

pay a bill by phone or issuing credits cards to minors.

These new, common-sense protections will empower consumers and prevent the credit card industry from continuing to reap excessive profits from often unsuspecting customers.

I ask my colleagues to vote "yes" on this critical consumer protection measure, and I urge the Senate to act on this measure so that it can be quickly signed into law.

CONGRATULATING SAUNDERS
YACHTWORKS ON ITS 50TH ANNI-
VERSARY

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 7, 2009

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor Saunders Yachtworks with facilities in Orange Beach and Gulf Shores, Alabama, on its 50th anniversary.

In 1959, the Saunders Engine & Equipment Company, Inc. was founded by Andrew Saunders Sr. in Mobile, and today members of the second and third generation represent the majority of the company's ownership. The company's "can do" attitude has set it apart as a premier marine service provider along the central Gulf Coast.

In 1993, Saunders Yachtworks opened as a mechanical service facility in Orange Beach, and in 2007, Saunders Yachtworks became the sole focus of the corporation. This year, the company expanded its operations to Gulf Shores with the opening of its new corporate headquarters and mechanical service shop.

This new facility features one of the largest boat lifts on the central Gulf Coast allowing Saunders to work on boats up to 115 feet. There is no doubt this new expansion will bring yachters from around the world to Alabama's Gulf Coast.

Throughout its 50 years of operations, the company has received numerous awards and accolades. In 1990, Saunders Engine & Equipment was named "Small Business of the Year" by the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce. Earlier this year, Saunders Yachtworks was named Boatyard of the Year by the American Boat Builders and Repairers Association. This award is given to the boatyard that "demonstrates excellence in all facets of business through commitment to customer service, quality management and positive vendor and employee relations."

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join with me in congratulating Saunders Yachtworks on its 50th anniversary and for being recognized as the Boatyard of the Year. I know John Fitzgerald, the company president, Andrew Saunders Jr., chairman of the board, along with the company employees, their friends, families, and members of the community also join with me in praising Saunders Yachtworks for their many accomplishments and for extending thanks for their continued service to the Alabama business community and the First Congressional District.

TRIBUTE TO TYLER CLARY

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 7, 2009

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual who possesses the talent, athleticism and dedication of an Olympic athlete. University of Michigan Sophomore Tyler Clary is turning heads and breaking records in the swimming world; and he's ready for the next step—the Olympics. Tyler grew up in Riverside, California, where his parents still reside. Our entire community is very proud of this young man and his accomplishments.

Tyler graduated from Poly High School in 2007 where he was a CIF champion in swimming. Tyler is now flourishing at the University of Michigan. He recently captured his first NCAA title and his time of 3:35.98 broke the American Record of 14-time Olympian gold medalists Michael Phelps by 28 hundredths of a second. Tyler received a congratulatory text message from Michael Phelps, who Tyler trained with at Michigan. The next night Tyler captured the 200-yard backstroke title and broke another NCAA record of Olympian gold medalists Ryan Lochte.

Tyler's coaches are not only impressed by his pure athleticism but by his great attitude. A recruiting coach from Cal said that he knew Tyler "was going to be one of the greats." Tyler intends to prove that correct as he sets his sights on the 2012 Olympics. He was just shy of making the cut for the 2008 Olympics and Tyler doesn't intend to let anything get in his way the next time around. He has begun preparation for this year's world championships, which will be held this summer in Rome.

Tyler is also a five-time All American Athlete, the 2009 Swimmer of the Year, the 2009 Big Ten (Conference) Swimmer of the Year, and holds the University of Michigan's records in the 200 Individual Medley (IM), 400 IM, 200 Backstroke and 800 Free Relay. Tyler was the 2006 Fédération Internationale de Natation (FINA) World Youth Top Male Performer. In 2007, Tyler was the Silver Medalist in the 200 Backstroke at the Pan American Games.

Madam Speaker, it is a rare honor to be able to speak about an athlete who is expected to break records and possibly become a future Olympic champion. Tyler Clary has everything it takes and I believe that three years from now I will be on the House floor congratulating Tyler on a successful return from the 2012 Summer Olympics being hosted in London. Tyler exemplifies the best of our future generations and I look forward to watching him in the years to come.

FREE MEDIA UNDER PRESSURE IN
THE OSCE REGION

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 7, 2009

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, as Co-Chairman of the Helsinki Commission I can attest to the fact that freedom of the press is only a cherished dream for many today in

the OSCE region. Vibrant independent media are an essential element of any democracy. Leaders the world over who are determined to remain in office by any means necessary understand perfectly the power of the press. That is precisely why they and their associates strive so vigorously to control the media. Indeed, there are a variety of means commonly used by those attempting to harass or intimidate journalists.

