

RECOGNIZING WILLIAM WILSON, RECIPIENT OF THE FRONTIERS IN PHYSIOLOGY'S ONLINE TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FELLOWSHIP

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor William Wilson, recipient of the Frontiers in Physiology's Online Teacher Professional Development Program Fellowship.

When Mr. Wilson is not coaching high school wrestling, he is inspiring his students in the field of science as a teacher at Clover Park High School in Lakewood, Washington. His outstanding research proposal in the biomedical field earned him the Frontiers in Physiology's Online Teacher Professional Development Program Fellowship. Mr. Wilson will be awarded educational grants to help him advance his research and make improvements to Clover Park's science department.

The Frontiers in Physiology program was initiated in 1990 by 10 impassioned high school science teachers embarking on a summer research grant in physiology. The 10-month fellowship aims to integrate best practices in scientific research into middle schools and high schools, incorporate technology and internet-based resources to enhance learning, and improve classroom labs with a better understanding of the scientific research process. The program has been proven to enable teachers to advance teaching techniques and promote excellence in science education.

As a dedicated and inspiring teacher, Mr. Wilson has proven to be an invaluable asset to the Pierce County community. The resources that Mr. Wilson will bring from the Online Teacher Professional Development Program fellowship will undoubtedly allow him to contribute more to Clover Park High School and the greater science community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues in the House of Representatives please join me in congratulating Mr. William Wilson for receiving the Frontiers in Physiology Online Teacher Professional Development Fellowship and honoring him as a model teacher.

IN HONOR OF ELAINE AND LARRY MYERS UPON RECEIVING THE 2011 GRINDSTONE AWARD

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Elaine and Larry Myers for winning the 2011 Grindstone Award which recognizes their devotion to the Berea community. Both Elaine and Larry will be honored at the 44th annual Grindstone Award Dinner.

The list of benefits the Myers have bestowed upon the Berea community is long. Larry established the Berea Athletic Hall of Fame in 1981. Both Larry and his wife have served on the Athletic Booster committee year after year. Elaine has held numerous positions

on organizations such as the Committee for Good Schools, the Coe Lake Nature Trail Committee, the Education Foundation Auction Committee and she worked for the Suicide Prevention Education Alliance, an extremely noble cause.

Within the community, Larry and Elaine are known as Mr. & Mrs. Pancake, since both co-chair the Annual Kiwanis Pancake Festival and the Committee for Good Schools Pancake Breakfast.

As one member of the Berea community has said, "Larry and Elaine Myers truly make Berea a better city in which to live and give truth to the line, a small city is like a big family."

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor and recognition on these two truly remarkable individuals. Through their devotion and love for their community both Elaine and Larry have truly made their mark and improved the Berea community.

RECOGNIZING JULIE MEIER WRIGHT, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE SAN DIEGO REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

HON. DARRELL E. ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the distinguished tenure of Ms. Julie Meier Wright on the occasion of her retirement as President and CEO of the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation (EDC).

Prior to her work with the EDC, Ms. Wright served as California's first Secretary of Trade and Commerce. Under her management, Ms. Wright built a new Agency to expand the state's international role and presence, including opening five new overseas offices.

Ms. Wright's service as President of the EDC has been the capstone of a notable career. For 13 years, she has served as an economic booster, marketing the San Diego region as the world's foremost job creation location celebrating a highly-skilled workforce, innovation climate, and quality of life.

In her work, Ms. Wright championed the Partnership for a New Economy, an initiative which spurred the creation of High Tech High, a school designed to prepare students for technology and life sciences careers along with the Rady School of Management at UCSD, which educates global leaders for innovation.

As a strong advocate for the economy of California, Ms. Wright has been a visionary that has undoubtedly helped shape San Diego to become a leader in so many industries.

Among her many commendations, Ms. Wright has been named the nation's Outstanding Secretary of Commerce by the Biotechnology Industry Organization and the California Leader of the Year by Leadership California. Her manifest of remarkable achievements includes receiving the Junior Achievement's San Diego Hall of Fame Lifetime Laureate Award, the San Diego Business Journal's Women Who Mean Business Award, the "Women of Distinction" award from Soroptimist International and she was named in

"Women Who Move the City" by San Diego Magazine.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues please join me in recognizing the tenure of Ms. Julie Meier Wright as she retires as President of the San Diego Regional EDC.

