

Credit card usage by consumers play a critical role in the home finances of millions of Americans, particularly those in the working middle class. The overwhelming majority of Americans who use credit cards do so in a responsible manner, however, they are far too often at the mercy of credit card companies, even when they pay their bills on time.

Credit card companies have engaged in dubious patterns of behavior such as using hidden fees, penalty interest charges, and other unfair practices to siphon money away from the households of working families. The terms and conditions set forth by credit card companies too often lack clarity and snare unsuspecting working men and women into a negative cycle of debt and adverse credit worthiness. Outrageous fees, improper billing practices and highly complex credit card agreement terms should not be the norm for the credit card industry nor should they be a burden to working Americans. Quite simply put, families should not have to hire a CPA or an attorney to decipher their credit card agreement terms and billing statements.

I want the Record to reflect my original co-sponsorship of the Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act of 2007, offered by my colleague Congressman MARK UDALL. I commend his vision and efforts to help provide relief to untold numbers of working families who have been victimized by a lack of transparency. It is my hope that in addition to the efforts of this Congress, the credit card companies and financial sector advocates work with us to address this issue and provide fairness to the American consumer.

I thank Congressman UDALL for his efforts.

BDI-IMDI CONGRESSIONAL
DELEGATION SPEECH

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 9, 2007

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, on February 20, 2007, I gave the following speech in Hamburg, Germany:

The American and European economies are deeply rooted and complimentary. In 2006, the transatlantic commerce—trade, investment and local business by transatlantic subsidiaries—representing three trillion dollars in business and providing some 14 million jobs on both sides of the Atlantic.

We recognize that the U.S. Administration and Europe have developed numerous plans to eliminate barriers between the two continents, however much work remains if we are to achieve a truly barrier free transatlantic market.

Chancellor Merkel has rightly pointed to the need for a new transatlantic initiative as the best means of expanding economic opportunity and enhancing competition in the global economy. We support the call for a new Transatlantic Partnership based on the foundation of our shared values to further deepen our economic ties and to eliminate trade barriers that still exist.

Previous attempts by both U.S. Administrations and the European Commission to develop plans to enhance transatlantic cooperation have resulted in some favorable results, but a higher-level commitment is in order to more effectively dismantle the barriers that limit the economic and trade opportunities in both continents.

A mutual pledge to addressing the barriers that inhibit trade and commitment to strengthening competitiveness and growth in the transatlantic economy is timely. The BDI-IMDI Congressional Roundtable discussion underscores the need for a transatlantic framework agreement in which the governments and legislatures on both sides of the Atlantic commit to addressing these issues.

We applaud Chancellor Merkel for giving priority attention to the Transatlantic Partnership in her position as President of the European Union and support placing the item on the next EU-U.S. Economic Summit Agenda and encourage our respective governments to further cooperation in this area.

TRIBUTE TO MARTIN RICHARDS IN
HONOR OF HIS BIRTHDAY

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 9, 2007

Mr. ACKERMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise before this historic chamber of the House of Representatives to call to the attention of this Congress the profound achievements of Martin Richards as we honor him on his birthday this March 11.

Many here and throughout our nation know of Mr. Richards through his extraordinary accomplishments as a theatrical and movie producer, having won our nations' highest awards including an Oscar for best picture, numerous Tony Awards for his Broadway productions, and a Pulitzer Prize.

Martin Richards has also blessed the lives of so many New Yorkers through his vision and leadership on behalf of so many seeking hope and opportunity. In 1997, Mayor Giuliani appointed him to a six-year term as a member of The Trust for Cultural Resources of the City of New York. He was also a member of the Mayor's Advisory Council for Theatre.

Mr. Richards served on the President's Council for the Gay Men's Health Crisis, and is on the Board of Directors of Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. In 1994, in memory of his wife, he established the Mary Lea Johnson Richards Institute at New York University Medical Center for organ transplantation and research, and in 1995, also in memory of his wife, he co-founded the Children's Advocacy Center of Manhattan, New York City's only non-profit center for abused children. For the past eight years he has produced the annual Red Ball, one of New York's premiere charitable events, which benefits both the Institute and the Advocacy Center.

Martin Richards' life is a living example of the expression that one man can truly make a difference. This boy from the Bronx has brought dreams and joy to audiences throughout the world through his work. By celebrating Martin Richards' birthday, we take pride in the ideals that define the greatness of New York City.

Madam Speaker, I ask all my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me now in honoring Martin Richards for bringing joy and hope to the people of New York City and the entire nation.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE FALLEN
AND WOUNDED SOLDIERS FUND

HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 9, 2007

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Madam Speaker, I want to recognize the tremendous generosity and compassion of the Fallen and Wounded Soldiers Fund. The organization's contribution to the men and women protecting our country should be commended.

The Fallen and Wounded Soldiers Fund began as a conversation between three friends, Christopher Cornelius, Tino DelSignore, and John Gingrell in December 2005. Christopher, a veteran, had just returned from visiting some wounded soldiers and had seen the hardships endured by the families who had lost loved ones. After sharing his experiences, the three friends decided to do something to ease the effects of war on our brave soldiers and their families.

Together they created the Fallen and Wounded Soldiers Fund, a volunteer non-profit organization that is dedicated to supporting U.S. soldiers and their families. Since its inception, the Fallen and Wounded Soldiers Fund has held dinners, auctions, and various community events to raise funds and awareness to their cause. In 2006, I am proud to say that the Fallen and Wounded Soldiers Fund raised over \$100,000 in donations that have benefited numerous families in Michigan.

On February 24, 2007, The Fallen and Wounded Soldiers Fund held their second annual dinner. This event drew over 600 people and raised over \$75,000 that will be donated to organizations like Homes For The Troops, Special Operations Warrior Fund, and Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America. In addition the proceeds will be used to help fallen soldiers' children attend college, fly out family members to visit the wounded, and assist in adapting the homes of disabled soldiers for handicapped accessibility.

Today I salute the Fallen and Wounded Soldiers Fund for their tireless efforts on behalf of our courageous men and women in the armed services. Theirs is a shining example of the altruism that embodies the American spirit.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF DR.
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN BYRD, JR.

HON. JIM COOPER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 9, 2007

Mr. COOPER. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the memory of Dr. Benjamin Franklin Byrd, Jr., a servant of the common good and fine citizen of our community.

Dr. Byrd was born on May 18, 1918, as the son of Benjamin Franklin and Ida Brister Byrd. An Eagle Scout and ROTC participant, Dr. Byrd attended the Duncan College Preparatory School in Nashville and received his A.B. degree from Vanderbilt University in 1937. In 1941, he earned his M.D. from Vanderbilt University School of Medicine.

During his medical residency, Pearl Harbor was attacked, and Dr. Byrd enlisted in the U.S. Army without hesitation. He was assigned to the 29th Infantry Division, 104th