

of providing consumers adequate protection from predatory lenders. H.R. 1728 recognizes this by prohibiting any compensation structure that could cause a loan originator to steer applicants toward costlier mortgages, providing a grace period for tenants before eviction from their homes, and creating an Office of Housing Counseling within the Department of Housing and Urban Development to educate consumers about what some might term as the Byzantine inner-workings of the housing market.

I am proud to support passage of this legislation and urge my colleagues to do so as well.

### MORTGAGE REFORM AND ANTI-PREDATORY LENDING ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. DEAN HELLER**

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 6, 2009*

The House in Committee of the Whole House of the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1728) to amend the Truth in Lending Act to reform consumer mortgage practices and provide accountability for such practices, to provide certain minimum standards for consumer mortgage loans, and for other purposes:

Mr. HELLER. Mr. Chair, I support and would have voted for H.R. 1728, the Mortgage Fraud and Anti-Predatory Lending Act. Considering the serious situation in Nevada related to housing issues, I support and would have voted for this bill to reform the mortgage and housing industry. H.R. 1728 reforms federal laws related to mortgage loan providers, those that buy or sell mortgages on the secondary securities markets, as well as appraisers. This bill will help reduce predatory lending practices and restrict lenders from making loans available to consumers that cannot afford them.

In the last Congress, I supported and voted for a similar bill, H.R. 3915, the Mortgage Reform and Anti-Predatory Lending Act of 2007. This bill passed the House by a vote of 291–127, on November 15, 2007, but was never considered by the Senate. Though this new version of the bill in the 111th Congress has a number of differences, and is not a perfect piece of legislation, I still would have voted in support of the legislation. I sincerely hope that some of the changes that need to be made will be achieved by the Senate or in a conference committee.

The economic downturn and housing situation in Nevada is dire. According to one leading foreclosure tracking service, foreclosures in Nevada were up 108% from February 2008 to February 2009. Nevada is the number one state, per capita, in foreclosures. Housing inventory is at an all-time high and construction and new starts are at a near standstill in both northern and southern Nevada. Clark County is one of the hardest hit counties in the nation.

Reforming mortgage fraud and predatory lending practices is critical to restoring confidence in the nation's housing market, helping get the economy back on track, and most importantly, helping keep Nevada families in their homes.

### NATO SUMMIT

**HON. JOHN S. TANNER**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 7, 2009*

Mr. TANNER. Madam Speaker, from April 2–9, 2009, in my capacity as President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA), I spoke at the 60th Anniversary Summit of NATO in Strasbourg/Kehl; chaired the NATO PA Standing Committee meeting and conducted bilateral meetings in Vilnius, Lithuania; traveled to Kiev, Ukraine and Tbilisi, Georgia on NATO PA Presidential visits; and addressed the EAPC Ambassadors in Brussels, Belgium. The Honorable JO ANN EMERSON (R-MO), who chairs the NATO PA's Civil Dimension of Security Committee and serves on the Standing Committee of the NATO PA, and NATO PA Secretary General David Hobbs, joined and worked with me to make this a successful trip.

In the NATO PA, parliamentarians from NATO member and partner states gather to discuss NATO issues and as elected officials, have a close working relationship with the Alliance. In addition to my role as the Assembly's President, I chair the U.S. delegation to the NATO PA. The U.S. delegation is always bipartisan, actively and regularly participates in the NATO PA sessions, and several of our delegates hold elected offices within the Assembly. The NATO PA meetings afford an opportunity to sound out parliamentarians from allied states on public opinion, defense and foreign policy, and trends in strategic thinking. These meetings also allow us to come to know members of parliaments who play important roles in shaping the security agenda that their governments debate at NATO headquarters. These relationships can last a lifetime and enhance mutual understanding of issues in the different member countries.

#### NATO SUMMIT IN STRASBOURG/KEHL

The NATO Summit was held April 3–4 in Strasbourg/Kehl, which is situated on the German-French border. There is great symbolism in the Alliance's 60th Anniversary being celebrated on this border, given what has transpired over the last century in those two countries which drew the United States into both World War I and World War II.

On behalf of the alliance parliamentarians, I addressed the Heads of State and Government at the NAC (North Atlantic Council), the Alliance's decision-making body. I outlined three serious challenges facing NATO at this time in its 60th year which we, as parliamentarians, believe are critical to the Alliance: the mission in Afghanistan, our relationship with Russia, and the need for a new Strategic Concept.

