

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2009

Mr. KANJORSKI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to raise my concerns about H.R. 2, the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act.

I voted in favor of H.R. 2, with some reservations. I fully support providing health coverage to children and support this legislation as it continues funding for 7 million children currently enrolled in SCHIP and will allow an additional 4 million children to be covered. Moreover, I support the efforts of this legislation to reach families that are eligible for this program but are not currently enrolled.

At the same time, however, I am concerned about the increases in tobacco taxes that will be used to pay for the extension and expansion of this worthwhile program. In particular, I am concerned about these taxes for small manufacturers.

For example, in my Congressional district, there is a small manufacturer, Avanti Cigar Company, that produces large cigars. The company currently employs 43 people and is concerned that the increased taxes as a result of this legislation will force the company out of business. In 2008, the company generated \$6 million in revenues and paid \$1 million federal excise taxes. With the increase in taxes included in H.R. 2, the company is facing a 40 percent increase and expects to pay \$3.1 million annually in excise taxes. These increases may very well cause Avanti Cigar Company to close.

From my perspective, at a time when our economy is in trouble and our small businesses are hurting, now is not the time to pass tax increases that may put some of these businesses out of business. In the coming months, it is my hope that we can revisit this issue and look for other ways to pay for providing health care to children that will not cause parents to lose their jobs.

In closing, I appreciate the opportunity to voice my concerns about this legislation.

DTV DELAY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2009

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of S. 328, the DTV Delay Act.

As a supporter of this bill, I believe we must do everything we can to make sure no one gets left behind during the transition to digital television.

Unfortunately, the Bush Administration grossly mismanaged the digital television transition and put years of meticulous planning for this transition at risk.

The coupon program, which was designed to help households defray the cost of converter boxes, has a waiting list of over two million. This number is expected to increase in the weeks ahead. What's more, we also face the possibility of converter box shortages.

And that's why we need to approve this important legislation to extend the cutoff date.

First, the DTV Delay Act extends the DTV transition date to June 12th, 2009. I am confident this one-time extension will give us the time we need to develop an approach that allows us to move the country smoothly to digital television without needing to extend the transition date in the future.

Second, this legislation fixes the converter box coupon program.

The fact that the coupon program has failed comes as no surprise.

As someone that supports the digital transition, I joined many of my colleagues in fighting for additional funding for the coupon program.

Over the last two years we have tried, repeatedly, to prevent this failure. And, I was very disappointed the Bush Administration did not work with us to prevent this situation.

We called on NTIA multiple times to make sure the coupon program had enough funding and people would not be put on a waitlist.

Repeatedly, we were told not to worry. And then, on Christmas Eve, we were informed that there were millions of people on the coupon wait-list and the NTIA would run out of money before the transition date, leaving millions of Americans without access to television.

Without coupons, households will not be prepared.

Unfortunately, in this economy, where every penny counts, the price of a converter box is more than many people can afford. To date, 98% of converter boxes are purchased with the help of a government coupon.

Last week we took a very important first step to fix this program by providing additional funds in the economic stimulus package for coupons.

But now, we must make further improvements to the program to address consumer needs.

For example, this bill permits Americans to receive coupons electronically and to apply for new coupons if their current coupons have expired. Americans should no longer have to wait 4 to 6 weeks to receive their coupons.

Unfortunately, we also know that certain segments of our population will likely be disproportionately impacted by the digital transition: Latinos, African Americans and seniors. As someone who represents a congressional district that is 42 percent Latino and many senior citizens, I find the failure of the coupon program particularly troubling.

Third, this legislation keeps in place the SAFER Act, legislation that I introduced and the Congress passed last year.

The SAFER Act enables the FCC to let a single broadcaster in each market continue broadcasting simple information about the transition to digital broadcasting over the old analog channel for a short period of time.

Households still not prepared for the DTV transition will see, for 30 days after the transition, information that the transition has taken place and information phone numbers. More importantly, households will also receive emergency weather and public safety information that is broadcast over digital airwaves.

We know that regardless of how much work we do, there will always be some households left behind and the SAFER Act is a common sense step to reduce that confusion even further.

