORING MR. PAUL COLLINS

HON. HENRY J. HYDE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the last day of Black History Month to commend the works of a great African-American artist, Mr. Paul Collins of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Mr. Collins has had a long and distinguished career painting portraits of individuals from all over the world. It has been said that Mr. Collins' work seeks to recognize and express the essential human dignity and worth of others.

Mr. Collins' talent has been awarded and recognized internationally on numerous occasions, and he has been commissioned by several foreign governments as well as the U.S. to commemorate important people and events.

One of Paul Collins' most celebrated works is the 18-foot by 8-foot mural of Grand Rapids native, President Gerald R. Ford, displayed in the Gerald R. Ford International Airport. Mr. Collins was awarded the mural commission in 1975. His finished product captures the various facets of President Ford's life as a husband, father and athlete. Upon its unveiling, the mural attracted national attention and critical acclaim and was applauded by Newsweek Magazine for its strong and dignified presentation of Gerald R. Ford. Mr. Collins is believed to be the first African-American artist to paint the portrait of a sitting president.

In 1981, Mr. Collins created the Ford Museum Commemorative Poster which was copied from the mural to help raise funds for the Ford Presidential Museum in Grand Rapids, Michigan. More than 1,000 posters were sold to help raise funds for the museum.

Also of note among Mr. Collin's lifetime achievements is the groundbreaking success and importance of his work, The Voices of Israel, conceived in the 1970s as a way to help renew the relationship between America's Black and Jewish communities during the civil rights movement. The work depicts the history of the people of Israel. This 25 piece collection has toured in Israel and all over the U.S.

Mr. Collins has also made good use of his excellent artistic skill to create symbols and designs, whose meanings and importance extend beyond his actual works. In this regard, Mr. Collins designed the Martin Luther King, Jr. Peace Prize Medal, which is awarded yearly to an individual who has contributed to the cause of world peace. This important symbol has been awarded to such notable people as former President Jimmy Carter, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the late Rosa Parks. Similarly, Collins also created the American Woman Commemorative Plaque, honoring astronaut Sally Ride, the first woman in space.

Throughout his long and distinguished career, Mr. Paul Collins has deservedly received many awards and honors. A few of his many distinctions include the Tadlow Fine Art Award, the People's Choice Award in Paris, and his election as one of the top 20 painters in America as voted by the Watson and Guptill Publication.

It is right, then, that we continue to honor the artist and the individual, Paul Collins. Mr. Collins' works, in a nod to his skill and ability to capture the essence of human characteristics and spirit, have been commissioned to represent and symbolize some of the most important figures and events in this country. Mr. Collins' work as an artist is matched only by his contributions as a humanitarian, as evidenced through his continued service as a teacher and lecturer in Michigan area schools on the value of art and his life experiences, the establishment of his own scholarship programs, and the creation of the Paul Collins Humanitarian Award in 2000. Through his own merit, dedication and long and distinguished career of success, Paul Collins has assuredly gained a position of honor and distinction in our country.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 45TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEACE CORPS AND IN CELEBRATION OF NATIONAL PEACE CORPS WEEK

HON. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of National Peace Corps Week and to congratulate the 7,800 Peace Corp Volunteers—including 31 of my constituents—who are serving their country today in 72 countries around the world.

More than 182,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in 138 countries since the organization's inception in 1961. Every year, thousands of selfless volunteers share their time and talents by serving as teachers, business advisors, information technology consultants, health and HIV/AIDS educators, and youth and agriculture workers.

In addition to serving countries around the globe, 272 Peace Corps' Crisis Corps Volunteers were deployed to the Gulf Coast in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita. These volunteers assisted the Federal Emergency Management Agency with hurricane response efforts. The deployment of Peace Corps' Volunteers within the United States was a historic first, and a great help in managing this national disaster.

I praise our nation's Peace Corps volunteers who serve their country and the world as humanitarians, devoting themselves to transferring life-changing knowledge and skills to the people of other nations.

Mr. Speaker, I salute the hundreds of thousands of men and women of this nation who have selflessly served abroad as Peace Corps Volunteers. On this 45th Anniversary of the Peace Corps, I am especially proud to represent 31 such volunteers and I offer them my sincere gratitude.

HONORING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TRI CITIES KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS COUNCIL 1098

HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the 100th Anniversary of the Tri Cities Knights of Columbus Council 1098.

In 1906, with an initial enrollment of 58 members, the Tri Cities Knights of Columbus Council 1098 was formed. The first Grand Knight was Mr. E. J. Sweeney and the early meetings were held in a hall in Madison, Illinois before moving to neighboring Granite City.

The years before World War I saw steady growth in membership and the establishment of the Knights of Columbus as a presence within the Tri Cities community. During the Great Depression and World War II, membership dwindled and it was only through the determination of the few dedicated members that the council survived. While most social activities for the members ceased during the war, the council opened the doors of their facilities for the entertainment of the troops stationed at the Granite City Engineering Depot.

After World War II, membership grew rapidly. During the 1950's a circle of the Daughters of Isabella was established for the wives and daughters of members and a circle of the Columbian Squires was formed to promote youth activities.

Social and athletic activities for members and their families expanded and grew but service and acts of charity continued to be the cornerstones of the council. The first chairman of Catholic Charities in the Tri Cities area was a past Grand Knight and members continued to be driving forces in this organization.

Council 1098 has been a significant supporter of community, charitable and educational organizations. The Council has directly contributed in excess of $100,000 annually in support of local Catholic education and provided more than $60,000 in scholarships annually. They have also contributed more than $15,000 a year to developmentally challenged service organizations.

While they have always focused on helping those within their community, Council 1098 has also extended its helping hands to those in need outside their boundaries. In response to the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina, the Council raised $50,000 in Katrina Relief and continues to provide on-going support to Brother Knights on the gulf coast.

Tri Cities Knights of Columbus Council 1098 has seen many changes through the last 100 years but they have always stayed true to the Knights of Columbus goals of Charity, Unity and Fraternity.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the 100th Anniversary of the Tri Cities Knights of Columbus Council 1098 and wish the best to them for continued service in the future.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE LARRY BLACK, OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring to the attention of my colleagues the passing of a Miami native and a sports legend, sprint star Larry Black, who died last Wednesday, February 15, 2006.

Born on July 20, 1951 in Miami, Florida, Larry Black was an athlete of extraordinary ability and striking grace. He didn't run as fast as the wind; he was faster.

While still a student at North Carolina Central University, Larry Black won two medals at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich. He won a gold medal for running the lead leg of Team USA's winning the 4x400 relay squad, and he also captured the silver medal in the 200 meters event, which he ran in 20.19 seconds.

Larry Black was an 11-time collegiate All-American who won four individual national championships and was a part of 3 national championship relay teams. He won NCAA outdoor titles in 1971 (220-yard) and 1972 (200m), and the NAIA indoor 60-yard dash crown in 1974. Black also set the NAIA Championship meet record in the 200m dash in 1972 (20.0 seconds) to help the Eagles win the 1972 NAIA Outdoor Track & Field Championship in Billings, Montana. His record still stands today.

As a relay team member, Black won national championships in the 1970 NCAA outdoor 440-yard relay and the 1972 NAIA 4x100m (39.5 seconds) and 4x400m (3:04.8 minutes) relays. Both of these relay times still stand as meet records for hand-timing. For his efforts, he was selected as the 1972 NAIA Championships Herbert B. Marett Outstanding Performer. For the last 10 years, Black has been a personal trainer in Coral Gables.

Larry Black is survived by his wife Cheresse, 4 daughters and 2 grandsons. I know that my colleagues join me in sending to Larry Black's family our deepest condolences for their loss, and in celebrating the life of a man of extraordinary ability who had the discipline and desire to hone his talents so finely that he became the best in the nation and in the world.

HONORING SANDRA MACKINNON COSENZA ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT

HON. ROSA L. DELAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to join the many family, friends and colleagues who have gathered to honor a very special woman, and my dear friend, Sandra MacKinnon Cosenza, as she celebrates her retirement. After more than thirty-four years of dedicated service, Sandy will be leaving Area Cooperative Education Services, one of six educational service centers that were formed under Connecticut State Statute in 1970. A result of recognizing that school districts must work together to meet the ever-changing needs of local education systems, these centers provide an environment where quality programs can be planned, developed and implemented—giving our young people access to the best educational opportunities possible.

Education is the cornerstone of success and the most critical link between our young people and their futures. Throughout our country, we look to our towns and cities to provide these invaluable skills to our children. That is what ACES is all about and its success would not have been possible without Sandy. As former Executive Director Peter Young recently described, for the first twenty years of its existence, Sandy was the heart of the ACES Personnel office—advertising vacancies, processing applications, providing orientation for new hires and ensuring that staff not only received their benefits but also met their specific needs. Everyone consulted with Sandy and welcomed her advice and suggestions. In addition, she built and improved staff spirit by organizing social events and took special care to provide the Governing Board with all that they needed.

Beyond her administrative skills was her commitment to the students of ACES. Though many of them will never know, Sandy's genuine care and concern for their education both inside and outside the classroom made all the difference in their lives. She began a Jesse tree which allowed staff to contribute clothing

and other gifts at Christmas for students who came from families in need. She fostered the notion of Holiday cards for ACES—cards designed by students which were used as an outreach tool to the school districts which they serve. It is from these special contributions to the ACES students that Sandy was able to pass on a very unique lesson—they learned the value and reward of giving back to their community. It is easy to see why Sandy will be missed by staff and students alike.

In addition to her career at ACES, Sandy has been married to her wonderful husband, Henry, for forty-two years and has raised two exceptional daughters, Robyn and Jennifer. She has also recently become a grandmother—a role which no doubt she will happily dedicate more of her time to in her retirement. I could not speak about Sandy without also personally thanking her for her many years of special friendship. She is more than a friend—she is family. Words cannot begin to express my appreciation and gratitude for the tireless support she has shown to me and my family.

And so, it is with deep admiration and affection that I stand today to join her husband, Henry; her children, Robyn and Jennifer; her son-in-law, Kevin, her grandson, Ian; family, friends and colleagues in extending my sincere congratulations to Sandra Cosenza as she celebrates her retirement. Sandy is a remarkable woman whose generosity and compassion has left an indelible mark on the lives of all of those who know her and many that do not. Though she will be enjoying her retirement years, I am certain that Sandy will continue to touch the lives of others—her extraordinary warmth and kind heart making all the difference. I am happy to extend my very best wishes to her for many more years of health and happiness.

TRIBUTE TO MEIKLEJOHN CIVIL LIBERTIES INSTITUTE

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the efforts of the Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute (MCLI), a non-profit organization in my district. The MCLI, founded in 1965, is a think tank that works on national and international human rights issues as they relate to the U.S. In 1995, the Institute's Human Rights Reporting Project began using U.S. treaties as tools to work for human rights.

In 2005, the MCLI issued a report entitled Challenging U.S. Human Rights Violations Since 9/11 in response to the failure of the U.S. government to submit timely and accurate reports to the United Nations (UN). According to 3 U.N. treaties ratified by the U.S. in 1992 and 1994, the U.S. is required to submit regular reports to U.N. oversight committees about human rights abuses and enforcement measures at the local, State, and Federal levels.

On March 15, 2005, the Berkeley City Council passed Resolution 62,841 in which the City Council resolved to submit a copy of Challenging to the U.S. State Department, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the UN Human Rights Committee. On March 31, 2005, MCLI presented Challenging to the U.S. State Department for use in the preparation of its late reports to the oversight committees.

Although the second and third reports for the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) treaty were due in 1998 and 2003, the U.S. State Department did not file a report until October 21, 2005. According to the MCLI, this combined second and third report fails to contain various instances of U.S. human rights violations and lack of enforcement measures. The combined U.S. Report will be discussed by the U.N. Human Rights Committee in March 2006 in New York and will be examined in greater detail by the committee in the summer of 2006 in Geneva.

The Challenging report raises important enforcement and reporting violations committed by the U.S. I encourage my colleagues to read this report for more information. The U.S. must comply with the treaties it signed in order to protect the rights of individuals both domestically and abroad and to realign the U.S. with the principles it was founded on. I appreciate the work of MCLI to promote and protect human rights around the globe and congratulate them on this report.

HONORING CAROLYN MEEKER

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Carolyn Meeker, a community champion whose activism has been missed by those in the small community for which she once fought.

Carolyn Meeker was a community treasure in the tiny town of Lutz, located in my congressional district. A native New Yorker, she moved to Lutz in the mid-1960s and quickly became immersed in issues affecting her and her neighbors. She led the charge against suburban sprawl and excessive development. She successfully restricted zoning laws and helped impose limitations on public well field pumping.

Mrs. Meeker became a regular at Hillsborough County Commission meetings. She firmly, but politely, shared her well-reasoned arguments with commissioners, many of whom favored that which she opposed. Her arguments often carried the day because, as a long-time friend once noted, she let facts, not emotion, guide her.

She eventually ran for the Commission herself, narrowly losing the election but nonetheless continuing her crusade to protect the rural lifestyle which so many in Lutz love. She subsequently served on many County-appointed boards working for better growth management. She also headed the Lutz Civic Association. She died in 2003 after a determined fight against cancer.

Mr. Speaker, Carolyn Meeker was a shining example of what community service and citizenship is all about. Her life reminds me that we all share a responsibility to be civic-minded and to fight for that in which we believe. Many of my constituents are better off because she did.

HONORING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RADNOR FIRE COMPANY, SERVING RADNOR AND PARTS OF DELAWARE, MONTGOMERY AND CHESTER COUNTY, PA

HON. CURT WELDON

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it is a great honor for me to rise today to congratulate the Radnor Fire Company for 100 years of dedicated service to the residents of Radnor, Tredyffrin and the surrounding communities in Pennsylvania.