Physical attacks on journalists have become commonplace in many part of the OSCE region along with police raids, spurious court cases, arrests, and forcible psychiatric hospitalization. In recent days those attacked included Argishti Kivirian, editor of the independent news Web site Armenia Today, Vyacheslav Yaroshenko, editor of Corruption and Crime, a weekly in the southwestern Russian city of Rostov-na-Donu, and Anastasia Akopyan, a young journalist assaulted following circulation of an interview she did with an opposition mayoral candidate in the Russian city of Sochi.

The situation in several other OSCE countries remains mixed. While the Belarusian regime allowed two independent newspapers to distribute through state-controlled outlets, the overall media environment remains repressive. Independent journalists continue to be harassed. A new media law entered into force in February contains provisions that toughen state control over the media as the Belarusian government seeks to maintain a virtual monopoly over the country's information space, especially television. In Armenia, the independent A1+ television station, forced off the air by the authorities, remains silent despite a ruling on the case by the European Court of Human Rights nearly a year ago. While the release of some imprisoned journalists in Azerbaijan is a positive development, the authorities have yet to repeal criminal defamation provisions. In Georgia, the government should take decisive action on promised reforms on media liberalization.

In the Balkans, media outlets are commonly targeted for harassment and occasional violence. In Serbia, several journalists were reportedly attacked earlier this year by a radical group organizing a commemoration of the 10-year anniversary of NATO bombing. Investigative media in Kosovo have come under pressure for their attempts to expose corruption. Independent media in Montenegro are frequently the target of trumped-up defamation and libel charges. In Albania, the magazine Tema was reportedly forced to cease operations under government pressure, while TV News 24 was apparently assessed a large fine for ridiculing another station's promotion of the country's prime minister. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the murder of Serbian journalist and editor, Slavko Curuvija, who testified before the Helsinki Commission shortly before his death, a case which authorities have yet to resolve.

Meanwhile, in Kazakhstan, the opposition weekly Taszharghan has reportedly been forced to cease publication following the imposition of a \$200,000 fine for damaging the honor and dignity of a member of the Kazakh parliament. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, at least half a dozen independent outlets and their staffers faced more than 60 such defamation lawsuits in 2008 alone, with many involving claims by senior government officials.

Madam Speaker, nearly two decades after the breakup of the U.S.S.R., Soviet-era censorship survives in places like Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, which, not coincidentally, ban all political opposition.

THE U.S.-CHINA COMPETITIVENESS
AGENDA OF 2009

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 7, 2009

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, today I am proud to join my good friend, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. LARSEN), in unveiling the bipartisan U.S.-China Competitiveness Agenda of 2009. This agenda includes four legislative priorities to expand America's influence in China and increase American competitiveness in the global marketplace.

As co-chairs of the bipartisan House U.S.-China Working Group, we are working in Congress to elevate the sophistication of our debate on U.S.-China issues. The U.S.-China Competitiveness Agenda provides Congress with a constructive legislative package to expand U.S. engagement with China while supporting key domestic and foreign policy objectives.

Along with two other Working Group members, Congresswoman SUSAN DAVIS (D-Calif.) and Congressman STEVE ISRAEL (D-N.Y.), we are introducing bipartisan legislation to expand America's diplomatic infrastructure in China, boost support to small- and medium-sized businesses exporting to the China market, increase funds for domestic Chinese language instruction and build new cooperative energy ties between the U.S. and China.

The U.S. has one embassy and five consulates in China, leaving more than 200 cities with a population greater than one million people with little to no American representation. Additionally, while 60 percent of U.S. exports go to the Asia-Pacific market, the U.S. contributes 100 times more dollars to Europe's Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development than to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum.

My legislation, the U.S.-China Diplomatic Expansion Act of 2009, authorizes the construction of a new consulate in Fuzhou and 10 smaller diplomatic posts in cities with more than a million people. The bill triples funding for public diplomacy, boosts funding for a range of language, student and teacher exchange programs, increases funding for rule of law initiatives and more than triples the U.S. contribution to Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation.

If we are serious about expanding export promotion services, defending intellectual property rights, improving consumer product safety and enhancing economic competitiveness, we need a diplomatic infrastructure in China that reflects those priorities.

