Work Zone Awareness Week, which is taking place next week.

During National Work Zone Awareness Week, almost every State across the country will be holding some type of educational event to highlight the importance of work zone safety on our nation's roadways.

Over the past decade, more than 10,500 fatalities were reported in work zones. In 2007, 835 traffic-related fatalities were reported and over 39,000 people were injured in accidents that took place in work zones across the country. Most disturbingly, 305 of the fatalities in 2007 involved workers being struck by moving vehicles while on the job. These statistics are alarming and illustrate the dangers posed to the men and women charged with rebuilding America.

We can help to reduce this number dramatically by taking a number of important steps including: encouraging responsible driving and greater understanding of the dangers involved with work zones, enhancing enforcement of speed limits and laws that protect workers, and installation of protective devices and equipment.

As a result of the nation's aging highway infrastructure, the country is faced with unprecedented levels of reconstruction and maintenance projects. And these levels will only increase in the near future.

With the influx of ready-to-go projects getting underway this summer as a result of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, every Member of Congress must make a greater effort to educate their constituents about the need to obey traffic signs, speed limits, and construction workers themselves while traveling through work zones.

As the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure begins to develop the next surface transportation authorization, our top priority will be improving the safety of our nation's roadways to reduce the astounding number of traffic-related fatalities and injuries that we, as a nation, endure year after year. Providing a greater commitment to increasing work zone safety will be a central aspect of this effort.

I look forward to working with national, state, and local organizations in reducing work zone and roadway deaths and injuries. Events such as Work Zone Awareness Week serve as an important first step in this endeavor.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to actively participate in promoting the goals and ideals of National Work Zone Awareness Week throughout their districts.

FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to rise in support of this bill. I would also like to thank Chairman CONYERS for helping to bring this bill, H.R. 985, Free Flow of Information Act of 2009, to the floor. I also would like to thank the author of this bill, Representative BOUCHER for this thoughtful legislation.

This bill is popularly known as the ''press shield law.'' I urge my colleagues to support it.

H.R. 985, protects the public's right to know by protecting the identities of reporters' confidential sources. The bill is identical to the one that passed the House in the 110th Congress by an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 398 to 21.

H.R. 985 creates a balancing test that would determine when the federal government may compel journalists to disclose information that they have gathered. This balancing test protects journalists from being compelled to disclose information that the government may obtain through other available means. The bill gives substantial protection to journalists' confidential sources, allowing compelled disclosure where doing so would protect national security or serve the public interest.

This legislation is necessary because it responds to a real and on-going problem. Since 2001, five journalists have been sentenced or jailed for refusing to reveal their confidential sources in federal court. Two reporters were sentenced to 18 months in prison and one reporter faced up to $5,000 a day in fines.

A 2006 study estimated that in that year alone, 67 federal subpoenas sought confidential material from reporters. Of those, 41 subpoenas sought the name confidential sources.

This bill establishes reasonable and well-balanced grounds for when a reporter can be compelled to testify about confidential sources. Reporters would not receive protection if information is needed to prevent or investigate an act of terrorism or other significant harm to national security, to prevent death or substantial bodily harm, to investigate a leak of properly classified information or private health or financial information, and to furnish eyewitness observation of a crime.

Forty-nine states and the District of Columbia have various statutes or judicial decisions that protect reporters from being compelled to testify or disclose sources and information in court. H.R. 985 would set national standards similar to those that are in effect in the states.

This bill has relevance to Texas. One of my constituents, Vanessa Legget, served maximum jail time in case. She was not the defendant—she was a reporter whose first amendment right was under siege.

I worked extensively on this issue. Ms. Leggett spent four years researching the 1997 murder of Doris Angleton for a book she was writing. When she refused to give in to threats and intimidation by an overzealous prosecution seeking her work product she was found in contempt and jailed.

Because of this injustice, I wrote letters to then-Attorney General John Ashcroft requesting that Leggett be permitted to assert her journalist privilege. I also requested that she be freed from incarceration. Despite my ardent efforts, Leggett remained jailed. The facts and outcome in this case were absurd. Surely, the law could not have intended for the result that transpired in the Leggett case. The present bill if enacted would address such anomalies.

When a federal grand jury was convened to investigate the possibility of filing federal murder charges against Houstonian Robert Angleton, the city braced itself for a media frenzy. In 1998, Robert Angleton had been acquitted in state court of murdering his wife, a well-known Houstonian, Doris Angleton, who was found shot to death on April 16, 1997, in her River Oaks home. The state court had been a media circus.

However, the person who received the most attention was not directly involved in the murder. Vanessa Leggett, a part-time college instructor and aspiring true crime writer, stole the limelight when she refused to turn over to the federal grand jury information that she had gathered during her four-year investigation. On July 19, 2001, Leggett was held in civil contempt under 28 U.S.C. sec. 1826 as a recalcitrant witness. She went to jail the next day and was not released until January 4, 2002, when the grand jury ended its Angleton investigation without handing down a single indictment.

Leggett was incarcerated longer than any reporter in U.S. history up to that time for refusing to disclose research collected in the course of newsgathering. Texas is one of the states that had and presently has no shield law. Leggett was forced to serve the maximum term for contempt of court, which was the shorter of either the duration of the grand jury investigation or eighteen months.

But the most disconcerting aspect of the Leggett case is that no court in Texas adequately investigated the actions of the U.S. Department of Justice or balanced the interests of the First Amendment against the government's need for Leggett's research. Indeed, there may have been no need for her information at all. On January 8, 2002, four days after Leggett's release, the U.S. attorney empanelled another grand jury to investigate Robert Angleton. It was able to hand down an indictment in sixteen days without subpoenaing Leggett or her records.

This bill is sound. The bill will address the situation that was present in the Leggett case. It adds balance and protection to journalists in the course of their vocation. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

DOUG MOORE: LEADER OF THE YEAR

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 2009

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, Doug Moore, executive director of the 64,000-member UDW Homecare Providers Union and a newly elected international vice president of AFSCME, has an outstanding record of success spanning nearly 30 years in building and energizing member-drive unions.

He began his labor career in 1980 as a rank-and-file member of the CWA, becoming a shop steward and, eventually, president of CWA Local 9586 in Sante Fe Springs, CA. He subsequently worked for SEIU as an international representative before becoming Ohio state director for the national AFL–CIO, where he was responsible for AFL–CIO programs for more than one million members.

After being recruited by AFSCME and serving as a regional field administrator and assistant regional director, Doug assisted in negotiating an agreement and helped build a 20,000-strong, member-driven union. He also created the first statewide Executive Board structure for the new ADSCME Local 3299 and developed a strong member activist program for the local.

In 2005, Doug was appointed deputy administrator of UDW. His dynamic leadership has helped rebuild UDW from the ground up.