On a historical note, after 30 years of service in 1904, the Wayne Hose Company & Wayne Chemical Company disbanded leaving no fire protection for the community. Following a devastating fire that completely destroyed the Wayne Suburban newspaper building in March of 1906, 24 men organized the Radnor Fire Company to protect the community and incorporated on March 15, 1906.

The Wayne steam plant agreed to sound the steam whistle if there was a fire and it sounded its first alarm on May 24, 1906 for a working house fire near Strafford train station. In that first year of existence the Radnor Fire Company responded to 13 fire calls.

In 1907, looking to improve the firefighting capabilities the members were tasked to find a motorized fire truck. Since none existed at that time they drew specifications and The Knox Company was hired to build the first motorized fire pump in the United States.

The firefighters of the Radnor Fire Company have an impressive record when it comes to firefighting. The fire company has fought such spectacular blazes including four at Villanova University, six at Valley Forge Military Academy, the Pennsylvania Fire Works Company explosion in Devon, the Wayne Opera House, Caley Nursing Home and crashes of P–40 fighter planes during World War II. During that time, the fire company manpower was augmented by a ''school boy fireman''—Rick Taddeo, who is still a member today.

The first ambulance was purchased in 1947 with funds raised by the Rotary Club following the death of a Radnor firefighter. By the 1970's the fire company was responding to 390 fire and 890 ambulance calls annually. Today they answer nearly 800 fire and 4,000 ambulance calls annually.

From its beginning with a horse-drawn fire apparatus to the first motorized firefighting equipment to its modern new trucks of today, Radnor is a leader in firefighting capabilities and continues to protect the citizens of Radnor, portions of Tredyffrin and the surrounding communities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have dedicated not only their time, but also their lives, to the safety of all Radnor residents as well as surrounding communities. As a former fire chief in Marcus Hook, I am aware of the risks firefighters face each day, under intense pressure, in life or death situations. Our thanks and appreciation can never repay those who put their lives on the line to ensure our safety. I am proud to recognize and commend the tremendous commitment, courage and dedication of the Radnor Fire Company members who continue

to reflect the same spirit in which the department was established more than 100 years ago. I am honored to rise today to extend my thanks for what the members of the Radnor Fire Company do each day and congratulate them on this milestone anniversary.

TRIBUTE TO THE WEST HAVEN BLACK COALITION AS THEY CELEBRATE THEIR 20TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, in so many communities across this nation, civic organizations have been founded in an effort to advance the local African-American community. For the last twenty years, the City of West Haven, Connecticut has been home to the West Haven Black Coalition—an organization that has not only helped to promote African-American involvement in the community, but has also worked diligently to improve the community and quality of life for all West Haven residents.

We begin each year celebrating the life and lessons of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King followed by the celebration of Black History Month. It could not be more fitting that the West Haven Black Coalition's anniversary coincides with these festivities. In the last two decades, under the leadership of founder and president Carroll Brown, the West Haven Black Coalition has gone a long way in bringing life to the legacy of Dr. King and addressing social, political, and economic issues through active participation in the government and community. Dr. King once said, ''Life's most persistent and urgent question is what are you going to do for others.'' Dr. King devoted his life—indeed gave his life—to working for others. Despite our best intentions, it is not always easy to find the time for community service. With so much going on in our daily lives it can be a challenge which is why I have a deep admiration for those among us who take the time to give something back and to share our talents with others. For 20 years, the West Haven Black Coalition has done just that.

It was not so long ago that minorities faced seemingly overwhelming obstacles to justice and equality. While our nation has taken great strides, there is still work to be done—this has become the mission of the West Haven Black Coalition. Actively encouraging African-Americans to not only run for public office but serve in city government, developing and implementing community enrichment projects throughout the city, and making opportunity real for our students by providing college scholarships—these are just some of the ways that the West Haven Black Coalition has made a difference.

Perhaps more important than the physical impact the West Haven Black Coalition has had on our community is the inspiring message that their good work has passed on to a new generation. Your participation, your service—in school, in government, or in the community—gives you a strong voice and empowers you to make a difference. In its first 20 years, the West Haven Black Coalition has left an indelible mark on our community and I have no doubt that they will continue to have a positive impact on the city for many years to come. That is why I am pleased to stand today to join the many who have gathered to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Carroll Brown and the West Haven Black Coalition for their invaluable contributions. My sincere and heart-felt congratulations as they celebrate this very special milestone.

TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT DIMITRI MUSCAT

HON. THOMAS G. TANCREDO

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a fallen soldier from Aurora, Colorado, Sergeant Dimitri Muscat. Sergeant Muscat died on February 24 in Balad, Iraq. He was just 21 years old.

Sergeant Muscat was born in Russia and came to Colorado when he was only 12 years old. According to his stepfather, serving in the Army to defend America was something Dimitri had wanted to do since he was young—and he joined the Army at 17. Dimitri was serving as a gunner on his unit's tank when he died.

Dimitri is survived by his mother, stepfather and his sister.

Sergeant Muscat was assigned to C Company, 1st Batallion, 8th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division based in Fort Carson, Colorado. He was in his second tour in Iraq when he died.

Dimitri served his adopted country with courage and valor, fighting for the cause of freedom.

The American and Iraqi people owe Dimitri and his family a great debt of gratitude for his service and his sacrifice.

We extend our heartfelt sympathy and sincere condolences to all who knew and loved Dimitri.

TRIBUTE TO THE MARINES OF BULK FUEL COMPANY BRAVO

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to pay tribute to the five returning Marines of Bulk Fuel Company Bravo, based in Wilmington, Delaware. During the past seven months, the five Marines of Bulk Fuel Company Bravo answered the call to duty in a highly volatile and dangerous region of Iraq. Their efforts contributed to the safety and security of an emerging democracy and our own great nation. With this sacrifice they have inspired others—including their family, friends, and neighbors.

As Americans, we are mindful of what we have lost, but we are deeply grateful for all that cannot be destroyed. It is Marines like those of Bulk Fuel Company Bravo who sustain and invigorate the timeless values, principles, and extraordinary character that define our great nation.

Today, I am just one of many Delawareans who would like to take this opportunity to say a sincere thank you to them for their service and sacrifice on our behalf. When they were needed, they answered their country's call, proving once again that extraordinary individuals live within each generation of Americans.

THE ''PORT OPERATIONS REQUIRE TOUGH SCRUTINY'' (PORTS) ACT STATEMENT OF INTRODUCTION

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Port Operations Require Tough Scrutiny (PORTS) Act to ensure that decisions about the sale of critical U.S. infrastructure such as ports are thoroughly reviewed so that the homeland security consequences of these transactions are not brushed aside in favor of commercial interests.

The Bush Administration's recent decision to approve the sale of British port operator Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation to Dubai Ports World, a company owned by the government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), has raised significant homeland security concerns. This decision also has shined a light on a little-known committee at the Treasury Department and the secretive process it uses to make decisions that can have important consequences for the security of our Nation.

Clearly, the UAE port deal did not receive the scrutiny it deserved. The 9/11 Commission identified the government of the UAE—the same entity that would operate major functions at 6 U.S. ports—as a ''persistent counterterrorism problem''. Two of the 9/11 hijackers were from the UAE. The 9/11 Commission concluded that the UAE banking system was used as a conduit for funds for the September 11th attacks. The UAE was a key transfer point for illegal shipments of nuclear components to Iran, North Korea and Libya. The UAE was one of only three nations to recognize the legitimacy of the Taliban government and still does not recognize the State of Israel.

Despite all of these warning signs, the proposed port deal did not even trigger a 45-day investigation, which is provided in current law and should have been interpreted as being mandatory when foreign governments—whether involving the UAE, the UK, the Ukraine or any other nation—seek mergers, acquisitions or similar transactions that could affect U.S. national security. Nevertheless, when asked about the UAE port deal last week, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld said, ''I am reluctant to make judgments based on the minimal amount of information I have because I just heard about this over the weekend.'' (Defense Department news briefing, 2/21/06).

It is unacceptable that President Bush, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of the Treasury were not informed of the UAE port deal until after it was approved and had caused widespread public outrage. President Bush has repeatedly told the American people that 9/11 changed his thinking, and extraordinary measures, such as warrantless wiretapping of

American citizens, are required to keep America safe. How, then, could the Bush Administration have overlooked such an obvious homeland security threat?

My legislation would strengthen the process for assessing the national security impact of foreign ownership of critical U.S. infrastructure. Specifically, the legislation would:

Limit Takeovers of Critical Homeland Infrastructure. In cases where the purchaser is a government-owned company based in a foreign country, the transaction must be approved not only by CFIUS, but also by the President and be subject to congressional review.

If the purchaser is a foreign company, but not government-controlled, the transaction must undergo a 45-day investigation and be found to not undermine national security before it can be approved.

Increase the 30-day Evaluation Period. According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), ''Several officials [participating in the CFIUS process] commented that, in complex cases, it is difficult to complete analyses . . .within 23 days.'' CFIUS's guidance requires member agencies to determine if they are likely to object to the transaction by the 23rd day of the 30-day review period. The legislation would double this initial evaluation period to 60 days and permit any participant to be granted an automatic 10-day extension, separate from CFIUS's 45-day investigatory period.

Require Reports to Congress. According to Treasury Department regulations, CFIUS reviews of any proposed transactions are confidential, and there is no congressional oversight of CFIUS decisions. The legislation would require CFIUS to report annually to Congress on the number of notifications it received during the year and the action taken after each notification.

As security experts and the 9/11 Commission have pointed out, our ports are a vulnerable entry point that could be exploited by terrorists to strike our country. Almost none of the cargo that enters U.S. ports is ever inspected. While the federal government is ultimately responsible for security at ports, much of the day-to-day security responsibilities, such as hiring security guards and ensuring adequate access controls and fencing are in place, are delegated to the companies that operate at the port. The port operator also has access to real-time sensitive intelligence of the continuous movement of ships, their cargoes and the millions of containers they are stored in; the identity of their shippers and inside knowledge about the security in place at the ports.

While oversight of these private operators is the responsibility of the Department of Security, the Bush Administration is nickel and diming our port security by proposing a budget that eliminates millions in port security grants. This is a wrong-headed decision that only leaves our country vulnerable to a devastating attack, such as a nuclear weapon or dirty bomb being detonated in our country.

We know that terrorists are seeking to use U.S. ports as a route to launch a devastating nuclear attack on U.S. soil—one of the millennium bombers entered the United States through the Port of Boston in an attempt to bomb buildings on the West Coast. Cargo containers represent a cheap, deadly method for delivering bombs on U.S. soil—we cannot afford to be lax in our oversight of the shipping and handling of these containers. This Administration's scrutiny of this UAE deal is just like their treatment of tons of cargos at our door: insufficient, incomplete and incomprehensible, given the security threats we face.''

As the DP World decision illustrates, the CFIUS process urgently needs to be overhauled. I urge consideration of this legislation so that we can increase the scrutiny of transactions that could create serious homeland security risks. Commerce must not be permitted to trump common sense.

TRIBUTE TO MR. RAY BARRETTO

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sympathy that I rise today to say goodbye to a Latin Jazz legend and a wonderful man. Mr. Ray Barretto passed away on Friday, February 17, 2006 at the age of 76. Ray was the first Hispanic to record a Latin song which became a ''hit'' on the American Billboard Charts. Although he has gone, his musical influence will live on for generations to come. Surely that is a mark of a great life.

Like many Puerto Ricans, Ray's parents moved to New York in the early 1920's in search of a better life. Raised in Spanish Harlem, he was deeply influenced by his mother's love of music and by the jazz music of musicians such as Duke Ellington and Count Basie. In 1946 at the age of 17, he joined the Army and was stationed in Germany where he met Belgian musician Fats Sadi. However, it was not until he heard ''Manteca'' recorded by Dizzy Gillespie and Cuban percussionist, Chano Pozo, that he realized music was his true calling in life.

After returning to New York in 1949, Ray began to visit clubs where he participated in jam sessions and perfected his conga playing. It wasn't long before the likes of Charlie Parker, Jose Curbelo and Tito Puente began to ask him to play with their bands. Ray opened the door for other Latin percussionists to appear in jazz groups, creating a sound unlike any other.

Over the years Ray achieved international superstardom and released nearly 2 dozen albums with the Fania label from the late-60s until salsa's popularity peaked in the mid 1980's. In 1975 he was nominated for a Grammy Award for the song ''Barretto,'' and in 1990, he finally won a Grammy for the album ''Ritmo en el Corazón'' (Rhythm in the Heart), which featured the vocals of the late great Celia Cruz. In 1999, Ray was inducted into the International Latin Music Hall of Fame and in January 2006 he was named one of the National Endowment for the Arts' Jazz Masters of 2006, the Nation's highest jazz honor.

Mr. Speaker, Rays fusing of Afro-Caribbean rhythms with jazz created a whole new genre of music that has not only entertained us but also helped to unite people from diverse backgrounds in a common love for the sound. The bonds that he worked to create over the years are, as one of his most popular tunes is entitled, ''Indestructible.'' I thank him for having the courage to ask, ''why not,'' when others asked ''why.''

For his masterful play and his genuine creativity I ask that my colleagues join me in giving a final farewell to the Godfather of Latin Jazz, Mr. Ray Barretto.

HONORING THE CONSERVATION EFFORTS OF ROBERT EASTERBROOK

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to Robert Easterbrook for his contributions to wildlife conservation and protecting the freedom to hunt.

As a member of the Safari Club for over 20 years and as founding member of the Detroit Chapter of Safari Club International (SCI), Robert's passion for conservation education has been an invaluable resource to the state of Michigan. Mr. Easterbrook's nature study outdoor center and camp hosts over 4,200 underprivileged children every year. His work with troubled teenagers has been credited with changing many of their lives for the better. He also founded the ''Great Lakes Bowfishing Championship,'' a fundraising event benefiting the children's camp that has been recognized as one of the largest of its kind.