At the beginning of the NAC, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer welcomed Albania and Croatia as new members of the Alliance. He noted that their membership comes as the result of long years of hard work and that both countries have shown dedication and drive in completing the necessary reforms of their governing structures and their militaries. Since the United States is the depository country of the Washington Treaty, President Obama handed over copies of the Washington Treaty to the Presidents of Albania and Croatia, signifying the two countries' admission to the Alliance. Additionally,

the 28 NATO Heads of State and Government unanimously agreed to appoint Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen as NATO's next Secretary General. He will officially take up his duties on August 1 of this year, when the term of Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer expires after over five years of leading the Alliance.

For the first time, the NATO PA was mentioned in the NATO Summit Declaration. In paragraph 17 it states: "We welcome the role of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in promoting the Alliance's principles and values."

#### LITHUANIA

On April 5 in Vilnius, I chaired the Standing Committee meeting of the NATO PA. The Standing Committee consists of the heads of the Member delegations, chairs of the five NATO PA Committees, and the Bureau of the Assembly. In a productive session, we approved Bulgarian MP Assen Yordanov Agov as the Assembly's new Vice President. Mr. Agov will replace outgoing NATO PA Vice President Rasa Jukneviene, who vacated the post to serve as Lithuania's Defense Minister. Among other agenda items, the Committee discussed relations with the Russian delegation to the NATO PA, increasing the profile of our relationship with Georgia, relations with Belarus, cost cutting measures for NATO PA meetings in light of the current economic climate, and the Assembly's contribution to a future NATO Strategic Concept. I took the opportunity of the Standing Committee forum to emphasize my presidency theme of teamwork and a "Team NATO" concept, and that keeping a critical mass of public support to maintain the Afghanistan mission is essential. 2009 is a critical year for the Alliance in Afghanistan, and I stressed a sense of urgency with this timeline.

Also in Vilnius, Ms. Emerson and I attended a working dinner hosted by the Speaker of the Seimas (Lithuania's Parliament), Arunas Valinkas. We were joined by Seimas Members Juozas Olekas and Emanuelis Zingeris and the Director of the Seimas's International Relations Department, Sigita Trainauskiene. Our Ambassador to Lithuania, John Cloud, also participated. We thanked the Lithuanians for their contributions in Afghanistan, highlighting that their per capita contribution to the effort is impressive. In turn, the MP's thanked the U.S. for its support throughout the Soviet occupation and its role in regional NATO initiatives such as Baltic Air Policing. We discussed energy issues, mainly Lithuania's concern regarding the requirement to close their nuclear power plant by the end of this year (an EU membership condition they agreed to eight years ago). We encouraged them to amend Lithuania's residency law which currently requires Americans (and other non-EU nationals) who are working in Lithuania to live in the country for two years before their family members can receive residency permits to join them. They reassured us it would be resolved by this summer. We also encouraged them to address Jewish property restitution issues.

We enjoyed a warm reception from our Lithuanian counterparts and the visit underscored the strong working relationship between our two countries. This year marks five years of NATO Membership for Lithuania. The bilateral visit and the NATO PA meetings, particularly on the heels of the NATO Summit, received positive attention from the local media.

## UKRAINE AND GEORGIA

Immediately following our participation in the Strasbourg/Kehl Summit and the Assembly's Standing Committee meeting in Vilnius, the delegation traveled to Ukraine and Georgia on April 6–7. The purpose of the visits was to underline the Assembly's continuing commitment to Ukraine and Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration and to obtain firsthand views on progress in the reform process. The two governments provided an opportunity to discuss a variety of security-related topics ranging from Afghanistan to the Russian occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. I emphasized to the Ukrainians and Georgians that this being my first official trip as NATO PA President was meant to send a signal of their importance to NATO and to Europe. We thanked Georgia and Ukraine for their contribution to NATO activities, encouraged them to continue pursuing NATO membership, and reassured them that we are here to help them achieve this goal.