I am proud to co-sponsor three other bipartisan bills in the U.S.-China Competitiveness Agenda, including Mr. LARSEN's U.S.-China Market Engagement and Export Promotion Act of 2009, Ms. DAVIS's U.S.-Chinese Language Engagement Act of 2009 and Mr. ISRAEL's U.S.-China Energy Cooperation Act of 2009.

Mr. LARSEN's bill would help states establish export promotion offices in China and create a

new China Market Advocate program at U.S. Export Assistance Centers around the nation. The bill provides assistance to small businesses for China trade missions and authorizes grants for Chinese business education programs.

I strongly support the U.S.-China Market Engagement and Export Promotion Act because we need innovative programs that support our small business exports and arm them with the tools they need to succeed in China.

Roughly 200 million students are learning English in China today. By contrast, only about 50,000 primary and secondary school students study Chinese in America. Ms. DAVIS's bill increases Chinese cultural studies and language acquisition for elementary, high school and college-age students. Grants would be available to fund university joint venture programs, virtual cultural exchanges with Chinese schools and intensive summer language instruction programs.

We have more than just a trade deficit with China—we also have a knowledge deficit. That is why I strongly support the U.S.-Chinese Language Engagement Act. We need additional funding for domestic Chinese language programs, educational exchanges and Chinese teacher exchanges to fix this knowledge imbalance.

To create green jobs in America and fight global climate change, we must expand energy cooperation between the U.S. and China. Mr. ISRAEL's bill authorizes new grants to fund U.S.-China energy and climate change education programs, along with joint research and development of carbon capture, sequestration technology, improved energy efficiency, and renewable energy sources.

In my view, China's connections to unstable energy markets like Iran, Sudan and Venezuela could set a foreign policy collision course with the United States. I strongly support the U.S.-China Energy Cooperation Act. To protect our environment and avoid future conflict, we need creative programs to boost U.S.-China energy cooperation.

I want to thank my colleagues for their hard work on this bipartisan agenda. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor all four bills and move quickly to enact this legislation into law.

INTRODUCTION OF U.S.-CHINA
LANGUAGE ENGAGEMENT ACT
OF 2009

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 7, 2009

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the U.S.-China Language Engagement Act of 2009—a bill to close the knowledge deficit when it comes to our relationship with China.

It is little news to anyone that China is on the rise. With a population of over 1.3 billion people and the second largest economy in the world when measured by domestic purchasing power parity, China is poised to become a world power, economically, diplomatically, and militarily.

Yet at a time when China's influence on the world stage is increasing, our national understanding of the "Middle Kingdom" has not kept pace.

While an estimated 200 million Chinese school children are studying our language and culture, less than 50,000 American elementary and secondary students are studying Chinese.

The goal of the U.S.-China Language Engagement Act is to provide our schools with the resources they need to offer Chinese language instruction and cultural studies classes.

This important legislation would instruct the Department of Education to offer competitive grants to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to develop and implement innovative Chinese language and cultural studies programs.

LEAs, in collaboration with institutions of higher education, may use grant funds to carry out intensive summer Chinese language instruction, link bilingual Chinese and English speakers with students and conduct virtual cultural exchanges with educational institutions in China.

This bill is part of a broader legislative package seeking to improve our competitive edge and relationship with China.

Some may view China's resurgence as a threat. But today, Madam Speaker, I ask you to turn China's rise into an opportunity for United States citizens.

Through careful diplomacy, I believe China can become not only a competitor but also a partner. But we cannot have this dialogue if we cannot understand the Chinese people.

This is why I come before you today: to ask for your help in ensuring that the lines of communication between the United States and China stay open. Please support the U.S.-China Language Engagement Act and help bridge the language barrier and cross the cultural gap between future generations of Americans and the Chinese.

CREDIT CARDHOLDERS' BILL OF
RIGHTS ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 29, 2009

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration of the bill (H.R. 627) to amend the Truth in Lending Act to establish fair and transparent practices relating to the extension of credit under an open end consumer credit plan, and for other purposes:

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chair, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 627, the Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights, and would like to thank Financial Institutions Chairman LUIS GUTIERREZ and Congresswoman MALONEY for their continued dedication and leadership on this issue.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of H.R. 627. Thanks to this legislation, abusive billing practices will end. No longer will a company be able to harm consumers by engaging in double-cycle billing. No longer will a company be able to harm consumers by applying their payments to the lowest-interest balance. No longer will these companies be able to harm consumers through arbitrary interest rate increases or universal default practices.

This bill also requires—as a result of an amendment I offered at markup—that the Federal Reserve conduct a study of how credit card companies are treating credit lines. Some