Robert is also well-known for his commitment and dedication to sportsmens' issues. He has been honored by both the Michigan House and Senate for his input on bipartisan legislation. His Sportsmen Against Hunger program encourages hunters to donate their meat to the hungry and has been adopted by 4 other states.

Over the past 30 years Robert Easterbrook has been awarded Special Conservationist of the Year Award by the Michigan United Conservation Club, the Ted Nugent World Bowhunters Lifetime Representative Award and the Outstanding SCI member, among other awards. He has also served on various committees dedicated to conservation efforts, including the World Wildlife Foundation, the American Archery Council and the Michigan Involvement Committee.

Mr. Easterbrook's many accomplishments serve as a lasting example of excellence in conservationism. Michigan has been well-served by Robert Easterbook. The residents of Michigan will appreciate Mr. Easterbrook's work to protect our great state for generations to come.

I would like to thank Robert for his dedicated service both to Safari Club International and to the State of Michigan.

TRIBUTE TO NATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFIDENCE DAY

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my gratitude to the YWCA USA and acclaimed performer Queen Latifah for their joint efforts to create National Women's Confidence Day this Spring. This day will help raise public awareness and celebrate the positive impact

of confidence in women's personal and professional lives.

The impact of cultivating confidence in the individual lives of women across America cannot be understated. Self-confidence, coupled with self-respect, are vitally important characteristics that empower women and help them to become successful in all areas of their lives.

When women are confident, society benefits. Our Nation's history has been shaped by women whose strong will, determination, and self-confidence has allowed them to break down barriers, speak their minds, and stand up for their beliefs.

I hope my colleagues will join me in celebrating National Women's Confidence Day on the first Tuesday in April. This momentous day will serve as a reminder for women to believe in themselves and remain confident every day; an opportunity for women to get involved in helping other women live more fulfilling lives and; a fitting tribute to women who contribute through education, self-empowerment, mentoring, and volunteer work to helping others gain confidence and self-esteem.

Again, I wish to express my deep appreciation to the YWCA USA, Queen Latifah, and others who support cultivating women's confidence. I invite everyone to join me in celebrating the positive impact confidence has on women's personal and professional lives this Spring, on National Women's Confidence Day.

TRIBUTE TO THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MICHIGAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION

HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an organization in Michigan that single-handedly brought dentistry from a journeyman's trade, as it was called, to a respected profession. The Michigan Dental Association, MDA, will celebrate 150 years of being the foundation for the education of dentists and professional development of their health care specialty on March 1 of this year. The MDA is the oldest continuous State dental society in the United States.

What began as 14 dentists venturing to Detroit on horseback through the harsh Michigan winter on January 8, 1856, would far surpass their dream of creating an association of dentists to elevate the significance of their medical profession. The MDA first pursued their dream by promoting education and professional standards by requiring all members to be graduates of dental school. Finding it difficult to demand such a requirement without a dental school in the State, they worked with the Michigan Legislature to appropriate funds to start a dental school at the University of Michigan.

In the MDA's endless quest to raise the reputation of the dental profession, they began working in 1867 toward legislation that would require dentists practicing in the State of Michigan to register with a State board of dentistry, weeding out those practicing unauthorized methods. In 1883, Governor Josiah W. Begole signed the first dental practice act to enact such requirements.

Membership of the MDA grew at rapid rates during the late 1800's and early 1900's due to annual meetings, the inclusion of local dental groups in the state and the publication of a monthly Journal, still in circulation today.

In the 1930's during the Great Depression, the dental industry was hit hard along with the entire economy. However, the MDA made a strong recovery by helping recruit dentists for military service as well as finding ways to ensure local communities had dental service. Throughout the 1940's and on into the 60's the MDA took up a number of causes including the promotion of community water fluoridation and promoting employer-paid dental coverage and third party plans, which eventually led to expanded dental coverage in Michigan.

The 1980's served as an opportunity to continue the MDA's pursuit of higher professional standards for their profession. A campaign began in 1984 to advocate the importance of dental care and to urge the public to visit their dentist every 6 months, a now widely accepted practice. The MDA worked to mandate continuing dental education for licensed dental professionals, further accomplishing their goal to promote education in the profession.

Mr. Speaker, the Michigan Dental Association has represented the profession of dentistry and the professionals it serves exceptionally well with foresight and vision over the last 150 years. They have successfully taught America that the importance of good oral health is key to overall health. With over 75 percent of Michigan dentists as members, the MDA continues to focus on their message of "Dental Care is Primary Care" and work with the State of Michigan to "promote professional ethics, dental coverage to the uninsured and disadvantaged, and to monitor in the disciplinary process." With those values in mind, I ask the United States House of Representatives to join me in congratulating the Michigan Dental Association and its 5,801 members—2005, on their sesquicentennial celebration of raising the standards of the profession of dentistry in Michigan and the United States. I wish them all the best in the future toward another successful 150 years.

TRIBUTE TO ALEX IZYKOWSKI

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me today in honoring Alex Izykowski of Bay City, Michigan. Alex is a member of the Men's 5,000 Meter Short Track Relay Team that won the Bronze Medal at the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin, Italy on February 25th.

Alex, nicknamed "Izy," started speed skating at the age of eleven after watching the 1994 Winter Olympics from Lillehammer, Norway. His first foray onto the ice was on borrowed skates. Determined to succeed and one day become an Olympian he continued to practice and entered his first competition in 1995. One year later he placed fifth at the junior nationals. Always striving to do better, he set three state juvenile outdoor records in 1997 and in 2001, Alex was named to the U.S. Junior Short Track team at the U.S. Championship held in Walpole, Massachusetts. Competing with the team in Italy that year, Alex won the 1,000 meter race.

The following year he became the Junior American record holder in the 1,500 meter and 3,000 meter competitions in Calgary. As a member of the U.S. Junior World Cup team Izy won a Silver Medal as a participant on the relay team in 2003. Two years later he won a Bronze Medal in Beijing as a member of the U.S. World Championships Relay Team. After finishing second overall in the lap time trials at the Marquette Training Center, Alex was given a slot on the U.S. Olympic Team fulfilling his 1994 dream to become an Olympian.

He competed twice in the 2006 Olympics, first in the Men's 1,500 meter race and the second time in the Men's Relay. As an integral part of the relay team, Alex was able to pull the team from fourth place to third place during one of his laps around the track. Along with fellow teammates, J.P. Kepka, Rusty Smith, and Apolo Anton Ohno, Alex was able to maintain momentum during the fast paced relay and win the Bronze Medal with a time of 6:47.990.

A 2002 graduate of Bay City Western High School, Alex credits his entire family as his strongest influence and support. Many of his relatives were able to travel to Turin to watch him compete. In tribute to his parents, Alan and JoAnn Izykowski, Alex presented the bouquet given to him during the medal ceremony to his mother. He remarked, "Just showing some respect."

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to rise to their feet and join me, the Bay City community, and the State of Michigan in welcoming home a tremendous athlete, an inspirational role model, and a fierce competitor, Alex Izykowski. Please join me in applauding his achievements as he takes his place in the history of our Nation.

RECOGNIZING THE NATION'S EYE BANKS DURING NATIONAL EYE DONOR MONTH

HON. CHARLIE NORWOOD

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. NORWOOD. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor today to bring attention to the fact that March 2006 is National Eye Donor Month. As a Member of the Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Health and a recipient of organ donation myself, I am firmly committed to promoting organ, eye, and tissue donation.

I have been blessed with the same gift thousands of transplant recipients have received: the gift of life. Sometimes that gift comes in the form of a longer life. Other times, in the case of cornea transplant recipients for example, the gift is one of enhanced life, or the simple ability to continue every day activities. The recipient is allowed the opportunity to enjoy one of the things so many of us take for granted—a chance to see the world around us. Few of us know personally the challenges associated with lost vision, but the fact that our Nation's eye banks exist and have helped so many Americans is a testament to their good work. As our Nation's seniors live longer and vision issues confront the baby boom generation in record numbers, the challenge will grow

and the work of our Nation's eye banks will prove even more important. I know they are up to this new challenge and Congress must stand behind them.

The first successful transplant of cornea tissue was made more than one hundred years ago. Since then, advancements in medical technology have been phenomenal. Cornea transplants are now among the most common and most successful transplant procedures. More than one million people, ranging in age from nine days to 107 years old, have received eye tissue transplants.

All eye banks are not-for-profit organizations that are community-based and work with local philanthropic organizations, such as Lions Clubs, to educate citizens on the importance of donation. The community-based reach helps contribute to their success. Eye banks facilitate approximately 46,000 sight-restoring transplants each year. In my home state of Georgia, over 1,000 Georgians have been given the gift of sight with the help of the Georgia Eye bank and our ocular transplant physicians. Their success is a testament to their hard work but it also indicates that Congress must join eye banks in the struggle they face everyday.

The Eye Bank Association of America has been vital in advancing the cause of eye donation for the past 45 years. Their efforts to raise awareness and support for eye donation have done wonders for the development of safe and effective transplants. This year marks the 23rd anniversary of Eye Donor Month.

If you are not yet an anatomical gift donor, I encourage you to become one. I know all too well what may seem like a simple check on a card can mean to those awaiting a life-saving or life-enhancing donation. I continue my call and challenge to all Americans to discuss this issue with their families and consider becoming an organ, eye, and tissue donor. Such conversations must take place around the kitchen table, not after a loved one is gone. The process of becoming a donor takes just a few minutes, but its impact can last a lifetime for recipients. I also hope that people consider the merits of donating not just solid organs, but tissue and corneas as well. As our eye banks have proven, being able to give the gift of sight is truly a testament to our medical advancement.

As this month goes on, I encourage my colleagues to recognize the success of eye banks across our Nation and work to increase local awareness about corneal transplants and the importance of donation. Transplants that give the gift of sight change Americans' lives every day, and we must do everything in our power to support this effort. I, for one, will do my part and hope you will join me in saluting our Nation's eye banks during Eye Donor Month.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR FULL FISCAL YEAR 2007 FUNDING OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH SPORTS PROGRAM/RECOGNIZING THE OUTSTANDING WORK OF THE MOREHOUSE COLLEGE NATIONAL YOUTH SPORTS PROGRAM

HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise in vehement opposition to the proposed elimination of National Youth Sports Program (NYSP) funding, contained in the President's Budget Request, for the second year in a row. I am concerned that some of my colleagues may not understand the severity of the situation that NYSP is facing. If Congress does not provide full FY07 funding for NYSP, the program will be forced to close its doors. This will result in 75,000 of our nation's most vulnerable youth, being left behind next summer.

NYSP uses sports instruction and competition, as a vehicle to enhance self-esteem and respect, among boys and girls from low-income households. Established in 1969, with a $3 million funding commitment from the White House, NYSP has provided over 2 million participants with instruction in career and educational opportunities, and exposure to the college environment for nearly four decades.

Because I have witnessed, firsthand, the difference that the NYSP program has made in the lives of under served youth in my Congressional District I cannot, in good conscience, sit idly by as this essential program is dismantled. In my Congressional District, Morehouse College has done an outstanding job of running the NYSP program for nearly four decades, serving over 10,000 children throughout Atlanta. The Morehouse College NYSP program is unique, because it has taken great pains to maintain a balance between athletics and academics. Similar to NYSP programs throughout the nation, Morehouse College offers instruction focusing on sports. However, it also includes additional instruction in areas such as: nutrition, drug awareness and prevention, creative writing, and leadership development.

The NYSP program has a tremendous impact on the youth that it serves in my Congressional District. By placing NYSP participants in academic settings, where they receive hundreds of hours of exposure to the benefits of higher education, the participants begin to believe that they, too, can succeed in college and beyond. Furthermore, the mentoring relationships established between the teaching/coaching staff, college student volunteers, and NYSP participants, have resulted in hundreds of former NYSP participants returning to work in the program at Morehouse College as student volunteers.

Mr. Speaker, NYSP is not asking for a handout from Congress. In fact, in 2005 NYSP secured two-thirds of its operating expenses from other public and private sources, such as the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the 202 selected institutions of higher education with which it partners. The Administration knows that NYSP works. Congress knows that NYSP works. Institutions of higher learning in 47 states and the District of Columbia know that NYSP works. Most important, over 2 million NYSP participants, and their families, know that it works.

I strongly encourage all of my colleagues, especially those serving on the budget and appropriations committees, to reject the President's proposed elimination of the NYSP program, and provide full funding for FY07.

TRIBUTE TO MARCIA S. SMITH

HON. SHERWOOD BOEHLERT

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. BOEHLERT. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to draw our colleagues' attention to the pending retirement of Marcia S. Smith from the Congressional Research Service after over thirty years of service to Congress. Marcia is one of the preeminent and most highly respected policy analysts in her field, and while she will remain an active figure in space and telecommunications policy at the National Academy of Sciences, her intelligence, expertise, objectivity and balance will be greatly missed on both sides of Capitol Hill.

Marcia Smith began her career at the Congressional Research Service in 1975, after graduating from Syracuse University with a degree in political science. She quickly became an accomplished and adept analyst in space and aerospace policy, rising to Specialist in Aerospace and Telecommunications Policy, first in the Science Policy Research Division, and then in the Resources, Science and Industry Division, of CRS. In her service to Congress, she has provided background and analytic reports, memoranda, committee prints and expert testimony to Members of Congress and committees of the U.S. Congress on matters concerning U.S. and foreign military and civilian space activities, and on telecommunications issues (and formerly on nuclear energy).

Marcia has been a mentor and advisor to over a dozen CRS analysts and researchers during her time in that organization. She was Section Head for Space and Defense Technologies from 1987–1991, and Section Head for Energy, Aerospace and Transportation Technologies from 1984–1985.

