

Hospital treating injured soldiers. He also served on the board of directors of the Bay Area Tumor Institute. As chairman of a voluntary organization that helped East Bay cancer patients consult with specialists prior to surgery to develop strategies for reconstruction before their tumors were removed.

Dr. Thomas Curtis was a healer and a teacher. He defended his country in battle, helped heal those in need in his community, and passed down his knowledge and experience to his students at the University of California, San Francisco. His passing shall be mourned and his exemplary service to our country and community remembered.

INTRODUCTION OF THE "NATIONAL LEVEE SAFETY PROGRAM ACT OF 2007"

HON. JEAN SCHMIDT

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 20, 2007

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to introduce the "National Levee Safety Program Act of 2007".

We know, following the terrible devastation of Hurricane Katrina, how important reliable hurricane and flood protection infrastructure is.

Congress has taken steps in the past to ensure that the nation's flood damage reduction infrastructure is properly inventoried, inspected, and assessed. In 1986, Congress authorized "the National Dam Safety Program Act" to conduct an inventory and assessment of all dams nationwide. "The National Levee Safety Program Act" is modeled after this successful program and law.

Thanks to the Dam Safety Program Act, we know a great deal more about our nation's dams. When it comes to our nation's levees, however, we know very little. We do not know where they are all located and we often do not know their condition. We do not even know how many levees there are in the United States, how old they are, and, in many cases, who constructed them or who is responsible for their operation and maintenance. Much of this is due to the fact that levees have been built for decades by different entities, at different times, and to different standards.

There has never been a national inventory of levees. I am introducing the "National Levee Safety Program Act" so we can develop such an inventory and work with the states to encourage them to develop their own levee safety programs.

This legislation authorizes the Army Corps of Engineers to conduct an inventory, inspections, and assessments of all levees nationwide. The legislation establishes an Interagency Committee on Levee Safety to create standards for federal levees, and creates a National Levee Safety Advisory Board made up of state, local, and private officials to advise the Committee on Levee Safety on the safety of levees in the United States, the implementation of this Act by state levee safety agencies, and policy relating to national levee safety. The bill also provides incentives for states and localities to participate in the program.

The National Levee Safety Program Act builds on my efforts in the last Congress encouraging states and local jurisdictions to work

together to establish modern, statewide building codes which help mitigate costly future natural disasters, improving public safety and hopefully saving lives as well as taxpayer dollars. Similarly, creating an inventory of our levees is a valuable way for us to reduce the likelihood of costly, unforeseen future disasters.

I am aware of at least three important levees built by the Corps of Engineers in Southern Ohio providing flood protection to Cincinnati, Portsmouth, and New Boston. This legislation would ensure the Corps maintains an up-to-date assessment of these levees while it also builds a broader inventory of levees throughout Ohio and our nation that were built by non-federal stakeholders.

This legislation is fiscally responsible. In order to make the best investment of taxpayer dollars, we need to do an inventory, an inspection, and an assessment of levees across the United States. We need to know what they are protecting and what level of risk is associated with them. This should help us prioritize future spending on flood protection so we can spend taxpayer dollars more wisely.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

HONORING DEBORAH COHN AND THE USPTO

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 20, 2007

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, it is an honor for me to recognize Deborah Cohn, Deputy Commissioner for Trademark Operations at the United States Patent and Trademark Office, USPTO, for her leadership in promoting government telework. Telework offers a great opportunity for the Federal Government to help solve environmental, traffic, and possibly continuity-of-operations issues, especially on the busy highways of Northern Virginia. It is well known that the Federal Government lags behind the private sector in providing telework options for its workforce. Yet, USPTO has set itself apart with its telework program.

With her foresight, creativity, and perseverance, Deborah Cohn pioneered the development of USPTO's first telework program at a time when telework was far from the norm. Ms. Cohn not only convinced reluctant agency executives, she forged coalitions with managers, IT personnel, and the employee union to create an innovative, award-winning telework program at the USPTO.

This month, the Trademark Work at Home, TWAH, program celebrates its 10th anniversary. TWAH, which began as a feasibility pilot of 18 teleworkers, today stands as the most innovative and progressive program in the Federal Government. It involves more than 220 employees, or 85 percent of eligible examining attorneys, who spend the vast majority of their workweek at home.

The USPTO program has received awards from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, the Telework Exchange, the Mid-Atlantic Telework Advisory Council, and the International Telework Association and Council. Just last month, USPTO received the 2007 Work-Life Innovative Excellence Award

from the Alliance for Work-Life Progress for the Trademark Work at Home Program.

The TWAH program now serves as a prototype of an innovative telework program, combining management-by-objective with hoteling, resulting in documented savings of space and cost savings for the agency. The ability to manage employees remotely using clear, measurable performance goals, regardless of where they work, models an extremely successful telecommuting program for government agencies. The TWAH program also demonstrates that flexibility of time and location enables employees to maximize efficiency, which is reflected by production gains of teleworkers. The phenomenally low attrition rate among TWAH participants should encourage agencies that face recruitment and retention problems to consider such programs.

It is essential that federal agencies maintain procedures for continuing government operations in the midst of, and following, a national emergency caused by terrorism or natural causes. Effective telework plans and procedures help ensure critical agency operations continue uninterrupted. Federal agencies with telecommuting programs receive significant benefits, including a more productive workforce, increased employee morale and quality of life, and the ability to better accommodate employees with health problems or child- or elder-care responsibilities. Teleworking eliminates a significant number of vehicle trips during peak hours, which aids the environment. The Federal Government should be a telecommuting leader, yet many federal agencies have been reluctant to embrace the concept. That is why I am delighted to congratulate Ms. Cohn on her outstanding leadership on telework issues.

Ms. Cohn began her career at USPTO in 1983 as a trademark examining attorney. In 2001, she joined the Senior Executive Service as a Trademark Group Director. She became Deputy Commissioner for Trademark Operations in 2005 and currently oversees the examination and processing of applications throughout the trademark operation.

Throughout her legal career at USPTO, Ms. Cohn has been involved in work-life improvement initiatives. She is a former Council of Excellence in Government Fellow, where she first developed the seeds of the trademark work-at-home program. Ms. Cohn is a graduate of The American University and George Mason University School of Law. Ms. Cohn is a sought-after resource and speaker as an expert on the development and management of telework programs.

I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing Ms. Cohn's efforts in making USPTO's telework program the most successful operation of its kind within the federal government. Additionally, I call upon my colleagues to join me in celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Trademark Office's award-winning telework program.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 20, 2007

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Madam Speaker, unfortunately yesterday, March 19, 2007, I