

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.

HONORING KATLYN MARIE MARCHETTI AND STRESSING THE IMPORTANCE OF SEATBELTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of a young woman whose life tragically was cut short by her decision not to wear her seatbelt.

Katlyn Marie Marchetti, known as Katie to her family and friends, was a vibrant, loving, community-oriented high school junior who dreamed of a career in fashion or interior design. She encouraged other young women through her participation in the Ophelia Project, a nonprofit group dedicated to encouraging middle and high school girls to believe that an individual's true beauty comes from within.

As a junior at Durant High School in Valrico, Florida, Katie planned to take the SATs in April and spend her summer examining colleges. Her commitment to academic achievement and hard work guaranteed that she would succeed in whatever field she chose. Katie's entire future was ahead of her, and what a bright one it would have been.

But it was not to be. On March 3, 2006, Katie was involved in a car accident that ended up claiming her life early the following morning. To the devastation of her loving parents, Vincent and Laura, and her younger brother, Andrew, she was not wearing her seatbelt. Had she buckled up, March 4 may have been one day closer to realizing her dreams. Instead, it was the day when they were ended.

Unfortunately, Katie's decision to forego wearing a seatbelt is not uncommon. Among the entire population, teenagers are the most likely to neglect this important lifesaving measure. A study conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in 2002 indicated that only 69 percent of 16 to 24-year-olds use seatbelts, compared to 82 percent of children and 76 percent of adults. Among 16 to 19-year-olds, the statistics are more troubling. Only 40 percent use seatbelts consistently. And the Fatality Analysis Reporting System shows that 63 percent of teens killed in crashes were not wearing seatbelts.

Data also reveals insights into why teens neglect to fasten up when they get in a vehicle. According to a 2003 survey, only 79 percent of teen drivers reported that they wear a seatbelt all the time. About 47 percent indicated that safety belts were as likely to

harm as to help, and 30 percent said that crashes close to home were usually not as serious. Approximately 30 percent affirmed that they would feel self-conscious if they were going against the group norm in wearing safety belts.

Mr. Speaker, these statistics are troubling. Seatbelt use has proven effective time and again in saving lives. According to NHTSA, the wearing of safety belts saved an estimated 14,164 lives in 2002. Choosing to buckle up is the best protection against drunk, tired, or aggressive drivers. And yet people choose not to take this precaution. What can be done to encourage them to do so?

Studies have shown that highly publicized and visible enforcement of safety belt laws have increased seatbelt use. Peer-led education and awareness also hold promise in changing youth norms and attitudes about seatbelt use. Parental involvement is absolutely critical. Children who observe their parents using seatbelts and obeying traffic laws are more likely to adopt these lifesaving habits.

Vincent and Laura Marchetti imparted this wisdom to their daughter and even prevented her from getting her license until she was 6 months beyond her 16th birthday. They instilled a sense of responsibility in her and practiced driving under all sorts of conditions, but it was not enough.

Technological advances have proven to be one of the most promising catalysts for increased seatbelt use. A study commissioned by NHTSA found that while enhanced safety belt reminders such as buzzers, lights and dashboard messages are aimed at the general population, they may be particularly effective for teenagers. Because teens tend to forget to fasten their seatbelts and are less likely than adults to disengage warning systems, they may be more likely to be persuaded to buckle up by these annoyances.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage the automobile industry to help address this problem by increasing and expanding the manufacture of vehicles with warning systems that do not disengage until the seatbelt is fastened. These systems may save precious young lives.

Mr. Speaker, I didn't know Katie personally, but through my discussions with her parents and brother who are in Washington this week, I know what a special young woman she was. I grieve with them and the rest of their family for their loss. I admire the strength and perseverance of the Marchettis to channel this grief into educating teenagers and their parents about the importance of seatbelt use through the Katie Marchetti Memorial Foundation. I rise today to join their call and to plead with all Americans to "cross it, click it and live."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE BIG CHILL IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of turn.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, it is awfully cold in Washington, D.C. these days, and the arrival of spring is not going to change the frigid temperature beginning to grip the Nation's Capital.

No matter how much we stand in the bright sunlight, Washington, D.C. is fast becoming a cold, cold place under this President and administration.

The Big Chill is on and it is becoming an ice age for the "People's-Right-to-Know."

The New York Times and The Washington Post recently won Pulitzer Prizes for breaking through the administration's secrecy to inform the American people about secret prisons and secret wiretapping.

In response, the administration wants journalism stopped. It just gets in the way of the administration telling people only what they want them to know.

Maintaining this veil of secrecy is so important that the administration directed the Attorney General to see if he might invoke the 1917 Espionage Act as a way to make the first amendment disappear. By controlling what you know, they hope to control what you think.

It is the solution to their Iraq dilemma. You don't have to mislead the people, as the President did, if the people simply don't know anything at all. That is what this assault on free speech is all about.

I seek permission to enter into the RECORD an editorial promoted by the Washington Times by Nat Hentoff entitled "Chilling Free Speech."

The President and his administration are doing everything possible to impose censorship. They know that secrecy is the fastest, most effective way to silence dissent.

If the American people know what they are doing, the American people could make them accountable for what they are doing. But there is no accountability for their actions, so they hide them under a blanket of secrecy.

The President cried "shameful" that the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalism had reunited the American people with the truth about secret prisons and secret wiretapping ordered by the President and his administration.

In other words, the truth made it out into the open, and that was not part of their plan. The only way to account for it was to attack those responsible for telling us. It is the centerpiece of the