To give my colleagues an idea of how prolific and proficient Marcia Smith has been during service to Congress, she has authored or coauthored over 160 reports and articles on space, nuclear energy, and telecommunications policies and issues. She has testified as an expert witness before House and Senate Committees nearly 20 times, a significant number of those times in front of the committee I chair, the Committee on Science.

I would like to point out 2 instances in which Marcia has served both Congress and her country in an exemplary manner. In both instances, these were circumstances marked by tragedy—when the Space Shuttle *Challenger* was lost at launch on January 28, 1986, and again when the Space Shuttle *Columbia* was lost during re-entry on February 1, 2003. Within hours of the *Challenger* disaster, Marcia was briefing congressional staff and talking to Members of Congress about the technical, policy, and human costs of this accident. She was widely interviewed and quoted by the national and international news media. And in the painful months following the accident,

Marcia worked with Congress to provide oversight, investigation, and new policy directions in our national space program.

In 2003, the unthinkable happened again—another shuttle disaster. And while this occurred on a Saturday, Marcia spent the entire weekend in her office, writing a report that detailed the Columbia program, what we knew then of the accident, and potential congressional outcomes for re-examining the purpose and scope of human space flight. This report was ready for Congress first thing the following Monday morning.

Let me also add that Marcia has helped Congress in so many other areas of space policy that has brought us as a nation forward. She has worked with us on the Mission to Planet Mars, international space policy and issues revolving around the International Space Station, and the President Bush's National Space Policy. She is an expert on the NASA budget, and has a working and encyclopedic knowledge of space launches and flights, going back to the Sputnik launches and the Mercury Program.

In addition, Marcia Smith has exemplified the type of professional growth and development that we in Congress have come to expect from senior-level policy experts at the Congressional Research Service. From 1985–1986, Ms. Smith took a leave of absence to serve as Executive Director of the U.S. National Commission on Space. The Commission, created by Congress and its members appointed by the President, developed long term (50 year) goals for the civilian space program under the chairmanship of (the late) former NASA Administrator Thomas Paine. The Commission published its results in the report Pioneering the Space Frontier.

Marcia Smith has continued her professional accomplishments even as she makes this transition in her career. She is a Trustee of the International Academy of Astronautics (and co-chairs the Space Activities and Society Committee, and is a member of the International Space Policies and Plans Committee and the Scientific-Legal Liaison Committee). She has been a member of the Committee on Human Exploration (CHEX) of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences' Space Studies Board (1992–93, 1996–97). She is a Fellow of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA). She serves on AIAA's Ethical Conduct Panel, and the International Activities Committee; was a member of the International Space Year Committee (1989–1992), the Public Policy Committee (1982–1989) and the Space Systems Technical Committee (1986–1989); was an AIAA Distinguished Lecturer (1983–1988); and was a member of the Council of AIAA's National Capital Section (1994–1996). She is a member of the Kettering Group of space observers. She is a Fellow of the British Interplanetary Society. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the International Institute of Space Law (IISL) and of the Association of U.S. Members of the IISL. She was President of the American Astronautical Society (1985–1986), on its Board of Directors (1982–1985), and Executive Committee (1982–1987,1988–1989). She is a Life Member of the New York Academy of Sciences and the Washington Academy of Sciences (Board of Directors, 1988–1989). She is a member of Sigma Xi (the honorary scientific research society). Ms. Smith serves on the editorial boards of the journals Space Policy and Space Forum, and is a contributing editor for the Smithsonian Institution's Air & Space magazine. She is listed in several "Who's Who" directories, including Who's Who in the World, Who's Who of American Women, and American Men and Women of Science.

Marcia Smith was also a founder of Women in Aerospace, was its President (1987) and member of its Board of Directors (1984–1990), and is an Emeritus Member. Women in Aerospace is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the advancement of women in aerospace and recognizing their achievements. In September 2003, I had the honor of presenting Marcia with the Women in Aerospace Lifetime Achievement Award. In my remarks, I commented that her unselfishness and service to her country served as models for everyone who works for Congress and therefore their country. That holds true today as it did then. And, as a founding member of Women in Aerospace, Marcia has clearly made a mark on supporting the role of women professionals in the space community.

Marcia once said of her position at CRS, that working for Congress, she was extremely busy, put in long hours, often became exhausted—but never bored. Members of Congress and the Committees they serve on have been the beneficiaries of this work ethic, high levels of thoroughness and competence, and keen analytical skills. I would ask that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle recognize and thank Marcia Smith for the contributions she has made during her time with the Congressional Research Service, and her outstanding performance and service to Congress, and for the American people.

CONGRATULATING KRISTAL KOGA ON BEING NAMED GUAM'S 2006 WOMEN IN BUSINESS CHAMPION OF THE YEAR

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and commend Ms. Kristal Koga, on being named 2006 Women in Business Champion of the Year by the United States Small Business Administration Guam Branch Office.

Ms. Koga is an accomplished designer and owns the "Kristal Kollection" clothing line. Her hard work and keen business sense has made her a well known and well established businesswoman on Guam. Her commitment to use her vast skills and knowledge to foster and mentor young women pursuing careers in business is what makes her especially deserving of this recognition as "Women in Business Champion."

Ms. Koga is serving, or has served in numerous organizations dedicated to improving the lives of women around the world, including the Soroptimist International of the Marianas, where she is a current member and served as the immediate past-president; the Federation of Asian Pacific Women's Association, where she is currently serving as treasurer; and the Guam Council of Women's Clubs, where she serves as the vice president.

I congratulate Kristal for being selected as the 2006 Women in Business Champion of the Year. I join our island community in celebrating her distinction. Kristal, we are all proud of you and we wish you continued prosperity.

IN HONOR OF THE 890TH TRANSPORTATION COMPANY

HON. MARK GREEN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and privilege to recognize before this House the courageous men and women of the 890th Transportation Company, who just days ago returned from their deployment overseas.

For nearly one year, the Ashwaubenon, Wisconsin-based 890th served under perilous conditions in Iraq, delivering vital supplies to their comrades throughout the country. The vast majority of their missions took place in the Sunni Triangle—home to some of the most intense violence in Iraq. However, despite the threat of roadside bombs and surprise attacks, the brave men and women of this unit faithfully and successfully executed their duties. And, although they encountered enemy engagement on nearly 40 percent of their missions, the unit suffered zero casualties.

Mr. Speaker, there's no question the 890th Transportation Company helped nourish the seeds of freedom and democracy in Iraq, and their service and sacrifice are to be commended. It is my honor to recognize their brave efforts today, and on behalf of the citizens of Wisconsin's Eighth Congressional District, I say thank you. They are our genuine heroes.

HONORING ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY, INC. AND THE IMPORTANCE OF BLACK FRATERNAL, SOCIAL AND CIVIC INSTITUTIONS

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the importance of black fraternal, social and civic institutions to the African-American community and to America as a whole. 2006 marks the 100th anniversary of Alpha Phi Alpha, the first continuous, collegiate black Greek letter fraternity. This is remarkable when you think of the social and political climate of 1906—where we were almost 50 years away from Brown v. Board of Education or Rosa Parks refusing to give up her bus seat. During this era of Jim Crow, black fraternal, social and civic institutions refused to accept this imposed inferiority, and banded together to provide support and promote solutions.

I am a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha, the oldest black Greek letter fraternity founded by collegiate women. Founded in 1908 at Howard University, AKA was established in order to provide social and intellectual enrichment through member interactions.

Throughout the years, AKA's purpose has expanded as it strives to promote high scholastics and ethical standards, vocational and career guidance, health services and the advancement of human and civil rights. Led by national Basileus, Norma S. White, Alpha Kappa Alpha focuses on five national targets including: education, health, the black family, economics, and the arts. Most importantly the women of AKA seek to make a difference in our communities and to be of supreme service to all of mankind.

When you look at AKA's distinguished membership it is easy to see its impact on America. Amongst these women are: Coretta Scott King, Rosa Parks, Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, Ella Fitzgerald, and Dr. Mae Jemison—just to name a few.

The impact of black fraternal, social and civic organization is truly immeasurable. They have brought together and inspired the leaders that have made America what it is today.

CONGRATULATING ALFRED K.Y. LAM ON BEING NAMED GUAM'S 2006 MINORITY SMALL BUSINESS CHAMPION OF THE YEAR

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and commend Mr. Alfred K.Y. Lam, affectionately known to everyone on Guam as "Uncle Alfred," on being named the 2006 Minority Small Business Champion of the Year by the United States Small Business Administration Guam Branch Office.

Alfred's entrepreneurial spirit, diligence, and perseverance have made him a successful businessman on Guam, but his commitment to the development and promotion of other minority businesses over the last 30 years makes him deserving of the Minority Small Business Champion of the Year award.

Since coming to Guam in 1972, Alfred has operated his own business, finding a wealth of business opportunity in Guam's burgeoning shipping industry. Even in those early days, Alfred saw the need to nurture other small businesses for the benefit of the entire community.

From 1974 to 1976, he served as the vice president of the United Chinese Association, and was the charter president of the Asian Pacific Lions Club in 1982. During this time, Alfred also helped form the Sea Transport Association, which was created to promote and stabilize the shipping market between Guam and the Far East for the benefit of Chinese merchants and Guam's economy as a whole.

For the last two years, Alfred has also served as president of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, which has begun to form alliances with other Chinese Chambers of Commerce in Hong Kong, Mainland China, and Los Angeles.

Alfred is a proven business leader, and continues to be an inspiration to the next generation of businessmen on Guam, including the 2005 Small Business Person of the Year, George Lai of Quality Distributors.

I congratulate Alfred for being selected as the 2006 Minority Small Business Champion of the Year for Guam. Our island celebrates his recognition with his wife Kathy and his children. Uncle Alfred, we are all proud of you and we wish you continued prosperity.

IN RECOGNITION OF MILLER ELECTRIC CREDIT UNION

HON. MARK GREEN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and pleasure to recognize before this House Miller Electric Credit Union, which was recently awarded the Desjardins Youth Financial Education Award for its extraordinary service to its members and the community of Appleton, Wisconsin.

Helping young people learn the value of money is one of the most significant social and economic challenges we face as a nation. Despite the principles of thrift and prudence embraced by our parents and grandparents, today the importance of saving is being overshadowed by the ease at which folks can spend. And, as a result millions of Americans have charged and financed their way into a life of debt and financial turmoil.

Fortunately, there are folks out there working to break the spending cycle. Miller Electric Credit Union spends hours upon hours teaching individuals lessons on financial education. They've created innovative programs to help their members, young and old, learn how to budget and save for important purchases down the road. One program in particular—the Undersea Saver's Club—gives prizes to kids who make a habit out of depositing, rather than withdrawing, money in their savings account.

Mr. Speaker, Miller Electric Credit Union has been a valued member of the Appleton community for nearly 60 years, and its 2,800 member-owners are a testament to its success. I congratulate them on receiving this outstanding honor, and wish them continued success in the years to come.

TRIBUTE TO BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am most pleased to join my colleagues and millions of Americans in commemorating African-American History Month and particularly this year's theme "Celebrating Community: A Tribute to Black Fraternal, Social and Civic Institutions". This theme as announced by the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History (ASALH) is most appropriate and timely as we enter a new millennium and hopefully a new and even brighter era of African-American progress.

Mr. President, I rise today to recognize February as Black History Month and to honor the rich cultural heritage of African-Americans in Dallas and my State of Texas. In the arts or letters, history, business, sport, or education, Greater Metroplex's African-American community has made a significant and lasting impact on our Nation's culture.

This evening, in honor of Black History Month, I would like to call the House's attention to four distinguished African-Americans entities that made major contributions to my congressional district, city of Dallas as well as the State and our country.

First, Mr. President, I would call your attention to Dallas Black Dance Theatre celebrates its 29th season as the oldest, continuously operating professional dance company in Dallas. The ensemble, a contemporary modern dance company, consists of 14 professional dancers performing a mixed repertory of modern, jazz, ethnic and spiritual works by nationally and internationally known choreographers which include: Alvin Ailey, Talley Beatty, Donald Byrd, Alonzo King, Milton Myers, Elisa Monte, Donald McKayle, Kevin Jeff, Christopher Huggins, Jessica Lang, Bruce Wood, David Parsons and Darryl Sneed. The company and company's dancers have studied, trained and performed with some of the pre-eminent performers and teachers in the American dance world.

Second, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the African American Museum which has more than 25 years, has stood as a cultural beacon in Dallas and the Southwestern United States. Started in 1974 as a part of the Bishop College Special Collection, the Museum has operated independently since 1979.

The African American Museum is the only museum in the Southwestern United States devoted to the preservation and display of African American artistic, cultural and historical materials. It also has one of the largest African American folk art collections in the United States. The African American Museum incorporates a wide variety of visual art forms and historical documents that portray the African American experience in the United States, Southwest, and Dallas.

The main objective of the Museum is the presentation of meaningful experiences for children and adults who would not ordinarily visit a museum. The rich heritage of black art and history is housed in four vaulted galleries, augmented by a research library. Living African American culture is experienced through entertaining and educational programs presented in the theater, studio arts area and classrooms. The Museum's permanent collections include African art; African American fine art; magazine, historical, political and community archives.

Third, I would like to recognize the Black Academy of Arts and Letters, Inc. (TBAAL) is a Dallas-based multi-disciplined cultural arts institution. TBAAL's primary objectives have been to stimulate an increased awareness of Black artistic accomplishments rooted in the African culture among the races; to honor those who have made significant and continuing contributions in the arts and letters of the past and present and; to identify, encourage and support young, promising talented artists and scholars in Black arts and letters.

