

drinking water. In order to claim this important tax credit, companies will be forced to search a bit harder for a new solution to water treatment. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and join in the fight to protect our national treasure.

RECOGNIZING CARL BLESSER OF
BROOKSVILLE, FLORIDA

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Carl Blesser of Hernando County, Florida. Carl has done something that all of us strive to do, but that very few of us will ever accomplish, celebrate his 102nd birthday.

Carl Blesser was born June 1, 1906, in New York City, New York. Attending school in Albany with a degree in accounting, Carl went on to be a successful CPA. Marrying his sweetheart Nadine, the two spent many happy years together traveling. One of his fondest memories, in fact, is of a trip he took with his parents and wife to see the Empire State Building, as well as several trips to the American West.

Carl moved to Hernando County when his wife was ill, and remained here following her death. Truly devoted to Nadine, Carl states that his happiest moment was when he married his wife. If he could live his life over, Carl would travel more and would like to have met President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

A lover of books, Carl loves to go outside and read, and also enjoys going to the Golden Corral for his favorite shrimp dinner. Today he spends much of his time with his friends and loves to sit outside under the trees enjoying the beauty that Brooksville has to offer. His advice to young people today is to not smoke or drink so that they can live longer and better lives.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join me in honoring Carl Blesser for reaching his 102nd birthday. I hope we all have the good fortune to live as long as him.

HONORING MAXWELL EMORY
LANHAM

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Maxwell Emory Lanham of Kansas City, Missouri. Maxwell is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1261, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Maxwell has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the many years Maxwell has been involved with Scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Maxwell Emory Lanham

for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

HONORING MASSACHUSETTS
STATE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN
A. LEPPER

HON. JAMES P. MCGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, today I rise in honor of John A. Lepper who is retiring after serving 14 years in the Massachusetts Legislature as State Representative for the city of Attleboro. I am proud to know and to have worked with Representative Lepper and I salute his many contributions to the citizens of Attleboro and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Representative Lepper began his career of public service in the 1980s as a member of the city of Attleboro Planning Board. He was elected to the Attleboro City Council in 1987 where he served for 6 years.

In 1995 he began his tenure as a member of the Massachusetts State Legislature and distinguished himself as a champion for children, families, and persons with disabilities. He is highly regarded for his work on a commission that championed the rights of grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. This issue is especially important to Mr. Lepper as he and his wife have devoted many years of their lives raising two of their grandchildren.

In his retirement, Representative Lepper is looking forward to staying involved with local politics but plans to take some time to relax at first and do some fishing.

Madam Speaker, I am certain that the entire House of Representatives joins me in congratulating State Representative John A. Lepper for all that he has accomplished and in wishing him the best in his retirement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. KANJORSKI. Madam Speaker, the American automobile industry faces almost certain extinction if this body fails to act at this time. I cannot in good conscience allow that to happen. I will therefore vote for this legislation today, December 10, 2008, but I do so with some reservations.

Admittedly, the industry has made many missteps over the years. Moreover, the many flaws in this bill were probably pre-ordained by the expedited legislative procedures—adopted under the guise of an “emergency”—by which the congressional leadership chose to craft this bill. However, to reject this imperfect solution for an imperfect industry solely because it could have been better makes little sense.

Like my constituents, I am also astonished by the actions of overpaid, out of touch executives at these companies. We need to pursue further reforms in their compensation. But if

we focus today on only the few individuals at the top of the companies, we will lose sight of the larger reality: Failure to act will cost the jobs of hundreds of thousands of average, hardworking Americans. It would also deprive our Nation of an industrial sector vital for us to remain an innovative global leader and manufacturer in the twenty-first century.

America needs its own automotive industry. I have always owned American cars. I believe in the American workforce, the thousands of men and women who make the automobiles on which we rely. They do not fly on corporate jets. They certainly do not make millions of dollars. We need to help them in their time of need.

Experts estimate that if the Congress does not provide this initial bridge loan and the automakers do fail, 2.5 million jobs will be lost. The Big Three employ 240,000 workers, suppliers and dealerships provide 800,000 jobs, and some 1.4 million jobs are dependent on the auto manufacturers. In my congressional district, some 500 workers at Rieter Automotive in Bloomsburg produce carpets for General Motors, and these workers and their families would experience undue hardship if we allow the American automotive industry to fail.

