

Our Nation's economy is struggling. The United States lost a record of 80,000 jobs in the month of March alone. The cities in the 32nd Congressional District that I represent have seen unemployment rates soar to more than 7 percent. In this time of economic turmoil, Congress must work to restore the economic security of working- and middle-class Americans.

This rule prioritizes the needs of American workers by removing the timeline for House action on this trade agreement. I strongly support this rule and urge my colleagues to vote for final passage.

RECOGNIZING EDWARD M. SMITH,
PRESIDENT OF THE UNION
LABOR LIFE INSURANCE COM-
PANY

HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 14, 2008

Mr. COSTELLO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Edward M. Smith, as he accepts his new position as President of the Union Labor Life Insurance Company, ULLICO, and retires as Vice President, Assistant to the General President, and Midwest Regional Manager of the Laborers' International Union of North America, LIUNA.

Ed Smith was born into a union family. His father was the business manager of Local 773, and would continue in that position until his retirement. His mother was also a 15-year member of the union. So it seemed natural that, at the age of 13, Ed Smith would join Laborers' Local 773, in Cairo, Illinois, and work his way through school as a construction craft laborer.

At the age of 21, when many young men are yet to chart their career course, Ed was elected as business manager of the local union. While serving as business manager, Ed continued to expand his role within the Laborers' Union. In 1981, he was appointed International Representative for the International Union and was later appointed LIUNA legislative director for the State of Illinois. Ed was elected President of the Southern Illinois Laborers' District Council in 1986 and Business Manager in 1990.

Ed has served on a number of Union entities, including the Laborers' National Pension Fund, as Chairman of the Central Laborers' Pension Fund, Laborers' Home Development Corporation, Laborers' International Federal Employees Credit Union, Southern Illinois Laborers' Fringe Benefit Funds, Railroad Maintenance Health & Welfare Fund, and the Illinois Laborers' & Contractors Joint Apprenticeship & Training Fund.

Ed does not limit his involvement to the Laborers' Union. He was Chairman of the Illinois State Board of Investment, serves as a member of the Illinois Department of Labor Advisory Board, the Democratic National Committee, and is chairman of the National Alliance for Fair Contracting. Ed has also been a major benefactor to the Therapy Center in Carterville, Illinois, an organization that assists physically disabled children, and he serves as a board member of the "I Can Read Program" which helps children with reading and learning disabilities.

Ed graduated from Shawnee College with an Associate of Arts degree and, in 1992, he received Shawnee College's first Outstanding Alumni Award. Ed was the first member of the Laborers' International Union to graduate from the National Labor College with a bachelor's degree and, in 1978, he graduated from the Harvard University Trade Union Program.

Ed and his wife, Betty, reside in Olive Branch, Illinois. Ed has two children, a daughter, Jordan, and a son, Matt.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in an expression of appreciation to Mr. Edward M. Smith, a true champion of organized labor, and to wish him our best as he embarks on his new position as President of the Union Labor Life Insurance Company.

HONORING EDWARD H. LEWIS AS
HE IS HONORED BY THE GREAT-
ER NEW HAVEN NAACP

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 14, 2008

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to join the Greater New Haven NAACP and the New Haven community in extending my sincere congratulations to my dear friend, Edward H. Lewis, as he is honored at this year's Freedom Fund Awards dinner with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

The Freedom Fund Awards dinner is a time not only to honor those who have made an impact on our community, but to renew our commitment to those ideals upon which the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was founded. For nearly nine decades, the Greater New Haven NAACP has been the voice of our African-American community and has improved countless lives. Their fight for justice has been tireless, and their efforts have gone a long way toward making sure that everyone will enjoy equal opportunity. Those honored with the annual Freedom Fund Awards are a reflection of this organization's good work—of the NAACP's commitment to ensuring a promising future for our families, our children, and our communities.

Edward H. Lewis, known to family and friends as "Teo," is a native of my hometown, New Haven, Connecticut and we could not be more proud of all that he has accomplished. I have been fortunate to know him for many years and consider myself blessed to call him my friend. We worked as community organizers together at the Community Action Institute and later, served together in the National Urban Fellow Program. Teo went to Washington as a legislative assistant to then Senator Henry Jackson and was appointed by President Jimmy Carter to the U.S. Small Business Administration as Associate Administrator for Procurement. After leaving Washington, he brought his wealth of government experience to the emerging cable industry. He has worked in several capacities but is perhaps best known for his work with BET networks where his work in marketing and event promotion for both BET and BET on Jazz redefined the title of Director of Marketing. Today, Teo is Vice President of Government Relations for the NBA's Charlotte Bobcats

where he is utilizing his multitude of talents to develop both local and state government relationships as well as build a positive relationship with the business community. He is a remarkable individual whose professional life has always enriched the surrounding community.