## UKRAINE

In Kiev, we were greeted by our Ambassador to Ukraine, William Taylor, and hosted by the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian Parliament). We met with MP's from BYuT (Block of Yulia Tymoshenko): Andriy Shkil (Head of Ukrainian delegation to the NATO PA), Ostap Semyrak, and Vadym Korotuk; Party of the Regions: Hryhoryi Iliashov; Our Ukraine: Ivan Zaiats, Yuriy Samoilenko, and Borys Tarasuk (Chairman of the Committee on European Integration). We also met with Speaker Volodymyr Lytvyn, Deputy Prime Minister Oleksandr Turchynov, had a particularly informative briefing from Deputy Defense Minister Ivanschenko, and spent over an hour in a private meeting with President Viktor Yushchenko. We did not meet with Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, as other events required her to cancel all of her meetings that day. While at the Rada, we observed a session of Parliament with Hans-Gert Pottering, President of the European Parliament.

Ukraine's political leaders readily acknowledged the harm caused by instability in parliamentary coalitions and friction between governmental factions. Most agree that the constitution should be amended to reduce the scope for political instability, and a constitutional commission is likely to be established to develop possible solutions. The need for stability has recently been underlined by the financial crisis which has hit Ukraine particularly hard. The various factions do seem to be working together to ensure the delivery of IMF support and to adopt an economic program.

President Yushchenko's popularity ratings are low. On April 1, the Rada voted to hold presidential elections on October 25, much earlier than the anticipated January 2010 date, which would mark the end of Yushchenko's five year mandate.

Ukraine is vigorously striving for NATO membership. Indeed, Ukraine's intention to join NATO was declared in 2002 and subsequently written into national legislation when the current main opposition party was in power.

Regarding the outcome of NATO's Strasbourg/Kehl Summit, Ukraine welcomed the reiteration of NATO's "Bucharest message"—that NATO's door remains open, and that Ukraine and Georgia will become members of NATO. The Annual National Program—a framework intended to help Ukraine plan and continue to implement political, eco-

conomic, defense and security sector reforms is being prepared. The view was expressed that the Annual National Program is seen as a Membership Action Plan in all but name.

Ukraine is the only NATO partner participating in all NATO-led operations. The current financial crisis is necessitating a review of commitments and transformation efforts, and some reductions in the scale of contributions to operations might have to take place. However, it was not felt that Ukraine would withdraw from any operations and strenuous efforts are being made to sustain those particular commitments. The Ukrainian officials explained that even Ukraine's peacekeeping operation in Afghanistan is a delicate issue, as 15,000 Ukrainians were killed in the Soviet's Afghanistan campaign, and those wounds still have not healed.

Public support for NATO membership remains relatively low but it is rising, particularly among the younger population. The government believes that the more is known about NATO, the more support should increase. Over the past decade, it has been important that candidate state governments take the lead in persuading public opinion of the value of NATO membership. Representative Emerson offered that instead of using terms such as "NATO", "MAP", etc., government officials could relate and appeal to the people on a more direct level by talking about personal security and how that affects them.

Ukraine's aspirations to NATO membership is but one source of friction with its neighbor, Russia. Others include energy, the expiration in 2017 of the agreement under which Russia leases naval bases in the Crimea for its Black Sea Fleet, and even the demarcation of borders.

It was stressed that Ukraine does not seek to antagonize Russia, but only to pursue its own independent course. It was pointed out that Russia has itself a more extensive list of areas of cooperation with NATO than has Ukraine, and that the NATO PA could seek to help the Ukrainian public realize that Russia is actually very actively cooperating with NATO on certain key issues. The Ukrainians pointed out that there are six working groups in Ukraine-NATO and 19 working groups in Russia-NATO.

We took the opportunity in the meetings in Kiev to thank Ukrainian governmental and parliamentary representatives for their country's contributions to NATO's operations, and to underline the Assembly's support for Ukraine's process of Euro-Atlantic integration. We underlined the strong relationship between the Assembly and the delegation from the Verkhovna Rada, and I reiterated the sentiments I expressed at the Strasbourg/Kehl Summit regarding NATO enlargement: that this process enhances Euro-Atlantic security, threatens no one, and is not subject to a veto by any other country.