Moreover, unemployment numbers released for November indicate this country lost 533,000 jobs in that month alone. The current unemployment rate sits at 6.7 percent. We simply cannot allow those already devastating numbers to swell further.

In addition, the loss of the industry would result in a sizable drop in government revenue, just when annual deficits have run away and our national debt soars. Unemployment assistance will skyrocket and thousands of American breadwinners will lose their homes and even the ability to feed their children. The costs of inaction will therefore be catastrophic.

Surely we all agree that the industry teeters on the precipice of disaster. Additionally, most agree that the global economic crisis bears a good deal of blame for the automakers' collective misfortune. Importantly, the industry has appropriately conceded that they deserve a large share of blame. They were reluctant to diversify their fleets of cars to suit demand and to inoculate themselves against market volatility in the price of oil.

Earlier this year, consumers quickly lost their taste for large sport utility vehicles in favor of small, fuel-efficient cars as automakers for too long ignored this shift. The automakers failed to trim costs appropriately. They retained too many unnecessary white collar jobs. As we all now know, they infamously provided private jets to transport executives across the country, all the while paying those very executives \$20 million-plus pay packages.

Over the last few years, the automakers have come to recognize the urgency of their plight by engaging in substantive changes in their corporate structures. They have now presented long-term viability plans to the Congress, and they seem intent on getting the job done. This bill—if its oversight provisions are dutifully carried out by the Executive Branch—attempts to ensure that the necessary transformations occur. As a start, the automakers have expressed that wide-scale restructuring has already begun, and at considerable cost.

This bill contains many thoughtful conditions. Executive compensation limits, taxpayer

warrants, and a czar-like overseer are among the principles necessary for us to extend Federal assistance. This legislation, however, could have been better, tougher, and as a result more likely to succeed, if we had taken the time to get it right. I remain concerned that American taxpayer money could be used in a way that might outsource American jobs because the Congress did not include a specific prohibition preventing such an action.

So, I question whether the oversight of the disbursement and allocation of all government funds is sufficiently strong. As for executive compensation, even though the CEOs have agreed to annual \$1 salaries, the Big Three could have been forced to pay their top 20 executives no more than their leaner, more-profitable foreign counterparts are paid.

Furthermore, we failed to establish what will occur in the event of a disaster scenario, in which the companies burn through this money and the hoped for results are not attained. We made some progress in planning for contingencies, but we should have done more. We could have created in legislation a structured bankruptcy system for the automakers.

We could have also relied more on the 1979 Chrysler bailout law for insight and guidance. That plan included a "certainty of success" formula and required more frequent reporting. Unfortunately, this precedent received far less attention than it deserved. Finally, I believe that we ought to have considered a buy-in incentive program, whereby Americans would hold a vested interest in the success of these companies.

Unfortunately, these and countless other potential provisions never saw the light of day because the Congress succumbed to the idea that emergencies, however real, preclude us from operating under regular order. The two are not mutually exclusive. I concede that the American automakers need money, and fast.

But, in the three weeks it took the companies to produce at least reasonable viability proposals, the Congress could have considered numerous drafts of bills, could have held additional hearings, and could have marked up legislation. In addition to producing a better legislative product, each of those activities probably would have built a stronger consensus and lessened partisan discord. Going forward into the 111th Congress, it is my sincere hope that the Congress will return to regular order so that we produce better laws and establish a more collegial, deliberative body.

That said, voting against this bill today simply was not an option. The industry might well have vanished in a matter of weeks, unemployment would have skyrocketed, and the economy would have sunk deeper. Let us hope that the money is allocated wisely, that the executives act prudently, that all stakeholders make some sacrifices, and that long-term viability is pursued tirelessly.

INTRODUCTION OF THE IDENTITY THEFT PREVENTION ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, today I introduce the Identity Theft Prevention Act. This act protects the American people from govern-

ment-mandated uniform identifiers that facilitate private crime as well as the abuse of liberty. The major provision of the Identity Theft Prevention Act halts the practice of using the Social Security number as an identifier by requiring the Social Security Administration to issue all Americans new Social Security numbers within 5 years after the enactment of the bill. These new numbers will be the sole legal property of the recipient, and the Social Security Administration shall be forbidden to divulge the numbers for any purposes not related to Social Security Administration. Social Security numbers issued before implementation of this bill shall no longer be considered valid federal identifiers. Of course, the Social Security Administration shall be able to use an individual's original Social Security number to ensure efficient administration of the Social Security system.

