

Naples. Upon his return to New York in 1949, he married Mary Crisalli—and Zachary and Mary have been happily married for 60 years. Zachary worked as a checker and clerk at the waterfront for over 20 years. In 1970, he organized and directed the Mott Street Senior Center in Manhattan. Now retired and celebrating his own 93rd Birthday, he dedicates all of his time to CIAO, CURE and the Ralph J. Sansone Foundation.

Zachary and Mary Crisalli Sansone have dedicated their lives to helping others without ever asking anyone for anything in return. I am honored to stand here today both to recognize Mary and Zachary Sansone on their 93rd Birthdays, and to acknowledge their 60th Anniversary.

INTRODUCTION OF THE WHTI IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING PLAN TO ASSURE CONTINUED TRAVEL AND TRADE (IMPACTT) ACT OF 2009

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 2, 2009

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the WHTI IMPACTT Act. As with many people who live along the U.S.-Canada border, we in Western New York do not think of the bi-national Buffalo-Niagara region as two separate countries, but rather as one community with a river running through it. We have shared principles and values, and rely on an intertwining economic relationship that is vital to our prosperity.

In the Buffalo-Niagara region and all across the border, the most pressing issue facing border communities is the implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). It is clear that our economy relies on the smart functioning of the Northern border and the increased documentation requirements under WHTI presents a difficult challenge for smooth travel and trade between the U.S. and Canada.

I recognize that there are security concerns at our border, and that in the post-9/11 world it is important that we know that those entering both of our countries are who they say they are, mean us no harm, and have the secure documents to prove it. That is why I agree with the intent of WHTI. We must be confident that the documents individuals present for entry into the United States are secure and authentic. However, there cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach to our border concerns. We cannot simply flip a switch and move from having the world's largest open border to requiring expensive new crossing documentation.

Recognizing this, in 2007 I led the charge in Congress to delay the implementation of WHTI from January 2008 until June 2009. Language mandating this delay was successfully included in the FY08 Omnibus appropriations bill which was signed into law in December 2007.

It has become clear over the past year that this delay has proved to be absolutely necessary. Consider what has been done since the original January 2008 deadline in Western New York alone towards WHTI implementation:

The first NEXUS enrollment center in Western New York was not opened until September of 2008, and the RFID technology that is so critical to the success of Passport cards, NEXUS cards, and Enhanced Driver's Licenses, did not "go live" at the Peace Bridge in Buffalo until this past November.

At other important border crossings in New York State and Michigan, this vital technology was not set to be working and active until April; less than two months before yesterday's final WHTI implementation.

Despite this progress being made, and despite DHS and State Department issuing their WHTI certification, I, along with a number of my colleagues, remain wary of the readiness of WHTI and committed to ensuring that it is implemented in a way that will not harm the cross border trade and travel that is so critical to our border communities.

During President Obama's visit to Ottawa earlier this year, he and Prime Minister Harper stressed the importance of a healthy U.S.-Canada trade relationship to bringing both countries out of the current economic recession. I would contend that a successful WHTI implementation is an important aspect of this trade relationship, and a failed WHTI implementation could have a devastating effect not only on border communities, but on the broader national economy.

The economic downturn facing both countries has already dramatically affected cross border travel and trade. Statistics from the Public Border Operators Association show that passenger, truck and bus crossings at all New York and Michigan border crossings in January of 2009 decreased by an average of over 16% from January 2008 levels. In Western New York, traffic at the Lewiston-Queenston Bridge and the Peace Bridge decreased by 19% and 13% respectively. If WHTI is not implemented properly it will only compound the current negative trend in commerce across the border.

For this reason, today I introduce the WHTI Implementation Monitoring Plan to Assure Continued Travel and Trade Act, or the WHTI IMPACTT Act. This legislation will place significant oversight on the implementation of WHTI to identify and mitigate any harmful effects of the new requirements. It will require joint reports to Congress from the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security on December 1, 2009, and June 1, 2010, that detail the effect of WHTI on freight and passenger travel across the border, enrollment levels in frequent traveler programs, the effectiveness on RFID technology, CBP staffing levels, and its effect on overall border security. It will also require the Government Accountability Office to conduct a study on the impact of WHTI on border economies and overall domestic security.

This legislation will allow Congress to partner with DHS and State to identify any problems with WHTI implementation prior to the 2010 Olympics and the 2010 tourist season, and hopefully quickly determine what actions need to be taken to ensure that our border and our regional economies are healthy.

TRIBUTE TO DR. JAMES BILLINGTON

HON. ZACH WAMP

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 2, 2009

Mr. WAMP. Madam Speaker, on June 1 the Librarian of Congress, Dr. James Billington, celebrated his 80th birthday. I want to take this opportunity to not only wish him Happy Birthday, but express my profound admiration and thanks for his service to America.

I have been a long time supporter of the Library of Congress, which is the oldest Federal cultural institution and the greatest storehouse of knowledge and wisdom in the history of the world. I have personally brought friends and constituents up to the dome of the Jefferson Building and marvel at the art, architecture, and symbolism of the magnificent Great Hall every time I am there.

The Library of Congress would not be where it is today—leading the world in acquiring, preserving, and making accessible some 140 million items of America's and the world's heritage—without Dr. Billington's vision, energy, and firm guiding hand. It was Dr. Billington who, shortly after being nominated by President Reagan and confirmed by the Senate in 1987, quickly set the Library on a path to harness new technologies as we moved into the digital age so that the Library of Congress would not recede into a position of being a passive warehouse of information but a world leader in making its collections more broadly available on the Internet for the benefit of all. Through programs such as American Memory, the National Digital Library, and the World Digital Library, just launched last month in Paris, Dr. Billington has changed the face of research and scholarship forever, making it easier for all to be enriched by the Library's treasures.

Jim Billington created the Madison Council, the Library's first ever private sector philanthropic and advisory group, which has spearheaded countless collections and initiatives, including the Kluge Center, the National Audio Visual Conservation Center, and a variety of cultural and educational outreach programs such as the Library's magnificent series of exhibitions, attracting millions of visitors to the Library and its website over the years.

I am particularly fond of the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress which has collected over 60,000 personal stories of America's war veterans and is now the largest oral history project in American history. In my own district we have set up a unique partnership with WRCB-TV, First Tennessee Bank, and the Erlanger Health System to interview local veterans and have collected hundreds of interviews for the Veterans History Project so far. At my request, Dr. Billington took time from his busy schedule to help kickoff this effort in Chattanooga on Veterans Day in 2002.

As a member of the Legislative Branch Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, which has jurisdiction over the Library of Congress, and currently as co-chair of the Library of Congress Congressional Caucus, I have become even better acquainted with the collections and services of the Library. At a Caucus dinner, Dr. Billington organized earlier this year in the magnificent Members Room we had a chance to get a special guided tour