## GEORGIA

In Georgia, we were greeted by our Ambassador, John Tefft, and hosted by the Georgian Parliament. We met with the Speaker of the Georgian Parliament David Bakradze; met with the official opposition (Levan Vepkhvadze, Gia Tortladze of Powerful Georgia Party, Nikolz Laliashvili of the Christian Democratic Party, and Rati Maisuradze of the Christian Democratic Party); had lunch with the Georgian delegation to the NATO PA headed by Giorgi Kandelaki; met with the Min-

ister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration Giorgi Baramidze (former head of the Georgian NATO PA delegation); had a very informative discussion with Prime Minister Nike Gilauri; met with President Mikheil Saakashvili; attended a dinner hosted by Speaker Bakradze which members of the opposition were invited to and attended; and lastly, met with Nino Burjanadze of the radical opposition (former Speaker of Parliament and driving force behind the April 9 protests). Georgia is seeking to make considerable progress with internal reform. For instance, it is looking at various forms of constitutional reform to strengthen parliament and to improve election practices. It is pursuing the recommendations of the Council of Europe and the OSCE, and seeking to build public trust in the system. It is noteworthy that although opposition figures within Parliament feel that democratic processes could be improved, they nevertheless believe that the overall situation is good.

Georgia must continue to reform its economy, build a free press, and establish an independent judiciary.

Despite the financial crisis, Georgia still expects modest economic growth in 2009. It has a balanced budget and a stable economy with relatively low inflation. The economy is attracting a high level of foreign investment. The economy is also diversified in terms of products and markets, so Georgia is not dependent on any particular geographical region or any single commodity. Furthermore, Georgia had been fortunate in not having substantially de-regulated the banking sector.

Representative EMERSON was impressed with Georgia's agricultural development and the positive role agriculture can continue to play in Georgia's economic future.

There is a very broad political consensus on joining NATO. This view was expressed by both government and opposition representatives. The government contends that over 70 percent of the population and nearly all of the political parties support NATO integration.

Georgia is developing its Annual National Program, and in that context it was stated that "the 'Membership Action Plan' route was not the only road to NATO membership."

NATO—and especially United States—support is seen as crucial to Georgia. Governmental and parliamentary representatives expressed their gratitude for the Assembly's particularly strong support following the events of August last year. Russia's continuing occupation of South Ossetia and Abkhazia was unacceptable, as was its recognition of the two regions' independence. Russia remains in violation of the EU-brokered ceasefire agreement. There has, for instance, been no draw down of Russian forces in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. On the contrary, new military facilities are under construction, tens of thousands of people remain displaced (in addition to the hundreds of thousands displaced in the 1990s), and international monitors can still not cross the administrative boundaries. Georgian officials believe that a continuing international presence remains vital.

Russia has made no secret of its opposition to Georgian membership in the Alliance and its desire to see "regime change" in Georgia. There is a widespread belief that tensions with Russia will persist until Georgia becomes a

member of the Alliance. Russia's goal in fermenting such tension, Georgian officials contend, is simply to present an obstacle to Georgia's membership.

Even so, Georgian officials said they have no desire to see Russia isolated from the international community. Russia, NATO and NATO aspirants have common interests in some areas, in their view.

The European Union's Monitoring Mission (EUMM) provided us with a detailed briefing.

EUMM's mandate is to monitor the implementation of the EU-brokered ceasefire agreement, in particular the withdrawal of Russian and Georgian armed forces to the positions held prior to the outbreak of hostilities. It is also tasked to contribute to the stabilization and normalization of the situation in the areas affected by the war, to monitor the deployment of Georgian police forces, and to observe compliance with human rights and rule of law. The Mission covers three functional areas: Internally Displaced People (IDP)/Humanitarian, Police/Justice/Human Rights, and Military.

Regarding Georgian IDPs, there are more than 230,000 IDPs from conflicts in the 1990s, and a further 130,000 from the war in August 2008. Of that latter category, some 100,000 have been able to return to their homes since Russian forces have pulled back—with some important exceptions—to within the administrative boundary lines of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The EUMM has been able to provide substantial assistance in collective data on IDPs. On the Police/Justice/Human Rights part of the mission, there is good cooperation with the Georgian authorities which has, for instance, helped to clarify the distinctions between Georgian police and armed forces. The EUMM's work is limited, however because it cannot obtain access to South Ossetia or Abkhazia. In the military area, Georgia has agreed to limits on the numbers and nature of weapons within a zone around the administrative boundary lines. This is seen as a substantial confidence-building measure.

