

RECOGNIZING CHRISTOPHER VAUGHN FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 27, 2006

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Christopher Vaughn, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 495, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Christopher has been very active with his troop, participating in my scout activities. Over the many years Christopher has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Christopher Vaughn for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

THE WAR ON TERRORISM

HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 27, 2006

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of a just cause that is facing a critical turning point. The outcome hangs in the balance, and Mr. Speaker, we should not kid ourselves into believing that victory is fore-ordained.

Churchill once said that there would not be war if both sides did not believe that they could win it. The enemy we face in Iraq, and in the broader war against the radical Islamists, is driven by an apocalyptic vision of God. And because such apocalyptic visions are rooted in faith and not facts, they are very hard to dispel. We, therefore, face an opponent who is neither open to reason or compromise. Nor will he necessarily be defeated by calculations of military strategy and prudence.

We face the paradox of a perilous time. At the opening of the 21st century we are opposed by an adversary who preaches the savagery and barbarism of the 12th century. We face in Iraq an enemy that will show us absolutely no quarter. And Mr. Speaker, I am bound to say that I think we in this Chamber, and indeed even in the country at large, have been slow to grasp that fact.

However, the difficulty of the fight should not dissuade us from waging it if the cause is just—and the cause is just. Mr. Speaker, I have had the sad duty to attend the funerals of several of the servicemen killed in Iraq who came from my district. There are those who say that we should not withdraw from Iraq because to do so would mean that they died in vain.

This is not correct. Nothing that we have done or will do, will ever subtract one ounce from the valor and nobility of those who have died in the service of their country. As Lincoln said in the Gettysburg Address, "We can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not

hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract."

However, we should pause to note that our servicemen and women are fighting—and sometimes dying—because they know the terrible price that will be paid if our adversaries prevail. They have seen, as I have seen when I traveled to Iraq, what a world our enemies would have us live in.

It is a world filled by a grotesque and distorted vision of God. It is a world of slavery and submission where the Almighty is not a benevolent and loving Creator of His Children. But rather is a pagan idol that demands blood sacrifice and glories in the murder of the innocent.

You need look no farther than the carnage in Baghdad, or Kabul, or Mogadishu or, let us never forget, the Twin Towers, to see the truth in that axiom. That is what our enemy, for all his talk of God, seeks to do. He seeks to kill God by destroying God's children and God's creation. And we are all that stands between our adversary and the realization of his nihilistic vision.

Mr. Speaker, there are those in this House who are far better versed than I in the strategic and military calculations that are the essence of this conflict. There are those who say that we mistakenly entered the war in Iraq on the basis of flawed intelligence. This, I think, underestimates the nature of our adversary. Given the expansiveness of our enemy's nightmare vision, I think it is safe to say that there would have been war in Iraq no matter what we did.

That, of course, will be for the historians to decide.

But this much I do know, Mr. Speaker. We stand for hope. We fight for peace and a world that is free. We sacrifice now so that the little children that I met when I was in Iraq might live in a better world tomorrow. And because they will have a better world, we Americans will live in a safer one. To quote DeGualle, "Behind the terrible cloud of our blood and tears here is the sun of our grandeur shining out once again."

Mr. Speaker, I do have one concern. I think that we in this Congress have allowed too wide a gap to develop between the society we help to govern and the war we have been compelled to wage. We have to correct this, because we will not win this war—in Iraq or beyond—unless we as a Nation come to grips with what we face and begin to act accordingly.

We must never forget that, to quote Lincoln again, "Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed." Right now I look around me and I see a Congress and a country distracted, and nothing could be deadlier to our security and our hopes for a better future.

To some extent this is understandable. America is, and has every right to be, tired of conflict. In 1917, for the first time, we went "over there" to make the world safe for democracy. In 1941, in Churchill's evocative phrase, the new world stepped forth, yet again, to the rescue and liberation of the old. Then after 1945 we stayed on to wage the long twilight struggle that came to be called the cold war.

Then, in 1989, a miracle. We stopped holding our breaths. The Berlin Wall came down

and the Soviet Union disappeared. The hair trigger nightmare of the nuclear armed world seemed to recede. We came off of the figurative tip-toes on which we had been standing for nearly 50 years. We had grown so accustomed to it that when the Cold War ended, we scarcely realized just how nerve wracking, and what a strain, it had all been.