TIME FOR AN AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN STUDY GROUP

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of my colleagues legislation I am introducing to create an Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group, APSG, modeled after the Iraq Study Group, ISG, to bring "fresh eyes" to the war effort in Afghanistan which is now in its 10 year.

Last August, I began pressing the administration to convene an Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group. I submit a copy of my initial letter to the President.

In the letter, I outlined the genesis of the Iraq Study Group, ISG—an idea which was born in 2005 after my third visit to Iraq, during which I witnessed firsthand the deteriorating security situation. While reticent at first, to their credit President Bush, Secretary of State Rice and Defense Secretary Rumsfeld came to support the ISG, ably led by bipartisan co-chairs, former Secretary of State James Baker and former Congressman Lee Hamilton.

It has been my hope that the Obama administration would come to view this bipartisan "fresh eyes" approach as something which is ultimately good for our men and women in uniform and good for the country as a whole.

Aside from the specific policy recommendations of the ISG, the formation of the group and the issuance of the report helped force a moment of truth in our national conversation about the war effort.

It was apparent last summer, and it is truer still today, that with roughly 100,000 U.S. troops presently in Afghanistan, no clear end in sight to our nation's longest running war at 10 years and counting, and public support for the war at an all-time low, a national conversation about Afghanistan is what is in fact urgently needed.

Before proposing this idea to the Obama administration I spoke with a number of knowledgeable individuals including former senior diplomats, public policy experts and retired and active military. Many believed our Afghanistan policy was adrift, and there was near unanimity that an Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group was needed. Among those distinguished individuals who embraced the idea was former Ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker. I also sought input from senior foreign policy experts, among them former U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Ronald Neumann, who now serves as president of the American Academy of Diplomacy, regarding the implications of failure in Afghanistan. I submit for the record Ambassador Neumann's letter which lays out in sobering detail all that is at stake in that country.

I also submit for the record a letter I received last year from a constituent who is the mother of six children, all of whom are currently serving or have served in the U.S. military. She wrote of being troubled by "how distant this war is for so many Americans" and

she offered her wholehearted support for “the formation of an Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group in the hope that it will turn the tide of this war . . .” I shared this constituent correspondence, too, with the administration last September and again urged them to take action.

The war has remained distant for many Americans. It is rarely spoken of from the presidential bully pulpit. In fact a recent Fox News piece reported that “The last time Obama specifically devoted a full public speech to Afghanistan was December 9, 2009, 16 months ago, when he announced at West Point that he was sending an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to that war-torn country.”

Further, the war is seldom covered in great depth in the news. And yet for the husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters who have sent off a loved one in uniform, the war in Afghanistan is anything but distant. It is uncertainty and sacrifice, it is separation and worry, it is life and death.

Despite my several letters to the President and other senior administration officials calling for a “vigorous, thoughtful and principled debate and discussion among some of our nation’s greatest minds,” the idea for a study group has languished.

And so today I am introducing legislation to create an Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group, comprised of nationally known and respected individuals who love their country more than their political party, and who would, I believe, serve to provide much-needed clarity to a policy that appears adrift at best and highly politicized at worst.

In reading Obama’s Wars, I was deeply troubled by Bob Woodward’s reporting which indicated that discussions of the war strategy were infused with political calculations. Woodward also wrote of an administration that “wrestled with the most basic questions about the war . . . What is the mission? What are we trying to do? What will work?”

These are questions that demand answers.

I believe that Americans of all political viewpoints can embrace this “fresh eyes” approach—for it is always in our national interest to openly assess the challenges before us and to chart a clear course to success. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this legislation.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
August 4, 2010.

Hon. BARACK H. OBAMA,
*The President, The White House,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: On September 14, 2001, following the catastrophic and deliberate terrorist attack on our country, I voted to go to war in Afghanistan. I stand by that decision and have the utmost confidence in General Petraeus’s proven leadership. I also remain unequivocally committed to the success of our mission there and to the more than 100,000 American troops sacrificing toward that end. In fact, it is this commitment which has led me to write to you. While I have been a consistent supporter of the war effort in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I believe that with this support comes a responsibility. This was true during a Republican administration in the midst of the wars, and it remains true today.