Although much has been achieved, several key challenges remain. These include the continuing presence of Russian forces at Perevi and Akhgori, the lack of clear dialogue with Russian, South Ossetian, and Abkhazian representatives, unsolved shootings, persistent acts of provocation, the reinforcement of defensive positions on either side of the administrative boundary lines, and the EUMM's lack of access to South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Representative EMERSON chairs the NATO PA's Civil Dimension of Security Committee and is considering taking her committee to the border area, possibly sometime next year.

Our visit took place two days before demonstrations were planned outside the Georgian Parliament (for April 9). The purpose of the demonstrations was to demand the removal from office of Georgia's President Mikheil Saakashvili. Naturally, the demonstrations were the subject of considerable discussion with government leaders, parliamentary supporters, and opposition representatives from within and outside the parliament.

Government and parliamentary representatives upheld the right to demonstrate and protest, but there was concern that protests might become violent. Officials also shared concern about how such demonstrations would be perceived internationally. Some opposition figures in parliament expressed fear that the demonstrations might get out of hand. They ar-

gued that if the demonstrations concerned the pace or nature of certain reforms, this could be the basis for legitimate protest.

In the various discussions on this matter, we urged restraint by all parties. Many observers had felt that the response to demonstrations in 2007 had been "heavy handed," and this too had harmed Georgia's reputation. It is in Georgia's national interest that the demonstrations remain peaceful. We encouraged Georgian officials to allow the protests to happen, and indeed, there was no violence during the demonstrations, due in large part to the appropriate way the government handled the demonstrations, which has earned them goodwill internationally.

Representative EMERSON and I spoke at length with the Georgians (and the Ukrainians) about the importance of peaceful transitions of power, peaceful reform, the rule of law, and functional bipartisan relations being essential to a stable country and democracy. We reassured them that opposition is to be expected in a democracy, that the majority has an obligation to take into account the ideas of the minority in deliberations, and that the minority in turn has an obligation to participate in a responsible way and accept that whoever has the majority at a given time, will end up making most of the decisions. We also stressed the importance of the opposition marginalizing the extreme opposition factions. Representative EMERSON and I shared our experiences of being in both the minority and the majority. We also relayed that, although members of opposite parties, we are able to effectively work together, especially when it comes to important issues.

We also applauded Georgia's progress in the implementation of reforms, and reiterated the Assembly's support for that process. Representative EMERSON commended the younger generation for stepping up and taking responsibility for leadership and the future course of their country. We also welcomed the government's decision to increase its force commitment to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

We underlined that—as I stated in my speech at the Strasbourg/Kehl Summit—NATO enlargement threatens no one. Allied nations make good neighbors, and new members promote regional and Euro-Atlantic stability—ends that serve everyone's interests—and Russia has no veto over the sovereign decisions of its neighbors.

The NATO Parliamentary Assembly does not wish to interfere in Georgia's internal affairs, nor provide support for any particular party or faction. It supports Georgia, the Georgian people, and Georgia's right to determine its own future.

#### BELGIUM

On April 8 in Brussels at NATO Headquarters, I addressed the EAPC (Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council) Ambassadors. The meeting was chaired by NATO Deputy Secretary General Claudio Bisogniero. The EAPC brings together 50 NATO Partnership countries (28 NATO countries and 22 Partner countries) for dialogue on political and security-related issues, and provides the overall political framework for NATO's cooperation with Partner countries and the bilateral relationships between NATO and individual Partner countries with the Partnership for Peace Program.

I delivered an overview of the Strasbourg/Kehl Summit and several Partners gave their

thoughts on the Summit conclusion, including Russia and Georgia.

There was a vigorous discussion among the Russian, Moldovan, and Romanian ambassadors at the EAPC meeting about the uneasy political situation in Moldova.

My speech to the EAPC ambassadors mentioned the work of the NATO PA and its role in building NATO partnerships. I noted Jan Peterson's (of Norway's NATO PA delegation) work on the Strategic Concept and welcomed suggestions from NATO PA associate members.

The brief was well received around the table and several Allies and Partners were very complimentary of the work done by the NATO PA and the NATO PA Secretariat staff in Brussels, led by David Hobbs.

