

The Feld's support school curriculum programs and have developed Circus Fit, a national youth fitness program. To help preserve the Asian elephant, Kenneth Feld established the Center for Elephant Conservation (CEC) in central Florida in 1995. This state-of-the-art breeding and retirement facility is dedicated to the conservation, breeding, and study of the Asian elephant.

In each generation, the Feld family has continued to capture children of all ages by preserving the great American circus and led the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, The Greatest Show on Earth, into the 21st century.

I thank my colleagues for joining me in recognizing the contributions of the Feld Family to American culture and entertainment.

TRIBUTE TO PHILLIP S. FIGA
UNITED STATES DISTRICT
COURT JUDGE

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 16, 2008

Ms. DeGETTE. Madam Speaker. I rise to honor the extraordinary life and exceptional accomplishments of United States District Court Judge Phillip S. Figa. This exceptional jurist merits both our recognition and esteem as his impressive record of civic leadership and invaluable service has improved the lives of many Coloradans.

Sadly, Judge Figa was taken from us by a brain tumor at the young age of 56 and he will be greatly missed. His passion for the law and justice and his capacity for community service were beyond measure. He molded a life of genuine accomplishment and served our Nation with distinction. His passing is a great loss to the Federal bench and our entire community.

Judge Figa was born in 1951 in Skokie, Illinois, the son of Holocaust survivors from Poland. He earned a scholarship to Northwestern University and graduated with a degree in economics. While at Northwestern, he met and married Candace Cole Figa. He went on to graduate from Cornell Law School and started his law practice in Colorado at Sherman & Howard in 1976. Four years later, Judge Figa became a founding partner of Burns, Figa & Will, P.C. and became the firm's President. For over 26 years, Judge Figa maintained a broad litigation-oriented practice and established a national reputation as an expert in the field of legal ethics. He was actively involved in the Colorado legal community and served as President of the Colorado Bar Association and as Chair of the Ethics Committee. He served on the Civil Justice Reform Act Advisory Committee and on the Colorado Commission on Judicial Discipline. He served as an instructor at the University of Denver College of Law and the National Institute of Trial Advocacy. Judge Figa was also one of the founding members of the Faculty of Federal Advocates and is credited with the development of the very successful Pro Bono Mentoring Program. As a former Chair of the Mountain States Region of the Anti-Defamation League, Judge Figa was deeply committed to fighting bigotry, extremism, anti-Semitism and supporting Holocaust awareness.

President Bush nominated Judge Figa to the United States District Court and he was confirmed by the United States Senate on October 2, 2003. During the confirmation process, Senators of both parties viewed him as highly intelligent and a fair prospective jurist. Many friends, family and associates have praised Judge Figa as "even handed" . . . "smart, caring and authentic" . . . "a great jurist" "a true humanitarian" . . . "one who brought passion and integrity to the field of law" . . . a humble and gracious man who genuinely cared about helping other people." I was honored to give the highest recommendation to the Senate Judiciary Committee. On a personal note, Judge Figa was a good friend of both me and my husband. He was loved and respected across the legal community. Judge Figa was a mensch—an upright, honorable and decent human being.

Judge Figa has been recognized with several accolades and honors including nomination to the International Society of Barristers, the American Bar Foundation and the Colorado Bar Foundation. He was honored by the Colorado Supreme Court for "outstanding leadership of the Coalition for the Independence of the Colorado Judiciary" and in January of 2006, he was named one of the Leading Judges in America by The Lawdragon. On February 4, 2008, the Anti-Defamation League will present the late Judge Figa with the Distinguished Community Service Award "for his commitment to human rights and dignity, and his dedicated service to his community, state and nation." Judge Figa lived a life that is rich in consequence and our country is a better place because of his labors. Truly, we are all diminished by the all too early passing of this remarkable gentleman and our thoughts are with Candace Figa and their two children, Ben and Elizabeth. Please join me in paying tribute to the life of United States District Court Judge Phillip S. Figa, a distinguished jurist. It is the values, leadership and dedication he exhibited during his life that serves to build a better future for all of us.

IN TRIBUTE TO MR. BOOKER
TOWNSELL

HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 16, 2008

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Booker Townsell. Mr. Townsell was falsely accused along with 42 other African-American soldiers for rioting and lynching an Italian POW at Fort Lawton, an Army base in Seattle in 1944. It was the largest and longest Army courts-martial of World War II. Mr. Townsell was ultimately court-martialed and convicted with 27 others and served two years in prison. After 63 years, Booker Townsell has been fully exonerated. Mr. Townsell was not able to see this travesty reversed having died in 1984 at the age of 69. However, his family persevered until he was fully exonerated for a crime he did not commit.

