

He set the tone for his team with his enthusiastic leadership. He wrote detailed Standards of Operating Procedure that are still used today and will be for the duration of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

I salute the great work done by Lt. Col. Altiery under exhausting conditions while maintaining his extraordinary technical skill and expertise. As well as thank him for his meritorious service to our country.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 17, 2007

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, I was unable to cast floor votes during the week of October 8, 2007, and on October 15, 2007, because of a death in the family.

Had I been present for the votes, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 958, 960, 961, 962, and 963, and "no" on rollcall votes 956, 957, 959.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 17, 2007

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I was absent on Monday, October 15 through mid-day Tuesday, October 16, due to an illness in the family.

If I were present I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote 961, "yea" on rollcall vote 962, "yea" on rollcall vote 963, "no" on rollcall vote 964, "no" on rollcall vote 965, "no" on rollcall vote 966, "no" on rollcall vote 967, "yea" on rollcall vote 968, "yea" on rollcall vote 969, "yea" on rollcall vote 970, and "yea" on rollcall vote 971.

HONORING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF CALTRANS STRUCTURE MAINTENANCE AND INVESTIGATIONS

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 17, 2007

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the dedicated professionals of the California Department of Transportation's Office of Structure Maintenance & Investigations, which is marking its 80th anniversary of service to the people of the Golden State.

In 1927, while Babe Ruth swatted 60 home runs and Charles Lindbergh crossed the Atlantic Ocean solo, the State of California showed the wisdom and foresight to create a special branch of engineering experts to ensure the safety and reliability of its State highways and bridges.

Babe Ruth's home run mark fell in 1961 to the bat of Roger Maris and air travel over the

"pond" became a routine occurrence. All the while, California's bridge maintenance program has stood the test of time and continues to deliver on its mission of providing Californians with a safe and dependable network of bridges carrying traffic and pedestrians over rivers, canyons, railroads, highways and city streets all across the Golden State.

That effort is still paying dividends for California and the Nation. More than 24,000 State and local agency bridges in California reliably serve millions of travelers and billions of dollars of commerce because of the ongoing care provided by Structure Maintenance & Investigations staff. These structures run the gamut from the majestic San Francisco-Oakland Bay and San Diego-Coronado bridges to the historic arch spans along the scenic Monterey Coast and the tens of thousands of unassuming concrete, steel and timber bridges dotting the California landscape.

The safety and reliability of California's bridges has been instrumental in fueling one of the world's largest economies. More than 160 million vehicle trips are recorded on California's transportation system each day.

Caltrans Structure Maintenance & Investigations engineering personnel have conducted more than 650,000 routine inspections and thousands of special hydraulic, steel and underwater bridge inspections since 1927. They look for any signs of deterioration, fatigue or distress in bridge decks, superstructures and substructures, and the office has initiated tens of millions of dollars in repairs to ensure the safety and structural integrity of each public agency bridge in California.

Thanks to the ongoing dedication of the Structure Maintenance & Investigations professionals no public agency bridge in California has ever collapsed due to neglect. The bridge inspection program pioneered by Structure Maintenance & Investigations has become the model for transportation agencies around the Nation and the world.

As part of its ongoing bridge maintenance program, Structure Maintenance & Investigations maintains a library of more than one million documents, some dating back more than 100 years, documenting the history of each public agency bridge in California.

Structure Maintenance & Investigations personnel have responded in a timely and heroic fashion to a myriad of natural and manmade disasters to protect public safety and complete any needed repairs to California's transportation system. While their efforts have been well chronicled in major disasters such as the 1989 Loma Prieta and 1994 Northridge earthquakes, SM&I personnel routinely answer the call to protect public safety. Such a case occurred last year in California's Sonoma County where two engineers risked their own safety to inspect the Highway 128 bridge over the rampaging Russian River near Guerneville. The engineers determined that the floodwaters had compromised the integrity of the bridge. They closed the structure and initiated a project that resulted in construction of a new bridge.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, it is appropriate for us to convey to all the dedicated professionals at the California Department of Transportation Office of Structure Maintenance & Investigations the thanks of a grateful state for years of dedicated service ensuring the safety and reliability of our transportation system.

HONORING ROSAMOND BEATRICE OCTOBER

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 17, 2007

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, Rosamond Beatrice October is 100 years old and the United States was fortunate to woo her from her native Guyana. She was born there on November 6, 1907 and has lived through perhaps the most remarkable age in the world's history.

In 1928 she and William October were married and had two children before they adopted several more. She was a successful caterer in Guyana and in 1973, at an age when most people have retired; she came to America and continued her successful catering operations.

She is a grandmother of 12 and great grandmother of 14, and aunt of several nieces and nephews. She lives with her daughter, Claudette Cox, in the Bronx and is the oldest member of the Eastchester Presbyterian Church. She attributes her long life to her faith and trust in God. And we thank God for allowing Mrs. October to remain with us and share her gifts of love and experience with us all.

I offer her my sincere wishes for the happiest of birthdays and congratulate her for a long and successful life.

THE FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2007

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Free Flow of Information Act, H.R. 2102, legislation that would prevent journalists from being forced to reveal their confidential sources in legal proceedings.

This important bill has strong bipartisan support and the endorsement of countless news organizations and the Newspaper Association of America.

The "press shield" is critical to the functioning of our democracy. Compelling reporters to testify and reveal the identity of confidential sources hinders the free flow of information. Many people with important information about government wrongdoing would rather stay quiet than reveal their identities. Sometimes the only way a reporter can gain access to a source's information, and bring it to the public's attention, is by guaranteeing that source confidentiality.

H.R. 2012 strikes a common sense balance between the public's need for information and fair justice. It would compel reporters to reveal the identity of a source if the court finds it necessary to prevent "imminent and actual harm to national security" or "imminent death or significant bodily harm."

The First Amendment states that, "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press." The Founding Fathers clearly envisioned a free press that would enable the electorate to make informed decisions and hold the government in check. That's precisely what this bill would do.