Immediately following the EAPC meeting, we (joined by the Deputy Chief of the U.S. Mission to NATO, Walter Andrusyszyn) met with Russian Ambassador to NATO Dmitry Rogozin, per Rogozin's request. Rogozin offered that parliamentary diplomacy through the auspices of the NATO PA could help alleviate the deep mistrust in Russia regarding engagement with the Alliance, and advocated an ambitious set of meetings. Noting that he is a former parliamentarian, Rogozin said he is willing to use his contacts in the Russian Duma to encourage this. We agreed that parliamentary diplomacy and the NATO PA have a positive role to play in the NATO-Russia context, but warned that practical constraints would make the scale of Rogozin's proposals difficult to implement. We also emphasized that enhanced engagement with Russia would require a more constructive approach than had been seen in the past from Russian participants in NATO PA events; that engagement needs to be a two-way street, but that nevertheless we would discuss Russia with Administration officials upon our return to Washington.

Raising Afghanistan, Rogozin noted that Moscow intended to continue to allow the transit of non-lethal goods bound for NATO forces in Afghanistan. He also said he expects resistance from the Taliban to increase in response to the U.S. troop increase in Afghanistan. Rogozin also offered that the crisis in NATO-Russian relations over the August 2008 Russia-Georgia war could turn out to be useful. Noting that the decisions taken at the April 3–4 Summit provided a way ahead on resumption of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC), Rogozin said he hopes to get the relationship to a qualitatively new level.

We reiterated our hope that we can have open dialogue with the Russians on the issues and threats we have in common, such as nuclear proliferation and radical fundamentalism, and that our differences will not preclude us from having discussions on these common interests.

This was a very tightly choreographed trip, which depended on exact timing and movement in order to achieve the results that it did; therefore, the support of the United States military was again essential to its successful planning and execution. Our aircrew was from F Company, 52nd Aviation Regiment, Wiesbaden Army Airfield, Germany. We could not have made our intense schedule work without their professional efforts and dedication to duty. Also, I must mention our military escort, Col. Tom Shubert, USAF (Ret.). He was the facilitator in the various air movements and air space clearance. His work was extraordinary.

HONORING PROFESSOR ED  
DEPETERS OF DAVIS, CALIFORNIA

**HON. MIKE THOMPSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 7, 2009*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Professor Ed DePeters, the 2009 recipient of the University of California, Davis Prize for Undergraduate Teaching and Scholarly Achievement. This \$40,000 prize, first awarded in 1987, is believed to be the largest undergraduate teaching award in the nation. The prize is awarded to scholars who are successful not only in their research, but convey their excitement and love of scholarship to their students.

Professor DePeters, or “Dr. D” as students call him, is an animal scientist and expert in dairy cow nutrition, but his hallmark at UC Davis is imparting his knowledge and passion for these subjects to his students.

Growing up on a farm in upstate New York, Professor DePeters developed an interest in animal agriculture that led him to Cornell University for a bachelor’s degree in animal science. He went on to Penn State for a master’s degree in dairy science, but instead of returning home as he had planned, he continued his studies and earned his doctoral degree in dairy science, which led him to a faculty position at UC Davis.

Professor DePeters’ research focuses on how the composition of milk, particularly the fatty-acid content, can be modified by changes in the cow’s diet, and how agricultural byproducts such as almond hulls and cottonseed can be converted into nutritious feeds. His research has resulted in more than 120 scientific publications and is widely influential in the industry.

Notwithstanding his research achievements, Professor DePeters’ energy and personal concern have stood out in the minds of his students. Their reviews are peppered with comments like “very enthusiastic” . . . “really knows his material” . . . “very approachable” . . . “incredible teacher” . . . “funny and gifted” . . . “the most motivated and dedicated teacher” . . . “a great guy and awesome professor” . . . “I love this class; it’s top priority.” He teaches a lower-division course in livestock production and upper-division courses in dairy cattle production and animal feeds and nutrition.

Professor DePeters makes a point of learning students’ names, and he takes pictures of each student and carries the pictures around with him until he has learned them all.

Madam Speaker, it is appropriate at this time for us to acknowledge and thank Professor Ed DePeters for his years of exemplary work as a scholar and educator, and to congratulate him on receiving this well-deserved award. His commitment to inspiring and educating students has been unwavering, and he deserves our congratulations.