In addition to his innumerable professional contributions, Teo has also devoted countless hours to a number of civic and social organizations. He currently serves on the board of the Freedom Theater in Philadelphia, the advisory committee for the International Association of Jazz Educators, on the Board of Trustees at Discovery Place Charlotte North Carolina, as well as on the Board of Directors at Theater Charlotte, WTVI Public Television, and the Bobby Phills Foundation. He is also a member of the Charlotte Rotary, 100 Black Men of Charlotte, the Business Committee on Higher Education for the Institute for Emerging Issues and the advisory board for the Mint Museum and the Mint Museum of Craft and Design. There are few like Teo who give so much of themselves back to their communities—he is a community treasure.

To be awarded with the Greater NAACP's Lifetime Achievement Award is a reflection of all that Teo has accomplished as a community member, advocate, professional, volunteer, mentor and friend. For his many invaluable contributions to the community and to those ideals at the very heart of the NAACP, I am proud to join his children Todd, Kimberly, Derek, and Barry, as well as all of those gathered this evening in extending my deepest thanks and appreciation to Edward H. Lewis as he is bestowed with this very special honor by the Greater New Haven NAACP. His is a legacy that is sure to inspire many generations to come.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 14, 2008

Mr. ROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, I would like to state for the RECORD my position on the following votes I missed on April 8 and 9, 2008.

On Tuesday, April 8, and Wednesday, April 9, 2008, I was unable to be present in the Capitol due to a family illness and thus missed rollcall vote Nos. 161 through 172. Had I been present, I would have voted in the following manner:

On rollcall vote No. 161, on H.J. Res. 70, a resolution congratulating the Army Reserve on its centennial, which will be formally celebrated on April 23, 2008, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall vote No. 162, on H.R. 2464, the Wakefield Act, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall vote No. 163, on S. 793, the Traumatic Brain Injury Act of 2008, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall vote Nos. 164 and 165, which were procedural votes that provided for consideration of the bill H.R. 2016, to establish the National Landscape Conservation System, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall vote No. 166, on H. Res. 1077, which called on the Government of the Peoples Republic of China to end its crackdown in

Tibet and to enter into a substantive dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama to find a negotiated solution that respects the distinctive language, culture, religious identity, and fundamental freedom of all Tibetans, I would have proudly voted "aye."

On rollcall vote No. 167, on the Grijalva Amendment to H.R. 2016, The National Landscape Conservation System Act, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall vote No. 168, on the Bishop (UT) (#3) Amendment number 3 to H.R. 2016, The National Landscape Conservation System Act, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall vote No. 169, on the Bishop (UT) (#4) Amendment to H.R. 2016, The National Landscape Conservation System Act, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall vote No. 170, on the Bishop (UT) (#5) Amendment to H.R. 2016, The National Landscape Conservation System Act, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall vote No. 171, on the Altmire/Carney Amendment to H.R. 2016, The National Landscape Conservation System Act, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall vote No. 172, on the Pearce Amendment to H.R. 2016, The National Landscape Conservation System Act, I would have voted "nay."

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PRAIRIE CENTER HEALTH SYSTEMS, INC.

HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 14, 2008

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the 40th anniversary of the Prairie Center Health Systems, Inc. (Prairie Center) in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. The Prairie Center has provided affordable, effective drug and alcohol education and treatment to the communities of Illinois since 1968.

The Prairie Center originated in 1968 with three grassroots organizations: the Mustard Seed Club, the Champaign County Council on Alcoholism and the Gemini House. Today, the Prairie Center is responsive to the needs of Ford and Vermilion County as well the 7,000 annual residents in need of substance abuse services.

The Prairie Center provides a variety of substance abuse services. These services include school-based prevention education, community education, early intervention counseling, outpatient care, DUI services, adult inpatient care and detoxification care. Regardless of the service the Prairie Center follows their vision to help people improve their lives.

Today the Prairie Center has expanded to three locations and provides numerous outreach services throughout Central Illinois. On behalf of the people who have benefited from these services, I thank the Prairie Center for their work and look forward to their next 40 years.

I hope all of you will join me in recognizing the services provided by the Prairie Center that restore the lives, families and communities of Illinois.

THE ABUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 14, 2008

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, the bloody crackdown on innocent, peaceful protesters by Burma's brutal regime last fall shocked the world. Over 30 people were killed, hundreds were injured, and as many as 1,000 people arrested during and after the protests. It was startling even by the standards by which we have come to judge this military regime.