In 2005, I returned from my third trip to Iraq where I saw firsthand the deteriorating security situation. I was deeply concerned that Congress was failing to exercise the necessary oversight of the war effort. Against

this backdrop I authored the legislation that created the Iraq Study Group (ISG). The ISG was a 10-member bipartisan group of well-respected, nationally known figures who were brought together with the help of four reputable organizations—the U.S. Institute for Peace, the Center for the Study of the Presidency, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and the Baker Institute for Public Policy at Rice University—and charged with undertaking a comprehensive review of U.S. efforts there. This panel was intended to serve as “fresh eyes on the target”—the target being success in Iraq.

While reticent at first, to their credit President Bush, State Secretary Rice and Defense Secretary Rumsfeld came to support the ISG, ably led by bipartisan co-chairs, former Secretary of State James Baker and former Congressman Lee Hamilton. Two members of your national security team, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and CIA Director Leon Panetta, saw the merit of the ISG and, in fact, served on the panel. Vice President Biden, too, then serving in the Senate, was supportive and saw it as a means to unite the Congress at a critical time. A number of the ISG’s recommendations and ideas were adopted. Retired General Jack Keane, senior military adviser to the ISG, was a lead proponent of “the surge,” and the ISG referenced the possibility on page 73. Aside from the specific policy recommendations of the panel, the ISG helped force a moment of truth in our national conversation about the war effort.

I believe our nation is again facing such a moment in the Afghanistan war effort, and that a similar model is needed. In recent days I have spoken with a number of knowledgeable individuals including former senior diplomats, public policy experts and retired and active military. Many believe our Afghanistan policy is adrift, and all agreed that there is an urgent need for what I call an Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group (APSG). We must examine our efforts in the region holistically, given Pakistan’s strategic significance to our efforts in Afghanistan and the Taliban’s presence in that country as well, especially in the border areas.

This likely will not come as a surprise to you as commander in chief. You are well acquainted with the sobering statistics of the past several weeks—notably that July surpassed June as the deadliest month for U.S. troops. There is a palpable shift in the nation’s mood and in the halls of Congress. A July 2010 CBS news poll found that 62 percent of Americans say the war is going badly in Afghanistan, up from 49 percent in May. Further, last week, 102 Democrats voted against the war spending bill, which is 70 more than last year, and they were joined by 12 members of my own party. Senator Lindsay Graham, speaking last Sunday on CNN’s “State of the Union,” candidly expressed concern about an “unholy alliance” emerging of anti-war Democrats and Republicans.

I have heard it said that Vietnam was not lost in Saigon; rather, it was lost in Washington. While the Vietnam and Afghanistan parallels are imperfect at best, the shadow of history looms large. Eroding political will has consequences—and in the case of Afghanistan, the stakes could not be higher. A year ago, speaking before the Veterans of Foreign War National Convention, you rightly said, “Those who attacked America on 9/11 are plotting to do so again. If left unchecked, the Taliban insurgency will mean an even larger safe haven from which al Qaeda would plot to kill more Americans. So this is not only a war worth fighting . . . this is fundamental to the defense of our people.” Indeed it is fundamental. We must soberly consider the implications of failure in Afghanistan. Those that we know for certain are chilling—name-

ly an emboldened al-Qaeda, a reconstituted Taliban with an open staging ground for future worldwide attacks, and a destabilized, nuclear-armed Pakistan.

Given these realities and wavering public and political support, I urge you to act immediately, through executive order, to convene an Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group modeled after the Iraq Study Group. The participation of nationally known and respected individuals is of paramount importance. Among the names that surfaced in my discussions with others, all of whom more than meet the criteria described above, are ISG co-chairs Baker and Hamilton; former Senators Chuck Robb, Bob Kerrey and Sam Nunn; former Congressman Duncan Hunter; former U.S. ambassador Ryan Crocker; former Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger, and General Keane. These names are simply suggestions among a cadre of capable men and women, as evidenced by the makeup of the ISG, who would be more than up to the task.