Members of Mr. Townsell's family learned of Jack Hamann's, 2005 book, "On American Soil: How Justice Became a Casualty of World War II", which chronicled the Fort Lawton court martial. The Townsell family contacted

Hamann and was the first to petition the Army to reverse the conviction. The Army Review Board required each family to apply individually for a review. Bipartisan requests were made in Congress to review the case. In October, 2007, an Army review board, acting on evidence uncovered by Hamann's book, overturned Townsell's conviction. The analysis used to reverse Townsell's conviction would apply to all of the soldiers convicted, an Army lawyer who reviewed the case for the review board told The New York Times.

Hamann's investigation uncovered racial bias against the soldiers, including charges being brought immediately without the benefit of full counsel which led to their unfair convictions. This incredible story also involves Leon Jaworski, a young lieutenant who prosecuted the case for the Army and later served as special prosecutor in the Watergate case. Hamann discovered that Jaworski failed to share evidence with defense lawyers that could have exonerated the black soldiers. Hamann said it seemed suspicious that black soldiers in 1944 would participate in a lynching, given the racial attitudes in America at the time. According to his research, no black person had ever been put on trial for a lynching until then.

A lawyer who specializes in military affairs helped the Townsell family with their petition to the Army review board. The decision that overturned Townsell's conviction was a sweet victory for justice in our country.

On January 19th 2008, the family will celebrate their legal victory with a ceremony attended by Army officials to recognize the overturning of this conviction after 63 years. I am honored to have this opportunity to pay tribute to Mr. Townsell and to his family. Mr. Townsell's good name has now been restored.

COMMEMORATING THE 25TH ANNI-
VERSARY OF PHEASANTS FOR-
EVER

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 16, 2008

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the members of Pheasants Forever for their strong legacy of environmental advocacy and conservation on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the organization.

Pheasants Forever started with a campaign for a Minnesota pheasant stamp. Since that modest beginning, the organization has demonstrated just how effective conservation at the grassroots level can be. By working with local farmers to restore marginal lands, a few pioneering Minnesotans started a movement that has spread across North America with great success. Currently the members of Pheasants Forever organize the efforts of hunters, farmers, and environmentalists in nearly 30,000 restoration projects each year. During the past 25 years, these efforts have helped to protect 4 million acres of wildlife habitat.

Pheasants Forever has accomplished great things over the past two and a half decades in the areas of critical habitat improvement, public and private land management, and public awareness and education. Hunting and

other outdoor recreational activities are strong traditions for many families in Minnesota and across America. Thanks to the foresight and hard work from the members of Pheasants Forever, these traditions can be passed down for generations to come.

Madam Speaker, please join me in honoring Pheasants Forever on its first 25 years of grassroots advocacy.

CONGRATULATING LIBERTY
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 16, 2008

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Liberty Christian School in Argyle, Texas for winning the TAPP Division II State Championship in football.

This season's title was the program's third state title in six tries, and capped a season in which the Warriors went 12–2 and were the No. 1 ranked team in the Dallas Morning News' Large Private School poll the entire season. Liberty Christian's season was certainly a magical one. After beginning the season 1–2, the Warriors won 11 games in a row. They held opponents to two touchdowns or less in nine of those games while scoring 40 or more points in eight games during that stretch.

The Athletic Director of Liberty Christian, Coach Darren Chrane, attributed the success of this season's team after their rough start to the resolve of their senior class. "They decided that they weren't going to be denied a win and went out there and dominated against a good football team." Coach Chrane stated.

This year's team was eighth out of all private schools in offense with an average of 384 yards per game. Defensively, the Warriors were 11th overall with 246 yards against per game.

These student athletes exemplify the type of leadership and work ethic we all strive to possess. I extend my sincerest congratulations to the Liberty Christian football team, Athletic Director Darren Chrane, Head Coach Mark Bowles and the entire coaching staff, and all of those involved in the successful 2007 season. I wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors. It is my honor to represent a group that exhibits such talent, hard work, and dedication.

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RE-
LATED PROGRAMS APPROPRI-
ATIONS ACT, 2008 (CONSOLIDATED
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008)

SPEECH OF

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of Department of Homeland Security FY 2008 Appropriations Bill which is part of the larger omnibus spending package, Amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 2764. Specifically, I want

to note that the Democrats have done a better job at funding key homeland security programs, but as always, more needs to be done.