Last week the Congressional Human Rights Caucus welcomed three courageous witnesses to this travesty, U Kovida, U Gawsita, and U Pannyasiri, Burmese Buddhist monks who were beaten and abused by this regime, but have become advocates for their people. I would like to submit their testimonies for the record.

After the initial outrage over the government's actions last fall, I'm afraid that many people moved on, and the plight of the Burmese people has passed again from public consciousness. This is why it was so important for us to hear these distinguished witnesses, peaceful and courageous men who stood up for their people in the face of this violent suppression. By giving them an opportunity to describe what they went through—and what their countrymen and women continue to go through—we can help refocus attention on Burma.

In February, the regime announced that it would hold a national referendum on a new constitution in May 2008. They said that if the constitution were approved, they would hold a "multi-party election" in 2010. I, for one, however, have no faith in pronouncements from these thugs that they are ready to end military rule; the closed process of drafting the constitution and the extensive ongoing military role in the proposed system are obvious problems. And, of course, the exclusion of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi—still locked up under house arrest—is completely unacceptable.

Meanwhile, we search for ways to compel this regime to respect human rights. We in Congress have addressed the issue many times since the 1988 massacres. I have chaired multiple hearings on human rights abuses in Burma and we have addressed the situation through legislation aimed at the regime. Just this fall, I was honored to co-sponsor legislation authored by that great friend of Burma, Chairman TOM LANTOS. The Block Burmese JADE act would level new restrictions on the military government.

But the emboldened dictators continue their course of abuse—extra-judicial killings, torture, rape, forced labor, and of course, tight control over speech, the press and assembly.

They are supported by patrons in Beijing, who are happily preparing for the Olympics as they bankroll these thugs to the tune of \$2 to \$3 billion in military aid since the early 1990s, \$200 million of economic aid annually, and billions of dollars in investment and trade.

Congress has discussed the role of the Chinese in Darfur, and recently Madam Speaker, I co-sponsored your timely resolution calling upon the Chinese to end their violent crack-

down in Tibet. However, we cannot forget the Chinese role in supporting repression in Burma.

When the world watches the Olympic games from China, I hope at least some of the viewers think of the Burmese political prisoners—perhaps 1,800 of them—suffering in the prisons that the Chinese support. They are enduring what one former prisoner has called the closest thing to hell on earth that he could imagine.

TESTIMONY OF U KOVIDA BEFORE THE CONGRESSIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CAUCUS, APRIL 10, 2008

Honorable Congressmen, staff members, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like, first of all, to offer my sincere THANKS to all of you who have given me a chance to share what I have experienced and those who are here to listen and pay attention to what I have to say. Secondly, I would like to thank the President of the United States and the American people for giving me this opportunity to explain the predicament and dire situation the people are facing in Burma on behalf of our leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the oppressed Burmese.

I am, as you all know, one of the participants during the so-called "Saffron-Revolution" in September 2007. Burma is infamous for its violation of Basic Human Rights, disrespect to the freedom of religion, one of the least developed and poorest countries in the world with the lowest living standard where the civil war has been going on for the past 50 years.

These are the reasons why we, people of Burma, have wanted a change in the government system. We have wanted to have a higher live standard, and live in a better and developed country. The people in Burma have struggled and fought for change since 1962. We have struggled and fought to achieve such change throughout the history and the demonstrations and protests in 1962, 1974, 1988, 1996, 2003, and 2007 are significant. But all of our voices, pleas and struggles were answered by the brutality of the military government which used weapons, brutal suppressions, torture, and imprisonments.

The international community witnessed the brutal suppression of monks who demonstrated peacefully in September 2007. But there have been many incidents of oppressions, violation and torture that have been going on inside Burma without anyone knowing for many decades.

What I would like to point out here in the harmless and helpless Burmese have very high hope and are depending on the assistance and intervention from the United Nations and the international community in the past 20 years. Sadly and unfortunately, there hasn't been any positive effect on the people of Burma. There were so many decisions by the United Nations. There were many U.N. representatives who have visited Burma, but the future looks bleak. We were greatly discouraged by the fact that the Security Council merely suggested the military which was killing its own people and monks, to engage in talks. What I am saying to you now is exactly what the people of Burma would like to speak out.

Ladies and gentlemen, the people of Burma are not only suffering from extreme poverty, hardship, substandard in health care, education and social services but also facing oppression by the military government on a daily basis. When monks in Burma understood, realized, and felt the hardship the people had to go through, we decided to protest peacefully on behalf of the people. And everyone knows how we were dealt with. We appreciate that you are trying to oppose the constitution drafted by the military and its