

Chet Newsome, of Lowell, Indiana, and John and Mark Thanos, both of Chesterton, Indiana, whose bravery and self-sacrifice are an inspiration to us all.

On Saturday, August 9, 2008, at 5:30 a.m., Chet Newsome, a local truck driver, was awakened by the sound of what he has described as a blood-curdling scream from one of his neighbors. After hurrying outside to see what was happening, Chet saw his neighbor's garage engulfed in flames. He could hear the screams of two men who were trapped inside, so Chet ran to his garage for his ax, and without hesitation, began to hammer away at the door. After breaking through the door, Chet could see that one of the men was able to escape through a side door, but the other man remained trapped inside. Again, without hesitation and without thinking of himself, Chet reached in and was able to grip the severely burned man's belt and pull him to safety. Without Chet's quick thinking and immediate action, the outcome of this tragic event would have seen a very different outcome. For his bravery, the town of Lowell and the entire First Congressional District owe Chet Newsome their respect and gratitude.

On Sunday, September 14, 2008, at approximately 10:30 a.m., John and Mark Thanos were alerted by screams in their neighborhood. They soon learned that two young boys had fallen into a nearby ditch that had filled with rain. By the time they arrived, one of the boys had managed to escape the waters, but the other was being pulled into a culvert under the street. In a truly selfless act, Mark, an English teacher for the last 20 at Wheeler High School, and his father, John, a retired custodian who worked for many years for the Merrillville Community School Corporation, realized something needed to be done. They plunged into the ditch to save the 10-year-old boy, but the waters were too strong. While the boy was rescued, neither John nor Mark survived the ordeal. To those who knew John and Mark Thanos, it was no surprise that when called upon in such a horrific situation, they would answer without hesitation and would put the safety of others ahead of themselves. There is no greater sacrifice than to give one's life to save another, and John and Mark Thanos made the ultimate sacrifice to save the life of a child. For their heroism, they are to be forever remembered by the people of northwest Indiana and beyond.

These real-life heroes represent true courage and bravery, and they are the greatest example of the valor and strength of our country and its citizens.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in commending and acknowledging these outstanding heroes of northwest Indiana. Their bravery while putting aside personal safety to ensure the safety of others is worthy of the highest honor and respect. I am grateful and am truly honored to recognize these astonishing individuals and their remarkable acts of heroism.

IN HONOR OF DAVE PAVLICK

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 26, 2008*

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of Dave Pavlick

upon the completion of his second 600-mile walk throughout Ohio to promote the "Health Care for All Ohioans Act." As one of the key driving forces behind the Single Payer Action Network (SPAN), Dave is ending his 23-day quest for health care justice in Parma, Ohio.

Dave's years of unparalleled dedication and commitment to the highest-quality, uniform standard of care for all as a basic human right has garnered increased attention and support from people all over the State of Ohio. Through his walk, Dave has given his own time and energy in a profound way for the over 1 million uninsured Ohioans and the many more without adequate health care who seek an end to their plight and injustice.

As a career public servant with both the United States Marine Corps and the Cuyahoga County Sheriff, Dave learned a great deal about many ails of society, and he decided to commit himself to healing perhaps the biggest social ail in America, the lack of adequate and affordable health care for all.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor of Dave Pavlick, whose outstanding and persistent contributions to health care justice for all Ohioans will someday lead to care for all. I, along with SPAN, the brothers and sisters of the United Auto Workers Local 1005, and all other supporters, welcome Dave back to Parma.

INTENT TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION IN THE NEXT CONGRESS TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM OF VACANT AND ABANDONED PROPERTIES IN OLDER, INDUSTRIAL CITIES

**HON. TIM RYAN**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 26, 2008*

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, Youngstown and Akron, and nearby cities like Cleveland, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, and Detroit, suffered severe job and population losses over the past 25 to 30 years. This has led to the loss of thousands of housing units to abandonment and decay. The subprime mortgage crisis has only worsened the problem in these cities, ravaging entire neighborhoods in its wake, leaving thousands of vacant and abandoned houses that attract criminal activity and trash, and are safety hazards to the families who remain. The abandoned properties also lower the property values of those who remain, and frustrate neighborhood improvement efforts.

Although the Housing and Economic Recovery Act we passed in July will provide some assistance to cities to demolish vacant and abandoned properties, a more comprehensive, regional, approach is needed to address this problem in the so-called "shrinking cities" and their metropolitan areas.

Youngstown, under the leadership of Mayor Jay Williams, has already taken a big step in this direction by adopting the Youngstown 2010 Plan, which envisions Youngstown, which once had a population of 170,000, becoming a smaller, but more vibrant city of about 80,000, with revitalized neighborhoods, and abundant green open space that will be used for parks, urban agriculture, and future economic development. Some of its land

might actually be reforested. Youngstown is also working with other local governments to develop a regional strategy to address vacant and abandoned properties, which are becoming more and more commonplace in suburban areas around Youngstown.

We need to unleash the creative energies present in Youngstown, and other cities and metropolitan areas, by assisting them to develop and implement plans to eliminate the blighting influences of abandoned properties, gain some control of the vacant land in their residential areas, and reposition themselves for the challenges of the 21st century as vibrant, livable communities.

To this end, Madam Speaker, I am working with my good friend, Congressman BRIAN HIGGINS of Buffalo, to develop legislation that would establish a new demonstration program within HUD, the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The program would be competitive. In order to successfully compete for assistance under it, a local government would need to partner with other jurisdictions within its metropolitan area. For example, a county government might be an ideal partner for its central city.

The partners would need to develop a plan that takes into account their population losses, and sets forth strategies to make better use of land and other resources within their boundaries. Grants awarded under the program could be used for, among other things, demolition, removal of old, antiquated infrastructure, the creation of parks and open space, code enforcement improvements, the development of real property information systems, and the creation and expansion of urban and regional land banks, which are widely recognized to be a key tool in efforts to promote investment and revitalization efforts in areas with very weak real estate markets.

Applicants would also have to submit detailed implementation plans, and would have to meet stringent accountability standards in carrying them out.

I would also like to mention that Mr. Stephen Cerny, who is currently serving in my office as a Brookings Institution Legislative Fellow, has provided me with tremendous help on this issue. Steve is an attorney at HUD and a former planner in Cleveland, and I am very grateful for the extensive professional experience he provides on this issue.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I look forward to working with you and the Committee to bring this program to fruition.

ALLIED VETERANS OF THE WORLD

**HON. ANDER CRENSHAW**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 26, 2008*

Mr. CRENSHAW. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize an organization of military veterans that works hard to take care of its own by supporting the Veterans Administration's health care services. It is my privilege to introduce the work of the Allied Veterans of the World to my fellow Members of Congress.

Allied Veterans of the World was founded in 1979 as the 451st Bomber Group by Commander-in-Chief Harold Grossman. It became the first organized veteran group in Florida by