Finally, the DTV Delay Act will let first responders use available spectrum before the transition date if the FCC determines there is no harmful interference in the area. It also explicitly authorizes the FCC to use expedited procedures to promote inter-operability amongst public safety radio services.

It is important for us to remember that one of the original purposes of switching to digital television was to free up spectrum so our first responders would have radio inter-operability.

This will make our country safer. But if we transition to digital television with millions of households still unprepared, we risk cutting off millions of Americans from vital emergency information, thus causing confusion and decreasing our safety.

We must act now to extend the cutoff date and fix the converter box coupon program. We cannot afford to wait any longer.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

FAST REDRESS ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. CANDICE S. MILLER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 3, 2009

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 559, the FAST Redress Act of 2009. This bill requires the Homeland Security Secretary to create a timely and fair process for individuals who believe they were delayed or prohibited from boarding a commercial aircraft, or entering the country because they were wrongly identified as a threat when screened against any terrorist watch list or database used by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Customs and Border Protection, or any other component of the Department of Homeland Security.

We have heard many news reports of people whose names are similar to those on the watch list, detained for hours at border crossings and airports, all because their name is the same or similar to a person with suspected terrorist ties.

The Fast Redress Act would set up a dedicated office within Department of Homeland

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

Security to coordinate and streamline the process of appeal for individuals who believe they have been wrongly placed on a government watch list and consequently remanded to secondary screening.

This office would then create and share a "Cleared List" of individuals who have gone through the redress process and that list would be disseminated to all components of DHS—preventing the same individuals from being stopped by multiple government agencies.

My home state of Michigan is home to the first and second busiest border crossings on the northern tier of the nation, where thousands of people cross the border into Canada every single day.

Detroit Metropolitan Airport is also a hub for Northwest Airlines and is one of the busiest airports in the nation.

When you combine the fact that southeast Michigan is home to one of the largest Arabic populations in America, the vast majority of whom are law abiding and patriotic Americans, with the important international travel corridors that exist in our community, far too many of my constituents have been needlessly inconvenienced without the goal of security being advanced.

Unfortunately, my office has been contacted by numerous people who were mistakenly detained, often at gunpoint, because their name mistakenly appeared on the terrorist watch list.

Now, American citizens will have a process to permanently clear their names, and spread that information throughout the DHS and others who use the watch list. And that will make it a more effective tool to keep our nation safe.

We must ensure that our CBP officers and TSA agents spend their limited time, manpower and resources on genuine threats to our security; scrubbing the watch list is an important first step to making sure that happens.

HONORING FRESNO DEPUTY
SHERIFF'S ASSOCIATION

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 9, 2009

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend the Fresno Deputy Sheriff's Association for their commitment to serving the City and County of Fresno, California.

For over thirty years the Fresno Deputy Sheriff's Association (FDSA) has maintained the goal of working for the rights and protection of law enforcement, as well as to serve the citizens of Fresno County. Originally the FDSA was organized to give deputy sheriffs the opportunity to collectively bargain with the county for wages, benefits and working conditions. Once fully operating, the FDSA was able to establish better labor conditions for the deputy sheriffs and began actively participating in the community. The FDSA donates time and monetary resources to various charitable organizations. It is also active in the state association, the Peace Officer's Research Association of California.

Today the FDSA represents over five hundred active employees. The membership includes deputy sheriffs, dispatchers, community service officers, identification technicians, criminalists and deputy coroners. The variety

of job classifications allows the FDSA to represent both sworn and support personnel throughout the enforcement side of the Fresno Sheriff's Office.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend the Fresno Deputy Sheriff's Association for their commitment to serving the personnel of the Fresno Sheriff's Office. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing the organization many years of continued success.

TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF JOSE
TORRES

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 9, 2009

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to former light-heavyweight boxing champion Jose Torres, who sadly passed away on January 19th this year. Mr. Torres was an extraordinary man who achieved a life that advanced the cause of civil rights, community empowerment, and equality of opportunity. Of Puerto Rican descent, Mr. Torres was fiercely proud of his heritage and made New York his home for 50 years.