After more than two decades of producing and presenting programs in music, theater, dance, film, television and video, literature and visual arts throughout the United States, TBAAL has continued to create strong ties among many emerging and well known artists and scholars. In the organization's early history (1977), it established a professional Resident Touring Company called the Third World Players. Renowned actress Regina Taylor was a member of that company in 1978 and other

artists such as Erykah Badu are a product of the Academy.

The 'cultural icon' of the Dallas/Fort Worth area, TBAAL presents and produces exciting cultural arts programs annually in dance, theatre, music, literary, fine, and visual arts. Local and emerging artists participate in TBAAL programs, and noted artists and celebrities have participated such as: Oleta Adams, Debbie Allen, Maya Angelou, Roy Ayers, Akin Babatunde, Obba Babatunde, Erykah Badu, Romare Bearden, The Barrett Sisters, Angela Bofill, Avery Brooks, Cab Calloway, Bill Cosby, Ruby Dee, Ossie Davis*, Mari Evans, Antonio Fargas, Kim Fields, Lou Gossett, William Greaves, Alex Haley, Irma P. Hall, Tramaine Hawkins, Jennifer Holliday, Linda Hopkins, Kim Jordan, Ella Joyce, Eartha Kitt, Dr. C. Eric Lincoln, Les McCann, Barbara McNair, Garrett Morris, Roger Mosley, Tyler Perry, Florence Quivar, Phylicia Rashad, Dan Rather, Esther Rolle, Sonia Sanchez, Karen Clark-Sheard, KiKi Shephard, Carole Simpson, Mavis Staples, Glenn Turman, Cicely Tyson, Albertina Walker, Margaret Walker*, Dionne Warwick, Lillias White, Hal Williams, Nancy Wilson, Vickie Winans, the late James Cleveland and many more.

TBAAL is the only African-American multidisciplined cultural arts organization in the country housed inside a major convention center, which increases the awareness of African American cultural history.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I like to recognize the Dallas Youth Council of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The purpose of the Youth Council is to inform youth of the problems affecting Black people and other minority groups as well as work towards those measures to advance the economic, educational, social, and political status of African Americans and other minority groups and to stimulate an appreciation of the African American contribution to civilization. I commend Bosha Jagers, President, Tayana White, 1st Vice President, Crystal Armstrong, 2nd Vice President; Danielle Whyte, Secretary; Nucleous Johnson, Treasurer and Linda Darden-Lydia, Youth Advisor for their hard work in my district towards betterment of younger generation.

Let me just say in closing, that Black History Month should be a time for reflection and appreciation; a time to reflect on the accomplishments of African-Americans throughout this country and throughout our history, accomplishments that often were made in the face of racism, of poverty, and unequal opportunity. It should be a time to increase our awareness and understanding of African-American history and culture, and a time to reaffirm our understanding of our rich cultural diversity, our commitment to social equality, and our support of racial justice.

COMMENDING JOSEPH CRISOSTOMO UPON HIS BEING NAMED GUAM'S SMALL BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR FOR 2006

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of Mr. Joseph Crisostomo of Guam and to commend him on being honored as the 2006 Small Business Person of the Year. Each year the U.S. Small Business Administration Guam Branch Office solicits nominations from our community for this award. This year Mr. Crisostomo has earned this distinction and his nomination will go forward for national recognition as well.

Mr. Crisostomo, who family, friends, employees, and customers know as ''Joey,'' is widely recognized and well respected within our island community as a formidable and successful business leader. His has an impressive record of experience in the sales and automotive industries and he has built a reputation of hard work and strong leadership.

The son of Jose R. and Rosario Sanchez Crisostomo, Joey grew up in a military family and developed an interest in cars and motorcycles at an early stage in life. He graduated from John F. Kennedy High School in 1977, and began working at a local company on the island stocking auto parts and assembling motorcycles. After spending several years in Idaho and Hawaii in the industry, he returned to his home island of Guam in 1992 to work in car sales and to serve as the sales manager for two local companies. In 1999, the local Chrysler dealership folded but Joey was instrumental in securing the parts and service agreement with Chrysler International to ensure the Chrysler name remained on Guam.

Despite weak economic conditions, Joey successfully took risk and opened Cars Plus, LLC. Joey demonstrated his ability to start up a new business from the bottom. Today, Cars Plus has grown from a service and parts company to a full line car dealership. Joey has guided the company over consecutive years of record growth, and the business has expanded in employees, size, and sales.

Joey is not only a strong and successful business leader on our island. He has contributed to our community in many ways with corporate sponsorships, board memberships, and his personal time. He is an active member of the Guam Chamber of Commerce and the Guam Visitor's Bureau Sports Tourism Committee. In particular, he has devoted his time to youth programs and youth organizations. Among the many organizations that have benefited from his contributions are Guam's Youth Life Program, the Guam Juvenile Drug Court Program, Operation Outreach USA, the Guam Football Association, the Global Young Leaders Conference, the Guam Girls Fast Pitch Softball League, the Boy Scouts of America, the Make-a-Wish Foundation, the American Red Cross, and the American Cancer Society.

As an avid racer, Joey has also promoted Guam internationally having competed in many races. Today we take this occasion to recognize Joey's achievements and his contributions to our community. I join his wife, Joyce, his daughters, Lenora and Jennifer, and his son, Joey, in honoring his accomplishments and in commending him as the Small Business Person of the Year for 2006. Our community wishes him the best of success as he pursues future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, had I been present for the votes on Wednesday, February 15, 2006, I would have voted as follows:

Rollcall Vote 10: I would have voted in favor of H.R. 4745, making supplemental appropriations for FY 2006 for the Small Business Administration's disaster loan program.

Rollcall Vote 11: I would have voted in favor of S. Con. Res. 79, expressing the sense of Congress that no United States assistance should be provided directly to the Palestinian Authority if any representative political party holding a majority of parliamentary seats within the Palestinian Authority maintains a position calling for the destruction of Israel.

Had I been present for the votes on Thursday, February 16, 2006, I would have voted as follows: .

Rollcall Vote 12: I would have voted in favor of H. Con. Res. 341, condemning the Government of Iran for violating its international nuclear nonproliferation obligations and expressing support for efforts to report Iran to the United Nations Security Council.

Rollcall Vote 13: I would have voted against the ruling of the Chair tabling the privileged resolution by Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi on the budget reconciliation spending cuts legislation.

TRIBUTE TO ERIN LAVERY, WINNER OF THE PRUDENTIAL SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY AWARDS

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Erin Lavery, of Huntington, WV for being named a top honoree in the 2006 Prudential Spirit of Community Award. I would like to congratulate and honor this innovative young woman who has shown exemplary volunteer service in her community.

Ms. Lavery is being recognized for organizing a monthlong nutrition and physical fitness education program that included the use of pedometers by all 1,600 students and faculty at Huntington High School. As an athlete and lifelong volunteer, Erin wanted to help classmates and staff members develop a commitment to healthy eating habits and physical activity. Motivated by the high rate of obesity that is prevalent in West Virginia, she states that she wanted to take a proactive stand to do something about the problem.

Erin had heard about a small pilot program using pedometers at a nearby school, and thought that idea could be of a comprehensive health education program for her entire school. She developed handouts and a video to introduce her program, and then recruited student volunteers to help her distribute pedometers donated by the county health department to all students and teachers, along with sheets for them to record the number of steps taken each week. To encourage participation, Erin publicized the program through

school and community media, and awarded random prizes for turning in completed record sheets. She also hung 252 large posters of nutrition and fitness information all over the school, and arranged for taste tests and fitness demonstrations during lunch. After she had collected and analyzed their data, Erin found that 35 percent of the participants had increased their activity level, and 62 percent said they were more motivated to live a healthier lifestyle.

The program that brought this innovative young woman to our attention—The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards—was created by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals in 1995 to show youth volunteers that their contributions are critically important and highly valued, and to inspire other young people to follow their example.

Ms. Lavery should be extremely proud to have been singled out from the thousands of dedicated volunteers who participated in this years program. I fully applaud Ms. Lavery for her initiative in seeking to make her community, and West Virginia as a whole, a better place to live, and for the positive impact she has had on the lives of others. She has demonstrated a level of commitment and accomplishment that is truly extraordinary in today's world, and deserves our sincere admiration and respect. Her actions show that young Americans can—and do—play important roles in our communities, and that America's community spirit continues to hold tremendous promise for the future.

RECOGNIZING THE DEDICATION OF THE E. PAT LARKINS COMMUNITY CENTER IN POMPANO BEACH, FLORIDA

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. E. Pat Larkins, Commissioner of the City of Pompano Beach, Florida, on the occasion of the dedication of the E. Pat Larkins Community Center. Commissioner Larkins has been a good friend to me and to the citizens of Pompano Beach for more than 20 years.

Born to a carpenter father and a mother who picked beans for a living, Pat has piled success on top of success throughout his life. In the process, he has made possible opportunities for African-Americans they would not have seen otherwise. In 1971, at a time when black-owned companies found it difficult to make headway in the construction industry, Pat Larkins helped start the Broward Minority Contractors' Association to promote the interests of African-American builders.

In 1985, Pat became the first black mayor of the City of Pompano Beach. In all, he has been elected 10 times, for a total of 20 years, during which he has also served three terms as Vice Mayor. Pat Larkins has been recognized numerous times as a fine citizen and an enormous credit to his city and to the people of Broward County, Florida. He is a great American, and I am proud to call him my friend.

Today's naming of the E. Pat Larkins Community Center is a fitting tribute to this excellent man. On behalf of my colleagues in the House of Representatives and all of the residents of Florida's 23rd Congressional District, I congratulate Pat for this honor and wish him health, happiness, and continued success in the future.

HONORING THE LIFETIME OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF CHUCK WU

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the lifetime of accomplishments of Mr. Wu Jia Chi, affectionately known to us on Guam as ''Chuck Wu'' and to recognize his humanitarianism. Mr. Wu was born in Taipei, Taiwan on February 21, 1921. He immigrated to Guam in 1971 and opened a small business in Harmon. His business was the first of many successful enterprises he has established on Guam during the last quarter century. Today Mr. Wu is a well respected resident on our island of Guam and in the Pacific Region. His entrepreneurial spirit, his commitment to his family, and his dedication to our community inspires us all.

Mr. Wu is a pioneer in the business community on Guam and is a leader within his own Chinese community. His vision and determination have contributed to his success, and he has used this success to help many nonprofit organizations and worthwhile causes. He is one who has given back to the community through his involvement and his time. He is a dynamic force and his efforts and volunteerism have helped civic organizations on our island on many occasions.

Mr. Wu has never lost his firm belief in the importance of preserving cultural traditions and customs. He established the Chinese School of Guam in 1978 and served as the school's principal for 7 years. He continues to advocate for the improvement of our schools and the development of our young students, both within the Chinese community and throughout our island.

Mr. Wu's commitment to serving and leading the Chinese community was recognized in his appointment as a commissioner for Overseas Chinese Affairs since 1991. He was also the president of the Chinese School Foundation of Guam from 1989 to 1993. Moreover, from 1985 to 1989, Mr. Wu was the president of the United Chinese Association of Guam. Mr. Wu also served as president of the Sea Transport Association of Guam from 1982 to 1985. In 1993 he was honored as the U.S. Small Business Advocate of the Year.

Mr. Wu has made a lasting impression on our island of Guam and his leadership in our community has improved our island significantly. I join his wife Shiu-Fong Lai-Wu, his sons, Fong, Albert, John, and Thomas, his daughters-in-law, Shaina, Sandra, and Janet, and his grandchildren, Vera, Valerie, Stefanie, Alexander, Sophia, Shaun, Chucky, Kaile, and Tommy, and all the people of Guam, in commending Chuck Wu for his lifetime of accomplishments.

TRIBUTE TO SAMUEL J. TENENBAUM

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to a man who has embraced God's admonition to ''do unto others as you would have them do unto you'' as his personal motto. Samuel J. Tenenbaum has been honored as the United Way of the Midlands' Humanitarian of the Year, and I can think of no one more deserving of this recognition.

Sam and I have been friends longer than I would like to remember. He has always been a loyal supporter and constant advisor, whether I seek his advice or not. He and his wife Inez are dear friends and true kindred spirits. So when the news images of the devastation in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina spurred me to call on Columbia Mayor Bob Coble to initiate an effort in South Carolina to welcome those displaced by this enormous tragedy, we both immediately asked Sam to lead the operation that became known as South Carolina—S.C.—Cares.

Under Sam's leadership, S.C. Cares became the model for an effective response to a natural disaster. He assembled thousands of volunteers, every service provider imaginable, and public and private sector organizations to be housed at a community center to provide a one-stop-shop to meet each and every need of our guests from the gulf coast. Sam's adherence to the golden rule meant our guests would stay in hotel rooms not shelters. He provided them with dignity, sustenance, and many times his own personal emotional or financial support. Sam worked around the clock, not because he had to, but because he couldn't sleep until he knew the needs of all our guests were met. Sam was the heart and soul of S.C. Cares, and he embodies the enormity of the compassion this community has to offer.

Although the S.C. Cares center closed its doors nearly 3 months ago, Sam is still involved with the gulf coast guests that remain in the Midlands. He is also taking the experience of S.C. Cares, and transforming it into an ongoing effort to address homelessness in South Carolina's capitol city. Sam knows that if our community could show such compassion for strangers from the gulf coast, we can extend the same graciousness to those who are homeless in our town. He is working with Mayor Coble to create an operation similar to the S.C. Cares center for Columbia's homeless that would provide social services, medical services, counseling, job training, and other programs in a one-stop-shop setting. Access to services and the support of a community can go a long way to transforming those who have been forgotten back into productive citizens. Sam's compassion is as limitless as his vision.