Madam Speaker, Congress has a moral responsibility to address this problem because it was Congress that transformed the Social Security number into a national identifier. Thanks to Congress, today no American can get a job, open a bank account, get a professional license, or even get a driver's license without presenting his Social Security number. So widespread has the use of the Social Security number become that a member of my staff had to produce a Social Security number in order to get a fishing license!

One of the most disturbing abuses of the Social Security number is the congressionally-authorized rule forcing parents to get a Social Security number for their newborn children in order to claim the children as dependents. Forcing parents to register their children with the state is more like something out of the nightmares of George Orwell than the dreams of a free republic that inspired this Nation's founders.

Congressionally-mandated use of the Social Security number as an identifier facilitates the horrendous crime of identity theft. Thanks to Congress, an unscrupulous person may simply obtain someone's Social Security number in order to access that person's bank accounts, credit cards, and other financial assets. Many Americans have lost their life savings and had their credit destroyed as a result of identity theft. Yet the federal government continues to encourage such crimes by mandating use of the Social Security number as a uniform ID!

This act also forbids the federal government from creating national ID cards or establishing any identifiers for the purpose of investigating, monitoring, overseeing, or regulating private transactions among American citizens. In 2005, this body established a de facto national ID card with a provisions buried in the "intelligence" reform bill mandating federal standards for drivers' licenses, and mandating that federal agents only accept a license that conforms to these standards as a valid ID.

Nationalizing standards for drivers' licenses and birth certificates creates a national ID system pure and simple. Proponents of this scheme claim they are merely creating new standards for existing State IDs. However, imposing federal standards in a federal bill creates a federalized ID regardless of whether the ID itself is still stamped with the name of your State.

The national ID will be used to track the movements of American citizens, not just terrorists. Subjecting every citizen to surveillance

diverts resources away from tracking and apprehending terrorists in favor of needless snooping on innocent Americans. This is what happened with "suspicious activity reports" required by the Bank Secrecy Act. Thanks to BSA mandates, federal officials are forced to waste countless hours snooping through the private financial transactions of innocent Americans merely because those transactions exceeded \$10,000.

Turning State-issued drivers licenses into federally controlled national ID cards is yet another federal usurpation of State authority and another costly unfunded mandate imposed on the States. According to a report issued by the National Conference of State Legislators, turning drivers licenses into national ID cards will cost the States more than \$11 billion.

Madam Speaker, no wonder there is a groundswell of opposition to this mandate. Several State legislatures have even passed laws forbidding their States from complying with this mandate! The Identity Theft Prevention Act not only repeals those sections of the federal law creating a national ID, it forbids the federal government from using federal funds to blackmail States into adopting uniform federal identifiers. Passing the Identity Theft Prevention Act is thus an excellent way for this Congress to show renewed commitment to federalism and opposition to imposing unfunded mandates on the States.

This legislation not only repeals those sections of federal law creating the national ID, it also repeals those sections of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 that require the Department of Health and Human Services to establish a uniform standard health identifier—an identifier which could be used to create a national database containing the medical history of all Americans. As an OB/GYN with more than 30 years in private practice, I know the importance of preserving the sanctity of the physician-patient relationship. Oftentimes, effective treatment depends on a patient's ability to place absolute trust in his or her doctor. What will happen to that trust when patients know that any and all information given to their doctors will be placed in a government accessible database?

By putting an end to government-mandated uniform IDs, the Identity Theft Prevention Act will prevent millions of Americans from having their liberty, property, and privacy violated by private and public sector criminals.

Some members of Congress will claim that the federal government needs the power to monitor Americans in order to allow the government to operate more efficiently. I would remind my colleagues that, in a constitutional republic, the people are never asked to sacrifice their liberties to make the jobs of government officials easier. We are here to protect the freedom of the American people, not to make privacy invasion more efficient.

Madam Speaker, while I do not question the sincerity of those members who suggest that Congress can ensure that citizens' rights are protected through legislation restricting access to personal information, the only effective privacy protection is to forbid the federal government from mandating national identifiers. Legislative "privacy protections" are inadequate to protect the liberty of Americans for a couple of reasons.

First, it is simply common sense that repealing those federal laws that promote identity