CELEBRATING THE 61ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL

**HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 7, 2009*

Mr. COSTELLO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Israel on the 61st anniversary of its founding on May 14, 1948.

Israel is a true friend to the United States. For the past 61 years, Israel and the United States have been linked on many levels. We have sustained a strong partnership, sharing not only a commitment to peace and security in the Middle East, but also common democratic ideals and principles.

Israel is a nation founded by people seeking refuge from religious persecution. It has developed into a thriving democracy proud of its achievements, building a strong and vibrant society committed to the rule of law and sustaining a robust economy.

While Israelis continue to contribute a great deal to society, the state of Israel exists in a dangerous neighborhood. It has weathered continued attacks by Hamas and Hezbollah and faces an increasing threat from Iran. These are real obstacles to peace that threaten the safety of Israeli men, women, and children, and affect the stability of the region. Despite these challenges, Israel still works toward peace and security with its neighbors.

Israel has taken meaningful, unilateral steps toward this end. It has fostered an amicable, working relationship with Egypt and Jordan, removed troops from Gaza and Lebanon, and has participated in open negotiations with the Palestinian government to work toward a productive peace agreement for both sides. While the United States will remain an active player in the Middle East peace process, true peace can only be achieved through a pragmatic and faithful approach constructed by regional authorities.

Madam Speaker, Israel wants peace, and the United States must remain committed to helping its friend achieve this goal. I stand here today to affirm my commitment to the nation of Israel and to congratulate our friend and partner on its 61st anniversary.

**FRAUD ENFORCEMENT AND  
RECOVERY ACT OF 2009**

SPEECH OF

**HON. JOHN D. DINGELL**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 6, 2009*

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of S. 386, the Fraud Enforcement and Recovery Act. This legislation provides the Department of Justice with the tools it needs to fight fraud in the use of funds under the Troubled Asset Relief Program, TARP, and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. S.386 has a number of provisions that seek to protect Americans by ensuring the agencies tasked with investigating and prosecuting mortgage and financial fraud have the funding and personnel they need to do so. I am also pleased the House recognizes the need for increased accountability for mortgage lending

businesses not directly regulated or insured by the Federal Government, an industry responsible for nearly half the residential mortgage market before the housing crash.

I am more hesitant to support other provisions of S. 386. This bill includes an amendment to establish a special commission to investigate the causes of the current financial crisis. I believe that any such commission should be comprised of members of this body, who are furthermore from the committees of jurisdiction relevant to the matter. I have introduced a resolution, H. Res. 345, to do precisely that. It is my long-held belief that the Congress should, contrary to the prevailing fashion of the times, conduct its own oversight work. For the simple fact that members of this body will ultimately write the legislation to reimpose a strict regulatory framework upon the financial services industry, they should be personally involved in vigorous efforts to expose the many and sundry causes of this country’s recent economic collapse. In brief, well-informed members of Congress write more effective legislation.

With this in mind, I voice my support for aggressive oversight of the financial services industry, but respectfully object to the manner in which S. 386, as amended, mandates it be performed.

**CONGRATULATING EAGLES OF  
DESOTO HIGH SCHOOL**

**HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 7, 2009*

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Eagles of DeSoto High School on their victory over neighboring Cedar Hill High School. This “Battle of Belt Line” has been played many times over the years, but this was the first time the state title was on the line. With the Eagles win, DeSoto can now claim their second state basketball championship. These outstanding young men have come a long way this past season and have made their community in Dallas County so very proud.

Winning a state championship is something that will last a lifetime. It is a remarkable achievement that few teams ever experience, and it is a legacy that will live with the 2008–09 Eagles forever. The Eagles and Coach Chris Dyer know what brought this state title back to DeSoto—hard work. It is doing that one extra sprint, that extra drill, shooting that extra free throw after practice that helped make the Eagles champions. Nobody outworked the Eagles and nobody could beat them in the state tournament. And nobody had a greater following or more community support than the Eagles of DeSoto High.

It is an honor to pay tribute to the entire Eagles squad and on behalf of all the residents of Texas, congratulations again to the Eagles of DeSoto High School and Coach Chris Dyer and the entire DeSoto community—you are an inspiration to us all. It is Eagles Pride at its finest. Go Eagles!