After working 33 years in his family's business, Chatham Steel Corporation, Sam retired in 2000 and dedicated himself to his community. Currently he serves on 19 boards and commissions, which demonstrate the diversity of his passions. His love of his faith manifests in his membership of the governing boards of the Columbia Jewish Federation and the Anti-Defamation League of B'Nai B'Rith, Southeast

Region. His devotion to animals is exemplified in his service as the development chair for Pet Project. His dedication to education is clear from his membership on the Allen University Presidential Advisory Board and Junior Achievement. His commitment to social causes runs the gamut from his chairmanship of the Alston Wilkes Foundation and membership on Habitat for Humanity's board. And these only touch the surface of his many current associations, and the 50 previous boards and commissions on which he has served.

Sam's list of awards is just as impressive. Back in 1978, the Columbia Record recognized him as one of 10 for the Future. Obviously that prophecy has been fulfilled. He has won numerous awards for his contributions to the arts, for his philanthropy, and for his community service. Governor Dick Riley bestowed South Carolina's highest honor, the Order of the Palmetto, on Sam in 1985. More than two decades later, Sam is continuing his life-long dedication to his community and its people.

Mr. Speaker, I invite you and my colleagues to join me in applauding Samuel Tenenbaum for his lifetime of service. As my father, a fundamentalist minister, once counseled me, "the world would much rather see a sermon than to hear one." Sam has been providing a living example of the Golden Rule his entire life, and his recognition as the Humanitarian of the Year is just another affirmation of his leadership and compassion.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR (RETIRED) GEORGE SMALL

HON. JIM GIBBONS

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a constituent of mine, Major, Retired, George Small. At 98 years of age, Major Small is the oldest living survivor of the Bataan Death March in the State of Nevada.

Major Small entered active duty for the U.S. Army on April 25, 1941 where he trained to be a Chemical Warfare Officer. He was assigned stateside until he was transferred to Manila, Philippines 6 weeks before the start of World War II and came to Bataan on December 24, 1941 where he was assigned to the 31st Infantry. The 31st was involved in the intense fighting until their surrender on April 9, 1942. After the Bataan Death march, Major Smalls spent 3 years and 5 months as a POW in five different camps until his liberation on September 10, 1945.

Major Small was discharged from the Army on November 26, 1946 and remained in the Army Reserve until his retirement on March 1, 1968. Major Small earned the American Defense Service Medal, with bronze star, the American Campaign Medal, the Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, with 2 bronze stars, the Distinguished Unit Badge, with 2 oak leaf clusters, the Combat Infantry Badge, The Philippine Liberation Ribbon, with bronze star, the WWII Victory Medal, and the POW Medal.

Please join me in congratulating this great Nevadan for the sacrifices he has made for this country and to extend him our wishes for continued health and prosperity as he celebrates his 98th birthday. Congratulations, Major George Small.

TRIBUTE TO ALEXANDRA McGREGOR

HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a young constituent of mine, Alexandra McGregor, and to speak to her efforts to support our troops, both at home and aboard.

A few weeks ago I came across a story of a young girl starting a grassroots effort, for a "National Support the Troops Day." After watching a news report of a fallen: soldier; Alexandra was inspired to contact her local, State, and Federal officials with her idea. I stand here today because of Alexandra and her efforts.

Throughout the calendar year Americans set aside days to honor great patriots, leaders, and fallen soldiers who have given their lives to defend the freedom that Americans cherish. These men and women should be honored and I, like all of my colleagues, honor their memory with my work in this great body. However, we as Americans do not have an official day to salute our active-duty soldiers. Today, there are over one million men and women who serve our country. These brave individuals deserve our respect and admiration for their courage to protect all Americans.

With Alexandra as my inspiration, today I am introducing a resolution that would mark March 26th, "Support The Troops Day." With this resolution I ask all Americans to participate in a moment of silence on March 26th to honor the hard work and accomplishments of our soldiers both at home and aboard.

COMMEMORATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SAINT VASILIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH IN PEABODY, MASSACHUSETTS

HON. JOHN F. TIERNEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud member of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, to honor the 100th anniversary of the Saint Vasilios Greek Orthodox Church in Peabody, Massachusetts. The local Greek population, with St. Vasilios as one of its bedrock institutions, has been and continues to be a vital part of the Peabody community.

The first Greek immigrants arrived in Peabody at the turn of the last century. As their numbers increased, they pooled their resources to buy their first property, a simple wooden building on Walnut Street which they modeled into a house of worship. On February 26, 1906, they were incorporated and chartered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, naming their parish "St. Vasilios."

By 1912, the parish relocated to a larger property on what is now called Paleologos Street. There they built a new church, and soon after built a school for teaching their children Greek culture and language. This was only the sixth such school in the United States, and it has operated without interruption ever since. The Byzantine style church which was completed on the site and dedicated in 1917 remains a house of worship to this day.

This week in my district, thousands of Hellenic American families will commemorate the 100th anniversary of St. Vasilios Greek Orthodox Church with religious services and festivities. I congratulate the clergy and the congregation of St. Vasilios for reaching this noteworthy milestone. The church continues to be a vibrant part of the Greek community in Peabody, serving as a house of worship and a gathering place. The church provides a vital link to the past and to the Greek homeland, its culture and religion. Through its school and the celebration of the rich heritage and language of Greece, the people of St. Vasilios are ensuring that the values and traditions upon which the church was founded will live on for future generations.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall Nos. 5, 6, 7, had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

INTRODUCTION OF THE FOREIGN INVESTMENT SECURITY IMPROVEMENT ACT

HON. PETER T. KING

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support the Foreign Investment Security Improvement Act of 2006, a bill to make certain that there is a full and complete investigation into the national security implications of the proposed acquisition of U.S. port terminal operations by Dubai Ports (DP) World—and to ensure Congress' crucial oversight role with respect to this transaction. I introduce this legislation today with support of my Ranking Member of the Committee on Homeland Security, the Honorable BENNY THOMPSON, and 80 bipartisan colleagues.

This legislation, and the message it sends about the importance of the national security concerns with the proposed deal, is crucial given what appears to be the cursory review of the serious national security questions that exist regarding the acquisition of port terminal operations by a company that is wholly-owned by the Government of Dubai.

SERIOUS NATIONAL SECURITY CONCERNS EXIST OVER DP WORLD ACQUISITION

On February 13, 2006, shareholders from Peninsular and Oriental Steamship Navigation Co. (P&O) approved an acquisition proposal from DP World, a port operations company owned by the government of Dubai, a member of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The deal would position DP World to conduct terminal operations at six U.S. ports: the Port of New York and New Jersey, the Port of New Orleans, the Port of Miami, the Port of Baltimore, the Port of Philadelphia, and the Port of Newark.

I have serious concerns over the national security implications of the proposed takeover of U.S. port operations by a government who less than five years ago was documented as having significant ties to terrorism. As the 9/11 Commission reported, money used to carry out the September 11th attacks was funneled through UAE banks, many of the hijackers traveled to the U.S. from the UAE, at least one of the hijackers was born in the UAE, and the UAE was used as a crossroads for the shipment of nuclear material to Iran.

I recognize that the UAE has provided significant assistance to our efforts in the War on Terror since 9/11. I commend the UAE for its willingness to be an ally in the War on Terror, including military cooperation, intelligence sharing and money laundering prevention and I encourage its continued efforts in securing our world. However, these positive commitments do not mean that we should ignore the real security concerns that exist with respect to this transaction.

Late last year, DP World and P&O requested that the Committee for Financial Investment in the United States (CFIUS) review the transaction for national security concerns. CFIUS, an interagency committee chaired by the Department of Treasury and with members from twelve other agencies, was established by Executive Order in 1975 and assigned to carry out the national security reviews mandated under Section 721 of the Defense Production Act of 1950. Current law requires CFIUS to review proposed foreign acquisitions to evaluate national security concerns during a 30–day initial review period. If national security concerns remain after this initial review period, the statute requires a more thorough 45–day investigation, followed by a Presidential evaluation of the proposed transaction. In the case of DP World, the Committee incredibly raised no national security objections to the proposed deal after a 30–day review period, and the more detailed 45–day investigation was not triggered.

Members of Congress, state and local officials responsible for port security and the public at large were understandably shocked to first learn from press reports that this transaction had been approved in thirty days, without a formal investigation and without any attempt by the Administration to provide basic information on the deal in advance. I was also shocked to learn that the CFIUS approval was made by mid-level officials and that senior decision makers in the Administration—including the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary Homeland Security and the President of the United States—were not informed until they became aware of the CFIUS approval via press reports. It also appears that state and local officials who oversee the affected ports were never consulted or otherwise informed of the DP World acquisition.

In response to considerable public pressure over the past few weeks, the Administration and DP World have come forward to offer only limited information on the details of the 30-day CFIUS review, the national security concerns examined, and the measures taken to address those concerns. For informed judgments to be made, significantly more information is needed.

DP World and the Administration recently announced an agreement to subject the DP World deal to a 45-day CFIUS investigation. While this announcement is a step in the right direction there remain a number of serious questions about the company and its security practices that must be answered before the deal can proceed. Congress must be made aware of the findings so that we can be certain our nation's homeland security is not being undermined.

As this 45-day investigation begins, more questions exist than answers. I stress that this 45-day investigation must not be viewed as a 45-day campaign to ''educate'' Congress on the limited work that has already been done by CFIUS. I am troubled by recent statements of senior administration officials that suggest that the focus of these 45 days should be on addressing so-called misconceptions of Congress. Rather, this 45-day review must be vigorously pursued by all relevant federal agencies to scrutinize the work that has been done on the proposed DP World transaction, conduct additional reviews where appropriate, and extract additional commitments from the company where necessary.

Consistent with the legislation I introduce today, I expect CFIUS to review U.S. Coast Guard assessments of foreign ports where DP World operates, perform background checks of DP World officers and security personnel, and to provide a thorough review of national security and port security impacts—in consultation with state and local officials responsible for port security. It is essential that CFIUS recognize the significant concerns that exist regarding U.S. critical infrastructure—an area of national security that has not traditionally been recognized in the CFIUS process. I expect CFIUS to fully investigate the financing and control of DP World, including the involvement of UAE and Dubai government officials in company operations particularly current and former government officials that may have ties to terrorist organizations and/or the Taliban. I expect that CFIUS will review the company structure and the potential for terrorist sympathizers to infiltrate company operations—including port operations in the U.S. We must take all appropriate steps to ensure that al-Qa'ida and other terrorist organizations are not learning about our vulnerabilities based on access to DP World operations.

Finally, I urge CFIUS to make clear that this 45-day investigation is a serious, thorough review that will address all relevant national security concerns and to assert the right of the President to block the deal or extract additional assurances should national security concerns require such actions. It is crucial that the President make clear that CFIUS will not prejudge the results of this investigation.

CONGRESS MUST STAND READY TO ACT

While I am encouraged by recent developments taken to voluntarily begin an investigation, I believe Congress must nonetheless stand ready to act pending the results of the 45-day investigation. The Foreign Investment Security Improvement Act of 2006 would impose an immediate suspension of existing CFIUS approval of the DP World transaction granted on January 17, 2006; require a 45-day CFIUS investigation of the DP World transaction, to include (1) a review of U.S. Coast Guard assessments of foreign ports where DP World operates, (2) background checks of DP World officers and security personnel, (3) an evaluation of the impact of port security by DP World's control of U.S. port operations, and (4) consultation with the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Secretary of Homeland Security and State and local officials, an evaluation of the impact on national security of DP World operations at affected U.S. ports. Following the 45-day review, the bill would require, within fifteen days, a report to Congress providing the detailed findings of the investigation and the Presidential determination. Congress would then have 30 days to reverse an approval of the transaction through legislation.

At a minimum, CFIUS should use this legislation to inform its investigation and subsequent notification of Congress. As Chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, I intend to work with my Committee Members to aggressively scrutinize the findings of CFIUS following its investigation, including a thorough review of the intelligence assessments utilized.

BROADER CONCERNS EXIST WITH THE CFIUS PROCESS

While the legislation introduced today only addresses the short-term concerns with the CFIUS review of the DP World transaction, I believe the current controversy has revealed that the larger CFIUS review framework is broken. Beyond the review of the proposed DP World transaction, I want to make clear that I intend to work with my colleagues in the Congress to conduct a comprehensive review of the CFIUS process and ensure that the Federal Government's review of foreign investments properly account for the security concerns of a post-9/11 world. I specifically note several concerns that I have with respect to the CFIUS process:

The current statute was enacted at the end of the cold war in the 1980s, when encouraging foreign investment was a priority. The 9/11 attacks changed our thinking and highlighted the need to more carefully scrutinize national security concerns.

Current CFIUS practices effectively nullify the statute's requirement for a more extensive investigation where national security concerns are raised with respect to a transaction involving a foreign government-controlled entity.

Current CFIUS practices create an incentive to avoid the formal 45-day investigation and subsequent Presidential decision because of a perceived negative impact on foreign investment and a conflict with the U.S. open investment policy.

The compressed 30-day initial review period effectively provides CFIUS with only 23 days to review all national security issues presented by a proposed transaction.

''National security'' is defined narrowly under CFIUS regulations, and does not explicitly embrace concerns over U.S. critical infrastructure. While the Departments of Homeland Security, Justice and Defense have moved to utilize an expanded view of national security, there is concern that many of the CFIUS members rely on an overly constrained ''pre-9/11'' view of national security.

From 1997 through 2004, CFIUS received notices for 451 proposed or completed acquisitions. The committee initiated only eight investigations during that period.

Enforcement of assurances provided during CFIUS review is the responsibility of the agency requesting those assurances. It is not clear whether sufficient resources are devoted to ensure parties to a transaction live up to their commitments.

Congress is only notified when a full 45-day investigation and Presidential decision are completed. The lack of notification has led to the situation where the concerns of senior Administration officials, Members of Congress and the general public cannot be expressed until after a deal is done. This lack of transparency must change.