I firmly believe that an Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group could reinvigorate national confidence in how America can be successful and move toward a shared mission in Afghanistan. This is a crucial task. On the Sunday morning news shows this past weekend, it was unsettling to hear conflicting statements from within the leadership of the administration that revealed a lack of clarity about the end game in Afghanistan. How much more so is this true for the rest of the country? An APSG is necessary for precisely that reason. We are nine years into our nation’s longest running war and the American people and their elected representatives do not have a clear sense of what we are aiming to achieve, why it is necessary and how far we are from attaining that goal. Further, an APSG could strengthen many of our NATO allies in Afghanistan who are also facing dwindling public support, as evidenced by the recent Dutch troop withdrawal, and would give them a tangible vision to which to commit.

Just as was true at the time of the Iraq Study Group, I believe that Americans of all political viewpoints, liberals and conservatives alike, and varied opinions on the war will embrace this “fresh eyes” approach. Like the previous administration’s support of the Iraq Study Group, which involved taking the group’s members to Iraq and providing high-level access to policy and decision makers, I urge you to embrace an Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group. It is always in our national interest to openly assess the challenges before us and to chart a clear course to success.

As you know, the full Congress comes back in session in mid-September—days after Americans around the country will once again pause and remember that horrific morning nine years ago when passenger airlines became weapons, when the skyline of one of America’s greatest cities was forever changed, when a symbol of America’s military might was left with a gaping hole. The experts with whom I have spoken in recent days believe that time is of the essence in moving forward with a study panel, and waiting for Congress to reconvene is too long to wait. As such, I am hopeful you will use an executive order and the power of the bully pulpit to convene this group in short order, and explain to the American people why it is both necessary and timely. Should you choose not to take this path, respectfully, I intend to offer an amendment by whatever vehicle necessary to mandate the group’s creation at the earliest possible opportunity.

The ISG’s report opened with a letter from the co-chairs that read, “There is no magic formula to solve the problems of Iraq. However, there are actions that can be taken to

improve the situation and protect American interests." The same can be said of Afghanistan.

I understand that you are a great admirer of Abraham Lincoln. He, too, governed during a time of war, albeit a war that pitted brother against brother, and father against son. In the midst of that epic struggle, he relied on a cabinet with strong, often times opposing viewpoints. Historians assert this served to develop his thinking on complex matters. Similarly, while total agreement may not emerge from a study group for Afghanistan and Pakistan, I believe that vigorous, thoughtful and principled debate and discussion among some of our nation's greatest minds on these matters will only serve the national interest. The biblical admonition that iron sharpens iron rings true.

Best wishes.
Sincerely,

FRANK R. WOLF,
Member of Congress.

P.S. We as a nation must be successful in Afghanistan. We owe this to our men and women in the military serving in harm's way and to the American people.

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY
OF DIPLOMACY,
Washington, DC, September 27, 2010.

Hon. FRANK WOLF,
*Cannon House Office Building,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE WOLF, I am responding to your letter of September 16 requesting my personal views on the consequences should our mission in Afghanistan fail. I believe the answer must examine both the likely results in Afghanistan and Central Asia on the one hand, as well as the risks to direct American security through terrorism on the other.

Should we withdraw our forces before the Afghan army is ready to assume the internal defense of Afghanistan—an issue of force quality and support services, not just numbers—I believe there is every reason to assume a civil war will occur in Afghanistan. The Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras, and even some of the Pushtun population, having experienced Taliban rule once will not submit again. However, lacking an adequate army with which to resist they will fall back on armed militias as they have in the past. This will have several consequences.

Such militia bodies inevitably empower warlords who seek power on their own. They will, at times, collude against each other. Similar infighting led to the initial acceptance of the Taliban by many Afghans in their desperate search for peace at any price.

The civil war will draw in outside powers to further or defend their own interests. At a minimum, the Russians will support forces in order to build a buffer between Afghanistan and the Central Asian states that Russia sees as its zone of influence. Iran will re-enter the fray, as it did before, to protect Shia co-religionists and to extend its power. Pakistan will be a major player, quite possibly reverting to the effort to back a Taliban victory as Pakistan did in the past. The Indians will be drawn in to counter the Pakistanis since India fears the growth of terrorist movements that have found sanctuary in Afghanistan in the past. The involvement of both India and Pakistan in a contest that each views as a zero sum game presents additional dangers of conflict between the two nuclear armed states (although I would put this risk as low).