As the first Democratic chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, I am happy to note that the appropriated dollars will go a long way to implementing the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission which are codified in a bill I had the distinct honor of developing and steering toward passage—the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, P.L. 110–53. I am also glad that the fiscal year 2008 appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security are fairly consistent with my eight-point plan—the “Real Deal on Homeland Security.” This 8-point plan is what I have used to develop key legislative and oversight initiatives aimed at ensuring that ours is a Nation that can flourish free from fear. In particular, the fiscal year 2008 appropriations reflect the Real Deal in the following way:

1. IMPROVING THE FUNCTIONALITY, GOVERNANCE, AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

The Department of Homeland Security FY 2008 appropriations bill provides \$28.49 million for the Chief Procurement Officer which is \$11.5 million above the enacted fiscal year 2007 level. This increase funding can help the office attract and retain experienced staff to manage procurements. The bill also provides a \$108.7 million for the Office of Inspector General at the Department of Homeland Security, \$6 million above the enacted fiscal year 2007 level. It is also notable that the bill's Joint Explanatory Statement makes clear that Congress favors contracts awarded by full and open competition. The bill also acknowledges the operation of the Small Business Act and therefore does not adversely affect the award of contracts to small, minority and disadvantaged businesses. In addition, the bill requires the Inspector General to review contracts awarded by means other than full and open competition to determine compliance with the law. Finally, I am very pleased that the bill provides no funding for MAX–HR but rather provides \$10 million for the Department of Homeland Security to address the issues revealed in the 2006 Federal Human Capital Survey. The bill further requires the Secretary to submit an expenditure plan for the \$10 million prior to the obligation of the funds.

However, I must point out that the Committee on Homeland Security was disappointed with the decision not to fund the relocation of the headquarters for the Department of Homeland Security at the St. Elizabeths site in Washington, DC.

2. ENHANCING SECURITY FOR ALL MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

I applaud the bill which provides over \$4.5 billion to enhance aviation security. That funding makes the bill consistent with meeting aviation security mandates in P.L. 110–53. For example, the bill fully funds the Aviation Security Capitol Fund at \$250 million. Furthermore, this bill provides \$15 million for a pilot program to screen 100 percent of airport workers.

Although the bill does not provide sufficient resources to implement the authorization levels in P.L. 110–53, the Appropriations Committee has provided the foundation to reach that goal. For example, the bill provides \$400 million in Public Transportation and Railroad Security Grants. This includes not less than \$25 million for Amtrak, \$11.5 million over the

road bus security grants, and \$16 million for trucking security grants. This is in contrast to the authorized amount in P.L. 110–53 which called for \$650 million for public transit, \$300 million for rail, and \$150 million for Amtrak.

I also support the bill's provision of \$523.5 million for information technology and intelligence for transportation security and the increased funding for Red Teams at \$6.26 million—a 50 percent increase over the enacted level of fiscal year 2007. Finally, the bill provides \$46 million for surface transportation security, an increase from the \$41.4 million enacted in fiscal year 2007. Of the proposed amount for fiscal year 2008, \$24.5 million is for staffing and operations, \$22.1 million is for inspectors and canines, and another \$30 million is provided for security training program, transportation risk assessment, and the development of regulation for name-based immigration screening for public transportation and rail workers.

3. RESPONSE, RESILIENCE, AND RECOVERY IN THE WAKE OF A NATIONAL CATASTROPHE

I am pleased that key programs to assist first responders and State, local, and tribal governments have been funded above the President's request. Specifically, the State Homeland Security Grant Program which provides grants to first responders in all 50 States and U.S. Territories to help them prevent, prepare for, and respond to an act of terrorism or other emergency is funded at \$950 million. The Urban Area Security Initiative, which addresses the unique planning, operations, equipment, training, and exercise needs of high-threat, high-density urban areas, is funded at \$820 million—a \$50 million increase in funding over FY 2007 levels.

The bill also provides \$41 million for the Metropolitan Medical Response System, MMRS; \$300 million for Emergency Management Performance Grant, EMPG, program; \$560 million for FIRE grants; \$190 million for the SAFER Act program; and \$32.5 million for the Urban Search and Rescue System, USAR, a \$7.5 million increase over the enacted level in fiscal year 2007.

I also support the bill for directing FEMA to assist communities by ensuring disaster preparedness and response education materials are developed and distributed to children. The bill also supports the Office of the Disabilities Coordinator and directs the Department of Homeland Security's Inspector General to investigate FEMA's policies and processes regarding formaldehyde in trailers purchased by the agency to house disaster victims in the office created by the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006.

I will note, however, that it is unfortunate that the splintered oversight jurisdiction of the Department of Homeland Security has resulted in the inclusion of section 541 of the bill which states that “none of the funds provided by this or previous appropriations Acts shall be used to fund any position designated as a Principal Federal Official, PFO, for any Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act declared disasters or emergencies.” I am very concerned that this language micromanages Federal emergency response through the appropriation process, interferes with the writing of the National Response Framework which aims to clarify the role of the PFO and does not recognize the situations where the appointment of PFO would be necessary, public health emergencies, cyber attacks, etc. Simply stated, this