Possible long-term CFIUS reforms to consider include the following:

Elevate the Secretary of Homeland Security to serve as co-chair of CFIUS (the Secretary of the Treasury is the current chair) to increase emphasis on security issues;

Abolish the current statutory interpretation by CFIUS by imposing a standard 75-day review, rather than the two-tiered 30/45 day structure, providing additional time for review and removing the negative stigma associated with an investigation;

Expand Congressional notification and oversight with respect to CFIUS reviews;

Revise the statutory factors to be considered in CFIUS national security reviews to include critical infrastructure concerns; and

Require vigorous agency oversight and enforcement of letters of assurance provided by parties to a transaction.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my Ranking Member, Mr. Thompson, for his support in developing this legislation, and I look forward to working with him to ensure that our national security is not undermined by the proposed DP World acquisition. I urge the Administration to be diligent in investigating this transaction and to recognize Congress' important role in safeguarding our national security.

HONORING AIRMAN ALECIA GOOD FOR HER AIR FORCE SERVICE

HON. CATHY McMORRIS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Miss McMORRIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to posthumously recognize Senior Airman Alecia Good for her bravery and heroism while serving to protect our freedoms. Airman Good was recently deployed from the 92nd Communication Squadron at Fairchild Air Force Base to the Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa. On February 17, 2006, Airman Good gave her life with eight Marines and another Air Force Airman when two U.S. Marine Corps helicopters crashed into the Gulf of Aden off the coast of northern Djibouti.

Airman Good was known to her family and friends at Fairchild for her positive outlook on life. She loved her country and was proud to serve it. In December, she volunteered to deploy to Africa. Her mission was to provide satellite communication support for United States military personnel training allied countries how to defend themselves against terrorism. The Joint Task Force also worked with families in humanitarian efforts such as drilling wells, vaccinating herds, or raising crops.

Today, her family, friends, and country say their final goodbye to Airman Good. She leaves a daughter, Tabitha, who has her mother's magnificent smile.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Senior Airman Alecia Good for fearlessly sacrificing her own life in order to protect our freedoms from the evils of terrorism. I invite my colleagues to join me in a moment of silence for Airman Good as well as all of the men and women who lost their lives in the recent helicopter crash while serving in the Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa mission.

HONORING THE DEDICATED SERVICE OF LIBBY JOHNSON

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Libby Johnson for her tremendous service to Tennessee's Sixth Congressional District while working in my Washington, D.C., office.

After serving as my executive assistant, the Sumner County native is moving on to greener pastures. Her last day is today, and although my staff and I are sad to see Libby go, we are glad she has taken a job that will further her career and is worthy of her incredible abilities.

Libby's conscientious work ethic and incomparable enthusiasm have served her well in the fast-paced world of Congress. Those same abilities also have gained her the respect of her colleagues. Now, she will share her tremendous abilities and experience with a new employer, who should be ecstatic over having found such a fine person.

As busy as she has been, Libby always took time to say a kind word to those around her. It seems she has never met a stranger during her time on the Hill. With her vivacious personality and contagious smile, she certainly has made a lasting impression on virtually everyone she has met.

Libby, you have endeared yourself to me and my staff. We will miss you and wish you well in your future endeavors.

CONGRATULATIONS TO KEKAHA FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the Kekaha Federal Credit Union on winning the 2005 Dora Maxwell Social Responsibility Award.

Chartered in 1938 to serve the employees of the Kekaha Sugar Company, the Kekaha Federal Credit Union has expanded its membership to include all businesses and individuals throughout the island of Kauai. It also acts as a Community Development Credit Union, catering to the financial needs of low-income individuals. The Kekaha Federal Credit Union has over 1,500 members.

In January 2004, the Kekaha Federal Credit Union initiated a partnership with the Kekaha Elementary School to support and encourage student achievement and raise school-wide standardized rest scores. Kekaha Elementary School serves a community of 3,700 residents, dominated by low-income, native Hawaiian and immigrant families. At the school, 11 percent of the student body speak English as a second language, 49 percent are Native Hawaiian (a historically disadvantaged group), and 62 percent qualify for free or reduced lunches due to low-income status. Many students live in single-parent homes or face situations that are not conducive to learning.

As part of their partnership, the credit union and the school established the Maximum Communication Journal program, also known as the MAX Program. The MAX Program has become the cornerstone to learning at the school, as students must keep a journal of class activities and homework, including notes and notices from teachers and the school. Each student is then required to have his/her parents or guardians read and sign the MAX notebook each week. This ensures communication between the students, parents, teachers, and the school.

With the incentive of prizes that include boogie boards, movie passes and bicycles, students are instructed to write in their MAX journals and have their parents read and sign it every week. In order to earn a chance to win a prize, students have to write in their MAX journals and have their parents read and sign it every week. Prizes were also given to the class with the highest percentage of completed and signed journals. Prizes are given at the school's monthly assembly. Often, parents and guardians attend these assemblies.

By all measures, this program has been a great success. The program's goal of 80 percent student participation has been achieved for the past four semesters and, more importantly, Kekaha Elementary School has achieved passing levels in the State of Hawaii standardized tests each of the last two times the tests have been administered.

Students and parents alike are excited and have a sense of accomplishment. Billy Smith, the principal of Kekaha Elementary School, explained: "The celebration assemblies are fun and crazy. Parents are invited to attend and the kids are happy and excited." Students have become more responsible as they see tangible results for their MAX participation.

Dora Maxwell is recognized as one of the original pioneers of the credit union movement. This award was created to promote social responsibility among credit unions by formally recognizing and celebrating their social achievements. The Dora Maxwell Social Responsibility Recognition Award is awarded to credit unions, based on seven asset-size categories, and to specific chapters for outstanding social responsibility projects in the community in which they are located.

I want to recognize and commend Kekaha Federal Credit Union not only for sponsoring this important and innovative program, but for receiving this national recognition by the Credit Union National Association. This award is just another example of the great work and strong personal relationships that our credit unions provide their respective communities, and represents a perfect union of the very best of credit unions and community service.

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1511–S1554

Measures Introduced: Eight bills and three resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2334–2341, S. Res. 384–385, and S. Con. Res. 82. **Pages S1539–40**

Measures Reported:

Report to accompany S. 1614, to extend the authorization of programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965. (S. Rept. No. 109–218) **Page S1539**

Measures Passed:

National Sibling Connection Day: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 381, designating March 1, 2006, as National Sibling Connection Day, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S1553**

Read Across America Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 384, designating March 2, 2006, as "Read Across America Day". **Page S1554**

USA PATRIOT Act Additional Reauthorizing Amendments: Senate continued consideration of S. 2271, to clarify that individuals who receive FISA orders can challenge nondisclosure requirements, that individuals who receive national security letters are not required to disclose the name of their attorney, that libraries are not wire or electronic communication service providers unless they provide specific services, taking action on the following amendments proposed thereto: **Pages S1515–28**

Pending:

Frist Amendment No. 2895, to establish the enactment date of the Act. **Page S1515**

Frist Amendment No. 2896 (to Amendment No. 2895), of a perfecting nature. **Page S1515**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 69 yeas to 30 nays (Vote No. 23), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, having voted in the affirmative, Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the bill. **Pages S1522–23**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the bill at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 1, 2006, with a vote on final passage of the bill to occur at 10 a.m. **Page S1554**

LIHEAP Funding—Cloture Motion: Senate began consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 2320, to make available funds included in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program for fiscal year 2006. **Page S1522**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill and, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur on Thursday, March 2, 2006. **Page S1522**

Subsequently, the motion to proceed was withdrawn. **Page S1522**

Escort Committee Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the President of the Senate be authorized to appoint a committee on the part of the Senate to join with a like committee on the part of the House of Representatives to escort the Honorable Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Italy, into the House Chamber for the joint meeting on Wednesday, March 1, 2006. **Page S1553**

Messages From the President: Senate received the following message from the President of the United States:

Transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the continuation of the national emergency blocking property of persons undermining democratic processes or institutions in Zimbabwe; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. (PM–41) **Page S1538**

Executive Communications: **Pages S1538–39**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S1540–41**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S1541–52**

Additional Statements: **Pages S1533–38**

Notices of Hearings/Meetings: **Page S1552**

Authorities for Committees To Meet: **Pages S1552–53**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—23) **Page S1523**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:45 a.m., and, adjourned at 7:19 p.m., until 9:30 a.m., on Wednesday, March 1, 2006. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on page S1554.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

APPROPRIATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Homeland Security concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2007 for the Department of Homeland Security, after receiving testimony from Michael Chertoff, Secretary of Homeland Security.

U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded open and closed hearings to examine current and future worldwide threats to the national security of the United States, after receiving testimony from John D. Negroponte, Director, and General Michael V. Hayden, USAF, Principal Deputy Director, both of the Office of National Intelligence; and Lieutenant General Michael D. Maples, USA, Director, Defense Intelligence Agency.

FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION BUDGET

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2007 for the Federal Transit Administration, Department of Transportation, after receiving testimony from Sandra Bushue, Deputy Administrator, Federal Transit Administration, Department of Transportation; Mayor Patrick L. McCrory, Charlotte, North Carolina, on behalf of the United States Conference of Mayors; and William Millar, American Public Transportation Association, Washington, D.C.

UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND CONTRIBUTIONS

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine proposed reforms of the Universal Service Fund (USF) contribution system, including the distribution side of the universal service equation, and wireless carriers providing mobile broadband services, after receiving testimony from Glen Post, CenturyTel, Inc., Monroe, Louisiana; Tom Simmons, Midcontinent Communications, Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Trent Boaldin, Epic Touch Company, Elkhart, Kansas; Bonnie Cramer, AARP, Raleigh, North Carolina; and Paul W. Garnett, CTIA—The Wireless Association, Washington, D.C.

PORT SECURITY

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the security of terminal operations at U.S. ports, after receiving testimony from Michael P. Jackson, Deputy Secretary, Admiral Jayson Ahern, Assistant Commissioner, Field Operations, Customs and Border Protection, and Rear Admiral Thomas H. Gilmour, Assistant Commandant for Prevention, United States Coast Guard, all of the Department of Homeland Security; H. Edward Bilkey, DP World, Dubai, United Arab Emirates; Robert Scavone, P&O Ports North America, Inc, Iselin, New Jersey; Tay Yoshitani, National Association of Waterfront Employers, and Christopher Koch, World Shipping Council, both of Washington, D.C.; and Michael Mitre, International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Los Angeles, California.

FOREST SERVICE BUDGET

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2007 for the Forest Service, after receiving testimony from Dale Bosworth, Chief, Forest Service, and Mark Rey, Under Secretary Natural Resources and Environment, both of the Department of Agriculture.

WATER REUSE AND RECYCLING PROGRAM

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Water and Power concluded a hearing to examine the current status of the Bureau of Reclamation Reuse and Recycling Program (Title XVI of Public Law 102–575), after receiving testimony from John W. Keys, III, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation, Department of the Interior; Betsy A. Cody, Specialist in Natural Resources Policy, Resources, Science, and Industry Division, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress; Virginia Grebbien, Orange County Water District, Fountain Valley, California; Thomas F. Donnelly, National Water Resources Association, Arlington, Virginia; and Richard Atwater, Inland Empire Utilities Agency, Chino, California, on behalf of the WateRuse Association.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE ACCESS ACT

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia concluded a hearing to examine S. 2060, to extend the District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999 and make certain improvements,

S. 1838, to provide for the sale, acquisition, conveyance, and exchange of certain real property in the District of Columbia to facilitate the utilization, development, and redevelopment of such property, and H.R. 3508, to authorize improvements in the operation of the government of the District of Columbia, after receiving testimony from Mayor Anthony A. William, Washington, D.C.; Sally L. Stroup, Assistant Secretary of Education for Postsecondary Education; and Paul Hoffman, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

OFF-RESERVATION GAMING

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine Indian gaming activities, focusing on land into trust and the two-part determination related to off-reservation gaming, after receiving testimony from George T. Skibine, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Policy and Economic Development for Indian Affairs; Ron Suppah, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, Pendleton; Cheryle A. Kennedy, Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, Grand Ronde; Carol York, Hood River County Commissioner, Hood River, Oregon; Michael Lang, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Portland, Oregon; and Cheryl Schmit, Stand Up for California, Penryn.

NSA SURVEILLANCE AUTHORITY

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee resumed hearings to examine issues relating to wartime executive power and the NSA's surveillance authority, receiving testimony from R. James Woolsey, Booz Allen Hamilton, McLean, Virginia, Former Director of Central Intelligence; Harold Hongju Koh, Yale Law School, New Haven, Connecticut; Ken Gormley, Duquesne University School of Law, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Douglas W. Kmiec, Pepperdine University, Malibu, California; Bruce Fein, Fein and Fein, and Robert A. Levy, Cato Institute, both of Washington, D.C.; and Robert F. Turner, University of Virginia Center for National Security Law, Charlottesville.