It has been argued that the Taliban and al-Qaida have different goals and, therefore, that a return of the Taliban to Afghanistan would not bring back al-Qaida. The first is true but immaterial. The second conclusion is false. The tactical alliance between the

two movements is strong and has been intensified during the insurgency. This is particularly true of the areas of Haqqani's influence where we see a steady growth in the presence of foreign fighters as I learned in my visit to Afghanistan in May of this year. In the context of the likely civil war the Taliban will have every incentive to maintain their alliance with al-Qaida since the latter bring with them resources, recruits and fanaticism. Indeed, before our entry into Afghanistan, al-Qaida often constituted the shock troops of the Taliban. There is every reason to believe they will return to this role in their alliance.

It is important to consider the likely consequences within Pakistan of a US defeat and a civil war involving the Taliban. It is not simply that Pakistan has a previous stake in a Taliban victory. The Pakistani army has shown itself deeply fearful of Indian influence with the largely Tajik Northern Alliance. The combination of fear and history is very likely to lead the Pakistanis to support the Taliban, notwithstanding whatever pressures we might bring to bear against this. Under these circumstances it is entirely possible that Pakistan will slow down or back off from its active military campaign against extremists within Pakistan. This was the pattern of the past. Pakistan tried repeatedly to put together short term alliances with domestic extremists to keep peace inside Pakistan while concurrently supporting or tolerating their activities in Afghanistan. The history of these alliances is that each one failed, extremism spread out of the tribal areas and into the Punjab and the major Pakistani cities where it now threatens the Pakistani state. This scenario is not guaranteed but it is certainly possible and, indeed, it is difficult to see how Pakistan could refuse to support the Taliban in Afghanistan or do so without compromising with the Taliban's backers in Pakistan. Of course, such actions would render the current US-Pakistani relationship difficult to sustain.

Renewed insurgencies in Central Asia are also possible. In the period of Taliban rule extreme Islamist movements gained support in Afghanistan for insurgencies in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan still exists. Within the last week, Tajik insurgents have mounted an attack that appears to have come from an unsecured area in Afghanistan. Instability in Central Asia will have unpredictable consequences for everything from political reform to gas pipelines.

In short, the future of civil war in Afghanistan, involvement of outside powers, increased extremism in Pakistan, and unrest in Central Asia could continue for years. The civil war in Lebanon involved fewer outside players, a smaller country and population, and less difficult terrain—and it lasted 15 years. The consequences in Afghanistan could easily challenge that record.

A second set of challenges involves our direct struggle with Islamist extremist terrorism directed against US and American interests. The goal of these self proclaimed jihadist movements is the reshaping of the Islamic world. Everywhere they look they think they see us in their way; our military presence in the region, support of Israel, ties with moderate Arab and Muslim governments, and even our very culture are seen by them as a threat. So their war with us will go on even if we retreat from Afghanistan.

The difference will be that the extremists will have gained their largest propaganda victory since the fall of the Soviet Union. They will trumpet the defeat of the second superpower to fall to their arms. They will use this to rally support and adherents and to discredit those Muslims who oppose them

in the name of religion, moderation and modernity.

One cannot predict the results with specificity. Nevertheless, I think it would be extremely naive to believe that we can unilaterally cease fighting, those who are waging a continuing, violent war of terrorism against us and not pay a heightened price in attacks against us in the future. It is important to remember that on jihadist web sites the incident we refer to as the terrorist attack of 9/11 is referred to as "the raid on New York," a chilling reminder of how they see that incident as part of a continuing war.

In sum, sir, should we be defeated in Afghanistan I foresee a substantial period of civil war, regional instability and enhanced risk to American lives and interests. All the dominoes did not fall in Vietnam, a war I fought as a soldier. It is possible that not all the disasters I foresee in Afghanistan will come to pass. Yet even a portion of them would be a considerable calamity for the region and our interests. That is why I believe we must persevere in Afghanistan. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to express my views.