Mr. Torres learned to box in the Army and captured the light-middleweight silver medal at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. After that, he served as a sparring partner for Sugar Ray Robinson. Mr. Torres boxed professionally from 1958 to 1969, sporting a record 41 wins, three losses, and one draw. He was a light-heavyweight champion, successfully defended his title three times, and was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1997.

He captured the light-heavyweight crown in 1965 by defeating then undisputed champion Willie Pastrano. His victory sent an outpouring of joy and pride into the streets of Spanish Harlem which held a parade in his honor, and he dedicated his title to the people of Puerto Rico.

Mr. Torres had a passion for civil rights and became a voice for the Latino. He joined Robert F. Kennedy's 1968 Presidential campaign to serve as a liaison to the Puerto Rican community. After boxing, Mr. Torres began his journalism career as a columnist for the New York Post. He became the first Hispanic columnist for a major English-language paper, writing about politics and life in the neighborhoods of Spanish Harlem. He also wrote for the Spanish-speaking New York newspaper El Diario La Prensa. His was a powerful voice because people trusted him. You could not find any one in New York who would not talk to him. Mr. Torres' literary interests extended to authoring the celebrated biographies of boxing legends Muhammad Ali and Mike Tyson.

In the mid-eighties, Mr. Torres served as the chairman of the New York State Athletic Commission, becoming the first former professional boxer and first Latino to head the boxing oversight agency. He understood the social disadvantages that many boxers faced and vowed to promote educational opportunities for fighters "at least so they can read their contracts."

Mr. Torres dedicated his life to helping others professionally and personally. Over the decades, he befriended and nurtured aspiring journalists and up-and-coming fighters. Mr. Torres is revered among the people of Span-

ish Harlem and Puerto Rico, which declared three days of mourning and ordered flags to be flown at half staff.

Once again, I pay tribute to Jose Torres, a trailblazer for his people and a renaissance man who made a positive impact in boxing, literature and civil rights. Those of us who had the opportunity to observe and experience his example consider ourselves blessed.

TRIBUTE TO GREGORY LEE
THOMAS

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 9, 2009

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, I stand here today to honor a loving father, supportive husband, caring brother and cherished son, Gregory Lee Thomas.

Born in Fontana, California, Gregory moved with his family to San Bernardino where he grew up to become a valuable member of the community. Having always held an interest and fascination with cars, working on them in his spare time, he eventually became a Service Advisor for Toyota and resided with his family in Redlands. However, it was the compassion and love for his family that really made Gregory shine. This is what made him the dedicated and devoted husband and father that will always remain in our hearts.

Gregory is survived by Angela Thomas, his wife of 15 years, and his two children, Alexia and Michael. He will be sorely missed by his father, Bill, step-mother, Jaennie, brother, Jeff, and sister, Danette as well as all of Gregory's combined nieces and nephews.

As a friend of Gregory's father, Bill, I would like to express my greatest sympathies for his family's loss. Gregory was extremely loved and will truly be missed. Let us take a moment to remember this great man, a positive role model to us all. The thoughts and prayers of my wife Barbara, my family and I are with Bill and his family at this time.

God bless Gregory Lee Thomas for love of country and mankind.

TRIBUTE TO PRESIDENT BARACK
OBAMA FROM KAZAKHSTAN

HON. SHELLEY BERKLEY

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 9, 2009

Ms. BERKLEY. Madam Speaker, as co-chair of the Friends of Kazakhstan Caucus, I would like to submit the following op-ed article, "Hoping for the Better", to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. This article, written by Kazakhstan's Secretary of State Kanat Saudabayev, expresses the continuing sense of solidarity between the United States and Kazakhstan as we enter into a new chapter of history with the inauguration of President Barack Obama. I look forward to working with President Obama as we continue to build our positive and productive relationship with the Kazakh people.

[From the Washington Times, Feb. 3, 2009]

SAUDABAYEV: HOPING FOR THE BETTER

(By Kanat Saudabayev)

The inauguration of Barack Obama as U.S. president has opened a new page in the history of America and the world. Great hopes