Hearings recessed subject to the call.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Rules and Administration: Committee ordered favorably reported an original bill to provide greater transparency in the legislative process.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Committee on Veterans Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine certain legislative recommendations and concerns of wartime service-connected disabled veterans, after receiving testimony from Paul W. Jackson, David W. Gorman, and Joseph A. Violante, all of the Disabled American Veterans, Washington, D.C.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 19 public bills, H.R. 4805–4823; and 6 resolutions, H.J. Res. 79; H. Con. Res. 348; and H. Res. 697–700 were introduced. **Pages H449–50**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H450–52**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 4167, to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to provide for uniform food safety warning notification requirements (H. Rept. 109–379); and

H.R. 1071, to direct the Secretary of Energy to make incentive payments to the owners or operators of qualified desalination facilities to partially offset the cost of electrical energy required to operate such facilities, with an amendment (H. Rept. 109–380, Pt. 1). **Page H449**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Aderholt to act as Speaker Pro Tempore for today. **Page H391**

Mexico-United States Interparliamentary Group—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Members to the Mexico-United States Interparliamentary Group: Representatives Kolbe, Chairman and Representative McCaul of Texas, Vice-Chairman. **Page H393**

Committee Resignation: Read a letter from Representative Barrow wherein he resigned from the Committee on Education pending his appointment to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, effective immediately. **Page H393**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

A bill to facilitate shareholder consideration of proposals to make Settlement Common Stock under

the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act available to missed enrollees, eligible elders, and eligible persons born after December 18, 1971: S. 449, to facilitate shareholder consideration of proposals to make Settlement Common Stock under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act available to missed enrollees, eligible elders, and eligible persons born after December 18, 1971—clearing the measure for the President; **Pages H393–94**

Act Commemorating the LITE: H.R. 1096, amended, to establish the Thomas Edison National Historical Park in the State of New Jersey as the successor to the Edison National Historic Site, by a yea-and-nay vote of 399 yeas to 1 nay, Roll No. 14; **Pages H394–97, H414–15**

French Colonial Heritage National Historic Site Study Act of 2005: H.R. 1728, amended, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of designating the French Colonial Heritage Area in the State of Missouri as a unit of the National Park System; **Page H397**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: ''To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of designating portions of Ste. Genevieve Country in the State of Missouri as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes.''. **Page H397**

Recognizing the creation of the NASCAR-Historically Black Colleges and Universities Consortium: H. Res. 677, to recognize the creation of the NASCAR-Historically Black Colleges and Universities Consortium; **Pages H397–H400**

Celebrating the 40th anniversary of Texas Western's 1966 NCAA Basketball Championship and recognizing the groundbreaking impact of the title game victory on diversity in sports and civil rights in America: H. Res. 668, amended, to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Texas Western's 1966 NCAA Basketball Championship and recognizing the groundbreaking impact of the title game victory on diversity in sports and civil rights in America, by a yea-and-nay vote of 397 yeas with none voting ''nay'', Roll No. 15; **Pages H400–03, H415–16**

Louis Braille Bicentennial—Braille Literacy Commemorative Coin Act: H.R. 2872, amended, to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of Louis Braille; and **Pages H403–07**

Authorizing the President to award a gold medal on behalf of the Congress, collectively, to the Tuskegee Airmen in recognition of their unique military record, which inspired revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces: H.R. 1259, amended, to authorize the President to award a gold medal on behalf of the Congress, collectively, to the Tuskegee Airmen in recognition of their unique military record, which inspired revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces, by a yea and nay vote of 400 yeas with none voting ''nay'', Roll No. 16. **Pages H407–14, H416**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: ''To award a congressional gold medal on behalf of the Tuskegee Airmen, collectively, in recognition of their unique military record, which inspired revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces.''. **Page H416**

Presidential Message: Read a message from the President wherein he notified Congress of the continuation of the national emergency blocking the property of persons undermining democratic processes or institutions in Zimbabwe—referred to the Committee on International Relations and ordered printed (H. Doc. 109–93). **Page H414**

Discharge Petition: Representative Barrow moved to discharge the Committee on Rules from the consideration of H. Res. 614, providing for the consideration of H.R. 2429, to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage (Discharge Petition No. 11).

Recess: The House recessed at 4:15 p.m. and reconvened at 6:30 p.m. **Page H414**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on pages H391, H393.

Senate Referral: S. 2141 was referred to the Committee on Financial Services and the Committee on the Judiciary.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Three yea and nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H414–15, H415–16, H416. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 2 p.m. and adjourned at 11:54 p.m.

Committee Meetings

AIR FORCE AIR REFUELING RECAPITALIZATION

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Protection Forces held a hearing on the U.S. Air Force on Aerial Refueling Recapitalization Requirements. Testimony was heard from the following officials of the Department of the Air Force: LTG Christopher Kelly, USAF, Vice Commander, Air Mobility Command; LTG Donald Hoffman, USAF, Military Deputy, Office of the Assistant Secretary, Air Force (Acquisition); and LTG Donald J. Wetekam, USAF,

Deputy Chief of Staff, Logistics, Installations and Mission Support; and a public witness.

HURRICANE RECOVERY/FAIR HOUSING

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity held a hearing entitled "Fair Housing Issues in the Gulf Coast in the Aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita." Testimony was heard from Kim Kendrick, Assistant Secretary, Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, Department of Housing and Urban Development; and public witnesses.

PROGRESS SINCE 9/11—HEALTH RESPONSE TO TERRORIST ATTACKS

Committee on Government Reform: Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations held a hearing entitled "Progress Since 9/11: Protecting Public Health and Safety Against Terrorist Attacks." Testimony was heard from Cynthia Bascetta, Director, Health Care, GAO; John Howard, M.D., Director, National Institute for Occupational Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services; and public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on International Relations: Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations approved for full Committee action the following measures: H.R. 3189, amended, Central Asia Democracy and Human Rights Act of 2005; H. Con. Res, 320, amended, Calling on the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to immediately and unconditionally release Dr. Pham Hong Son and other political prisoners and prisoners of conscience; H. Res. 578, Concerning the Government of Romania's ban on intercountry adoptions and the welfare of orphaned or abandoned children in Romania; and H. Res. 675, Expressing disapproval of the Arab League's decision to hold its 2006 summit in Khartoum, Sudan and calling on the Arab League, the Government of Sudan, the Sudanese rebels, and the world community to do all they can to end acts of genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan.

OVERSIGHT—AFT GUN SHOW ENFORCEMENT

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security continued oversight hearings on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATFE) Part 2: Gun Show Enforcement. Testimony was heard from Michael R. Bouchard, Assistant Director (Field Operations), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Department of Justice; and public witnesses.

DOD'S INTELLIGENCE BUDGET; ACCORDANCE WITH THE FRAMEWORK

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Held a hearing on the Department of Defense's Intelligence Budget. Testimony was heard from Stephen Cambone, Under Secretary (Intelligence), Department of Defense.

The Committee also met in executive session concerning Accordance with the Framework.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, *p. D 125)*

S. 1989, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 57 Rolfe Square in Cranston, Rhode Island, shall be known and designated as the "Holly A. Charette Post Office". Signed on February 27, 2006. (Public Law 109–175)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2006

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2007 for the Library of Congress, Open World Leadership Council, and Government Accountability Office, 10:30 a.m., SD–138.

Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2007 for the Department of Education, 10:30 a.m., SD–124.

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Personnel, to hold hearings to examine active component, reserve component, and civilian personnel programs in review of the defense authorization request for fiscal year 2007, 9:30 a.m., SR–232A.

Subcommittee on Airland, to hold hearings to examine Army Transformation and the future combat systems acquisition strategy in review of the defense authorization request for fiscal year 2007 and the future years defense program, 2:30 p.m., SR–232A.

Full Committee, business meeting to consider pending military nominations, 4 p.m., SR–222.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: to hold hearings to examine regulatory relief proposals, 10 a.m., SD–538.

Committee on the Budget: to hold hearings to examine the President's budgetary proposals for fiscal year 2007 for the Department of Health and Human Services, 10 a.m., SD–608.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Disaster Prevention and Prediction, to hold hearings to examine winter storms, 2:30 p.m., SD–562.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: to hold an oversight hearing to examine the state of the economies

and fiscal affairs in the Territories of Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the United States Virgin Islands, 9:30 a.m., SD–366.

Subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests, to hold hearings to examine the role of the Forest Service and other Federal agencies in protecting the health and welfare of foreign guest workers carrying out tree planting and other service contracts on National Health System lands, and to consider related Forest Service guidance and contract modifications issued in recent weeks, 2:30 p.m., SD–366.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: to hold hearings to examine the status of the Yucca Mountain Project, 2:30 p.m., SD–628.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Subcommittee on Education and Early Childhood Development, to continue hearings to examine S. 2198, to ensure the United States successfully competes in the 21st century global economy, 10 a.m., SD–430.

Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine reauthorization of the Ryan White CARE Act relating to fighting the AIDS epidemic of today, 3 p.m., SD–430.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: to hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2007 for the Department of Homeland Security, 9:30 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on Indian Affairs: to hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Resources to examine the settlement of Cobell v. Norton, 9:30 a.m., SD–106.

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security and Citizenship, with the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology and Homeland Security, to hold joint hearings to examine Federal strategies to end border violence, 9 a.m., SD–226.

Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Norman Randy Smith, of Idaho, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, and Patrick Joseph Schiltz, to be United States District Judge for the District of Minnesota, 2 p.m., SD–226.

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Eric M. Thorson, of Virginia, to be Inspector General, Small Business Administration, 2 p.m., SR–428A.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to receive a closed briefing to examine certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, on Office of Inspector General, 9:30 a.m., 2362A Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, on Secretary of the Interior, 9 a.m., B–308 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Military Quality of Life, and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies, on public witnesses, 10 a.m., H–143 Capitol.

Subcommittee on Science, the Departments of State, Justice, and Commerce, and Related Agencies, on FCC, 2 p.m., H–309 Capitol.

Committee on Armed Services, hearing on the Fiscal Year 2007 National Defense Authorization Budget Request for the Department of the Air Force, 10 a.m., to hold a hearing on the Fiscal Year 2007 National Defense Authorization Budget Request for the Department of the Navy, 2 p.m., and to mark up H. Res. 645, Requesting the President and directing the Secretary of Defense to transmit to the House of Representatives all information in the possession of the President or the Secretary of Defense relating to the collection of information pertaining to persons inside the United States without obtaining court-ordered warrants authorizing the collection of such information and relating to the policy of the United States with respect to the gathering of counterterrorism intelligence within the United States, 6:30 p.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, hearing on the Fiscal Year 2007 National Defense Authorization Budget Request for the Department of Energy's Atomic Energy Defense Activities, 4:30 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Committee on the Budget, hearing on the Department of Defense Budget Priorities Fiscal Year 2007, 9:30 a.m., 210 Cannon.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, Subcommittee on Workforce Protections, hearing entitled ''Evaluating Health and Safety Regulations in the American Mining Industry,'' 12 p.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection, hearing entitled ''Car Title Fraud: Issues and Approaches for Keeping Consumers Safe on the Road,'' 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled ''Medicare Part D: Implementation of the New Drug Benefit,'' 2 p.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on Domestic and International Monetary Policy, Trade, and Technology, hearing entitled ''Foreign Investment, Jobs and National Security: The CFIUS Process,'' 2 p.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Government Reform, Subcommittee on Energy and Resources, hearing entitled ''Oil and Gas Royalties: The Facts, The Remedies,'' 2 p.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Federalism and the Census, hearing entitled ''Apportionment in the Balance: A Look Into the Progress of the 2010 Decennial Census,'' 10 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Government Management, Finance, and Accountability, hearing entitled ''U.S. Fiscal Outlook and the FY 2005 Governmentwide Financial Statements,'' 2 p.m., 2247 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs, hearing entitled ''Plain English Regulations: Helping the American Public Understand the Rules,'' 10 a.m., 2247 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, executive briefing on the acquisition of terminal operations in six United States ports by Dubai Port World, 5:30 p.m., H–405 Capitol.

Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Science, and Technology, hearing entitled ''The State of Interoperable Communications: Perspectives From State and Local Governments,'' 2 p.m., 311 Cannon.

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Courts, the Internet, and Intellectual Property, to mark up the following measures: H.R. 4742, To amend title 35, United States Code, to allow the Director of the Patent and Trademark Office to waive statutory provisions governing patents and trademarks in certain emergencies; and S. 1785, Vessel Hull Design Protection Amendments of 2005, 12 p.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security, and Claims, to begin hearings entitled ''The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act—Are We Fulfilling the Promise We Made to These Veterans of the Cold War When We Created the Program,'' Part 1, 4 p.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Resources, Subcommittee on Water and Power, oversight hearing entitled ''How the Federal Marketing Administrations Are Implementing the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and An Assessment of the Proposed Fiscal Year Budgets for These Agencies,'' 2 p.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Rules, to consider H.R. 4167, National Uniformity for Food Act of 2005, 2:30 p.m., H–313 Capitol.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, oversight hearing on the United States Coast Guard and the Federal Maritime Commission Fiscal Year Budget Requests, 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, oversight hearing on Agency Budgets and Priorities for Fiscal Year 2007 for the following Agencies: the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, 2 p.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Health, hearing on MedPAC's March Report on Medicare Payment Policies, 3 p.m., 1100 Longworth.

Joint Meetings

Joint Meetings: Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, to hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Resources to examine the settlement of Cobell v. Norton, 9:30 a.m., SD–106.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

9:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 1

Senate Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Senate will continue consideration of S. 2271, USA PATRIOT Act Additional Reauthorizing Amendments Act, with a vote on final passage of the bill to occur at 10 a.m.

Following the joint meeting, Senate will resume consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 3199, USA PATRIOT, Terrorism Prevention Reauthorization Act, with votes on certain procedural matters relating to cloture.

(At 10:30 a.m., Senators will meet in the Senate Chamber to proceed to the House of Representatives for a Joint Meeting of Congress, to begin at 11 a.m., to receive an address from Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister of Italy.)

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Wednesday, March 1

House Chamber

Program for Wednesday: The House will convene in Joint Meeting with the Senate for the purpose of receiving the Honorable Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Italy. Afterwards, the House will begin consideration of the following suspensions: (1) H. Con. Res. 316—Raising awareness and encouraging prevention of stalking by establishing January 2006 as ''National Stalking Awareness Month''; (2) H. Res. 357—Honoring Justice Sandra Day O'Connor; (3) H. Con. Res. 335—Honoring and praising the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People on the occasion of its 97th anniversary; and (4) S. 2271—USA PATRIOT Act Additional Reauthorizing Amendments Act of 2006.

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