Sincerely,
RONALD E. NEUMANN,
Former US Ambassador to Afghanistan.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN WOLF: I have read your proposal for the formation of an Afghanistan/Pakistan Study Group with deep personal interest and approbation. I applaud its respectful, well-reasoned, bipartisan approach to rethinking the war in Afghanistan. The following are my personal thoughts regarding this war. Please accept them as the insights of an average American mother.

It has been troubling to me how distant this war is for so many Americans. Many are only vaguely aware of the events taking place, other than perhaps the recent increase in the number of casualties. Even gathering information of what is daily happening in Afghanistan hasn't been easy. I comb the internet daily searching many different online news sources in an attempt to be informed. Our country is at war and yet so often the top news items contain nothing regarding it. Often it is the local papers in towns with soldiers, sailors and marines serving in Afghanistan that contain the most news. Other times it is the news stations with an embedded reporter who will have a flurry of articles while the reporter is there but then nothing once they return.

The War on Terror is not just impersonal news but it is a war that strikes very close to home. My father has a dear friend whose son-in-law died in the Twin Towers. I have a friend who lost a son in Iraq during the battle for Fallujah. A student of mine lost her fiancée in the war. My children and son-in-law have served in both Iraq and Afghanistan and have buddies injured or killed in action.

One of my daughters is currently serving in Afghanistan in a Combat Support Hospital. She arrived in time to experience first hand the peak number of casualties in June and July. In a recent news interview her Commanding Officer said they are seeing an almost constant stream of casualties; something that none of them were prepared for, but will remember the horrors of the rest of their lives.

It has sometimes appeared that the efforts in Afghanistan have trudged along, with success measured in part by the areas in which we have gained some measure of control versus the price paid in human lives both civilian and military. The casualties suffered aren't just numbers to me; each name, each face, represents a family who is paying the ultimate price, the loss of a son or daughter, brother or sister, father or mother; a family that will never be the same. Therefore, I

wholeheartedly support the formation of an Afghanistan/Pakistan Study Group in the hope that it will help to turn the tide of this war and lessen the number of casualties as well.

I, too, have a deep respect and confidence in Gen. Petraus and would not want my comments to be construed as being critical of the leadership of our military. I have no formal training in political science or history so please accept these comments as simply the perspective of an American mother with children glad to serve our country.

God bless you and give you wisdom as you serve in the leadership of our country.

Sincerely,

* * *

PS It meant so much to see my sons receive a standing ovation when introduced during last weeks luncheon. It is these very Lance Corporals, Corporals and Sergeants who are almost daily listed among the casualties. My son, * * *, remarked that listening to your speech "restored his faith in the republic". Thank you again for recognizing their service.

HONORING THE LAJKONIK SONG
AND DANCE ENSEMBLE

HON. MIKE QUIGLEY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the thousands of Polish-American constituents residing in the 5th District of Illinois, I rise today in recognition of the 20th Anniversary of the Lajkonik Song and Dance Ensemble. For 20 successful years, the Lajkonik Song and Dance Ensemble has promoted Polish folk culture and history to constituents of Polish and non-Polish decent alike.

Founded in 1991—under patronage of the Polish National Alliance Group 3241, and belonging to the Holy Trinity Polish Mission—Lajkonik has had the opportunity to flourish to an influential organization and cultural asset to the City of Chicago.

The Lajkonik Ensemble has performed in various locations in Chicago; some include the Chicago Cultural Center, Taste of Chicago, Daley Plaza, Chicago Public Libraries and Millennium Park, among others. Additionally, Lajkonik has traveled the Midwest and also represented the Chicago Polish Community at the International Folk Dance Festival in Rzeszów, Poland on four occasions.

Though the event focuses on Polish traditions, Lajkonik also reaches out to the American population to promote and encourage all people to learn about Polish culture, to support and appreciate it. The performances consist of different Polish regional folk songs, dances and colorful authentic Polish costumes.