Now here we are again. More war, more sacrifice, more death. It is not a pleasant picture—but it offers this. It offers hope. It offers an alternative to yet another in a long line of obscene and perverted visions that seem to be forever conjured in the minds of men.

Mr. Speaker, I have dared to say today something that very few of us seem willing to say. We could lose this war. There is nothing in the stars that says we must prevail. In history, freedom is the exception, not the rule. So I say to my colleagues, we must press on in Iraq. We must fight wisely, but we must not falter.

Most of all we must stand together. That way, when our children and grandchildren look back at this moment in history, they will say that at the threatened nightfall the blood of their fathers ran strong.

TIME MAGAZINE ARTICLE

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 27, 2006

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to share the following article from Time Magazine with my colleagues in the House. I believe it contains some important insights into what we really need to focus on during the long war.

[From Time Magazine, June 25, 2006]

FORGET FLAG BURNING

(By Major General Robert Scales (Ret.))

Some in Congress appear to be taking a sabbatical from the long war on terrorism to introduce a constitutional amendment banning the burning of the flag. The debate over such an amendment may or may not be worth having, but one thing is clear: at a time when the country is at war, now is not the time for such tertiary considerations.

I understand reverence for the flag. It comes naturally to soldiers. We commit our lives to serving intangibles, swearing oaths to a piece of parchment or saluting an expanse of cloth decorated with stars and stripes. We understand symbolism because symbolism is what in large measure compels us to do a job that might result in our demise.

The American flag symbolizes freedom. The Constitution we soldiers are pledged to defend guarantees freedom of expression even when freedom of expression includes the right to deface the flag, however obnoxious that act may be. Of course, I'm old enough to remember flag burning when flag burning was "cool." I was in Hawaii, on R. and R., halfway through my tour in Vietnam. My wife and I were watching television when student war protesters in California—none of whom had the slightest chance of facing violent death in combat—illuminated their campus by torching Old Glory. I was appalled by the sight. A short time later, Walter Cronkite informed the world that my unit, the 101st Airborne, was beginning an offensive in the A Shau Valley. I left for Vietnam the next day to confront an enemy that undoubtedly would have punished those protesters had they burned the North Vietnamese flag in Hanoi.

But that was then. The image of the flag that soldiers see today is different. Instead of flags aflame, we see flags covering coffins of soldiers and Marines returning the hard way from Iraq and Afghanistan. Pushing forward a constitutional amendment is labor-intensive work. I'm concerned how such a diversion during wartime might appear to those who are still serving in harm's way.

Please don't get me wrong. I have many friends in Congress, patriots all. Each one of them has been to Iraq and Afghanistan many times. Although he refuses to advertise the fact, one was wounded there during an inspection tour last year. My concern relates not to the sincerity of Congress but to the perceptions among our young men and women that their overseers are suddenly distracted at a time when attention to their needs has never been more necessary.

Our soldiers want to be assured that Congress is doing all it can to reduce losses in what Lincoln ruefully termed the "terrible arithmetic" of war. They want to know that Congress is doing all it can to give them the weapons they need to maintain the fighting advantage over the enemy. They are concerned that their equipment is wearing out under constant use. They and their families are worried that not enough soldiers are in the pipeline to replace them.

We know from letters and conversations that our young soldiers returning from combat are concerned about the future of their institutions. They want to know who is focused on reshaping our Army and Marine Corps so that both services will be better able to fight the long fight against radical Islam. How will Congress fund the future? Where will the new weapons and equipment come from? They are also worried about more personal issues like housing and health care for themselves and their families.

Dan Brown was my First Sergeant in Vietnam. I was new to war. He had served in two. He gave me a piece of advice then that Congressmen intent on changing the subject should heed: "In combat the main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing. Otherwise, you die." The main thing today for Congress and the Nation should be the war in Iraq. Soldiers are sworn to defend the right to free speech with their lives even if "speech" is expressed in despicable ways. What they want in return is the assurance that our lawmakers will hold their interests dear.

So the message from most of us soldiers is clear: Debate a flag-burning amendment if you wish. But don't create the perception among our young men and women in combat that there are more important issues than their welfare at the moment. Wait a while. At least for their sake, wait until the last flag-draped coffin comes home.