Sunday, May 29th, 2011 marks the 20th Anniversary of the Lajkonik Song and Dance Ensemble. All the community support and time volunteered by numerous individuals have made two decades possible and hopefully many more anniversaries to come. The 20th Anniversary celebration will be held at the Copernicus Cultural and Civic Center consisting of hundreds of children performing in a Gala Concert displaying regional costumes, folk dances, songs, and other performances.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize this exciting day on behalf of my 110,000 Polish

American constituents. I congratulate all those who contributed their time and passion of preserving the Polish culture toward another successful celebration.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent for votes in the House Chamber yesterday. I would like the record to show that, had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 254 and 255 and "no" on rollcall vote 256.

RECOGNIZING KEITH LEWINGER
ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT
FROM THE FALLBROOK PUBLIC UTILITIES
DISTRICT

HON. DARRELL E. ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the honorable public service of Keith Lewinger as he retires as General Manager of the Fallbrook Public Utilities District (PUD) of California.

After graduating from the University of Cornell in the early 70's, Mr. Lewinger worked for the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts, the Irvine Ranch Water District, and the Otay Water District. Mr. Lewinger proceeded as General Manager for ten years at Otay which is one of the largest water districts in San Diego County.

In 1999 Mr. Lewinger joined the team at the Fallbrook PUD which contains approximately 8,000 water and 4,000 sewer connections. After 12 years of committed leadership, Mr. Lewinger has established a solid foundation for the Fallbrook PUD and has been instrumental in the area's resource management efforts.

Previously a member of the Governor's Recycled Water Task Force, Mr. Lewinger also represents the San Diego County Water Authority on the Metropolitan Water District Board of Southern California. Additionally, he serves on the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA's) Board of Directors as Vice-Chair of Region 10, has been Chairman of ACWA's Water Reclamation and Reuse Committee, a member of the California and National Boards of Directors of the WaterReuse Association including President of the California Section of the WaterReuse Association, and a member of the American Water Works Association's (AWWA's) Water Reuse Committee.

It is an honor to recognize Mr. Lewinger on the occasion of his retirement after nearly three decades of contributions to the resources community. Mr. Speaker, I ask you to please join me in recognizing Mr. Keith Lewinger's dedicated service to the Fallbrook Public Utilities District and the state of California.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR
STRENGTHENING SAFETY
STANDARDS FOR OFFSHORE
BLOWOUT PREVENTERS AND
EMERGENCY SHUTOFF EQUIP-
MENT

HON. JAY INSLEE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker. I rise today to once again to introduce the Offshore Drilling Safety Improvement Act.

As we rapidly approach the one-year anniversary of the catastrophic Deepwater Horizon oil spill, which killed 11 workers and dumped hundreds of millions of gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico, we must confront the fact that Congress still has yet to pass comprehensive safety reform for offshore oil drilling. A year after toxic sludge drenched the Gulf beaches, communities are still suffering from economic ramifications of the loss of tourism and fishing.

Last year, after numerous congressional hearings and months of hard work, the House passed the Consolidated Land, Energy, and Aquatic, CLEAR, Act, a comprehensive approach to make sure American jobs and coastlines are protected. Among other beneficial improvements, the CLEAR Act included important provisions requiring better technology on blowout preventers and other commonsense safety reforms. Unfortunately, the bill did not make it through the Senate, and over the last few months the House has yet to pass similar legislation.

That is why I am once again, with bipartisan support, introducing the Offshore Drilling Safety Improvement Act. This act strengthens the standards for safety equipment on offshore oil rigs by requiring the use of the best available technology for blowout preventers and emergency shutoff equipment. It will also require the Administration to consider independent and reputable science and expertise when determining appropriate equipment. It is one vital piece of the larger, comprehensive effort to create a regulatory system that protects American jobs, coasts, and communities.

We may never know for sure what exactly caused the disastrous leak but we do know that we must work together to protect our shores and local economies from future spills. Other countries around the world require more comprehensive emergency safety equipment. It is time that, in the places we decide to drill, we are using the best safety equipment available.

A MODEL OF FEDERAL/STATE CO-
OPERATION ON BEHALF OF THE
PEOPLE

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, one of the most troubling inconsistencies in our political dialogue is the one in which many conservatives argue on some issues that the Federal Government must be respectful of states' rights and not intrude on the prerogatives of the States, but, on the other hand,