RECOGNIZING BRIAN LESEMAN
FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF
EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 27, 2006

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Brian Leseman, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 495, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Brian has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the

many years Brian has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Brian Leseman for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

RESIGNATION OF THE HONORABLE
NORMAN Y. MINETA, SECRETARY
OF TRANSPORTATION

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 27, 2006

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, Norman Mineta last week announced his resignation from the President's Cabinet as Secretary of Transportation—the longest serving Transportation Secretary in the history of the Department. His departure comes gracefully and on his own terms, just as were his more than three decades in public service to the American people.

Norm's public service can't be condensed into a press release or simple statement of appreciation. His years of service to the country he loves—on behalf of his California constituents and in the arena of transportation—are unparalleled for their impact and effectiveness. The past 30-plus years have proven Norm a giant in his field and a true friend to those of us that served with and learned from him.

On occasion Norm joined me in the mountains of southern West Virginia, each time increasing his understanding of our unique landscape and transportation needs. In his years as a Member of Congress and as Transportation Secretary he did a great deal to improve the infrastructure of southern West Virginia and, indeed, the lives of southern West Virginians.

I am certain Norm will continue his outstanding record of service as a private citizen in the years to come and I congratulate my friend on his decision and wish him, his wife Deni and his two children, David and Stuart, the very best.

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HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 27, 2006

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, the United States of America has always stood for economic opportunity and freedom. And in recent generations our nation has strived to provide an even better model for equality of opportunity. The work has been long and arduous, and it has not been without its setbacks.

We have struggled in the schools, the halls of government, in the workplace to make equality of opportunity something that is written on our hearts as well as in our laws.

Some of the most successful undertakings in the struggle for equality have been in our mills, and foundries and factories. Mississippi's manufacturing sector has provided genera-

tions of our citizens the opportunity to enter the middle class and realize The American Dream.

Manufacturing jobs have traditionally provided above average wages and the medical and other benefits that strengthen families and society. These jobs have also provided Mississippi workers with the satisfaction that comes from seeing their work transform raw goods and materials into finished products of usefulness and value.

Since 1998 the United States has lost more than 3.3 million manufacturing jobs. Here in Mississippi the manufacturing job loss approaches 60,000, and this has undercut the strength and resilience of our state's economy. The erosion of our state's manufacturing sector presents a significant barrier to our state's long-term economic progress.

Mississippians are especially mindful of the need for economic strength and resilience as we rebuild from the devastation of last year's hurricane. The world has witnessed the stunning economic setbacks wrought by Hurricane Katrina, but they have also witnessed the strength of our spirit and our resolve to rebuild Mississippi better and stronger than before.

If we are to accomplish this we must create a sound economic foundation for manufacturing. This means we face several additional important tasks as we continue to rebuild. We must ensure that international trade agreements—either in their drafting or their enforcement—do not discriminate against Mississippi manufacturers because they adhere to the world's highest environmental, health and safety standards. We must redouble our efforts to root out and halt all unfair trading practices among our trading partners because these practices place Mississippi manufacturers at a significant and unfair disadvantage.

One American manufacturer is leading a national grass-roots effort to bring back the level playing field to global trade and the global economic arena in which our manufacturers compete. Nucor Corporation is underwriting and leading an unprecedented series of grass roots town hall meetings across the country to inform voters and inspire action among elected officials at every level of government.

These meetings have been held in states across America and have drawn as many as 4,000 citizens. Nucor Steel—Jackson, Inc., which employs 250 workers in Mississippi, is hosting the eleventh Nucor Town Hall Meeting on June 29, 2006 in Jackson, Mississippi. It is noteworthy that in a political age where we often focus on personalities and scandal that this meeting will feature in-depth presentations and discussions of substantive issues.

Voters and elected officials are provided an important forum to look at the underlying causes of our massive job losses and to propose policies and actions that can reverse the trend and put American manufacturing back on track.

Rebuilding Mississippi in the wake of the hurricanes has proved a daunting challenge, but we have demonstrated the spirit and resolve to get the job done. We also face the long-term challenge to restore manufacturing to its rightful status as a cornerstone of our economy. We offer our appreciation to Nucor Steel—Jackson for their leadership as we face this challenge and make our commitment to Mississippi's future.