

THE BRIDGE TO JOBS ACT

HON. JANICE HAHN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 27, 2012

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, as every American knows already, we have a jobs crisis in this country. While unemployment has improved within the past year, at 8.5 percent it is still strangling our economy. Over 40 percent of jobless Americans—who lost their jobs through no fault of their own—have been out of work for six months or longer, and the longer they wait, they harder it is for them to find jobs. The fact of the matter is that we will not see robust economic growth again until we put Americans back to work.

We also have an infrastructure crisis. According to Transportation for America, there are 69,223 bridges that have been classified as “structurally deficient” by the Federal Highway Administration. Leaving these bridges in their current state of disrepair poses a grave threat not only to our safety, but also to our economy. As the President noted just a few months ago, “Our aging transportation infrastructure costs American businesses and families about \$130 billion a year . . . And if we don’t act now, it could cost America hundreds of billions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of jobs by the end of the decade.” Additionally, studies have shown that our crumbling infrastructure threatens our competitive edge in the world economy. As the Washington Post reported this past summer, if nothing is done to improve our infrastructure, “U.S. businesses would pay an added \$430 billion in transportation costs, household incomes would fall by more than \$7,000, and U.S. exports will fall by \$28 billion.” Mr. Speaker, we can’t afford to wait until the end of the decade; we need action now.

Alleviating both of these crises is not a mutually exclusive endeavor. That’s why I’ve introduced the “Bridge to Jobs Act,” a much-needed “win-win” for the American economy and public safety. The act provides states with grants to put Americans back to work by repairing crumbling bridges. Not only will this legislation put Americans back to work and bolster our ailing economy, it will also ensure the safety of the millions who use these bridges each and every day. I urge my colleagues to support this crucial investment in our workforce, our economy, and our safety.

HONORING CHIEF RICKY WATSON

HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 27, 2012

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, there are sacred obligations all citizens have to their community: to participate, to serve, and to leave their home a more prosperous place than they found it. From time to time, it is my distinct privilege to acknowledge outstanding citizens who have made it their life’s work to fulfill their sacred obligations. I rise today to honor Chief Ricky Watson as he retires from 25 years of service to the Brentwood community, the Memphis community, and the greater Tennessee family.

Chief Watson began his career in public service by joining the Memphis Police Department in 1978 where he worked in various precincts as well as in the Criminal Investigations Division. A veteran of the United States Air Force, it was no surprise that Chief Watson would join the Tennessee National Guard and earn the rank of 1st Lieutenant. Coming to Brentwood in 1986, he served as Captain of Administrative Services and Captain of Police Services until 2000 when he was appointed as Chief of Police.

A storied legacy of service, Chief Watson embodies at that we in this chamber hold sacred. A member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, American Legion, and Leadership Brentwood, Chief Watson has spent his career giving to the noble ideals of freedom, service, and sacrifice. I thank him for his service and his example, and ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Ricky Watson for his lasting devotion to a higher calling.

A TRIBUTE TO HENRY S. TRYSLA

HON. ADRIAN SMITH

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 27, 2012

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an icon of the Eastern Nebraska business community, Henry Trysla. I was saddened to learn this week he had passed away at the age of 82. Henry’s life was linked with Nebraska newspapers for more than 50 years. Beginning as a young reporter and columnist at the South Sioux City Star, he rose through the ranks to become the paper’s editor and then a contributing writer after his retirement.

Henry served as president of the Nebraska Press Association which bestowed on him its highest honor, Master Editor-Publisher. A Nebraska Press Association Hall of Fame inductee, Henry led the South Sioux City Star to nine community service awards.

Henry’s accomplishments did not stop with his professional life. He was also a devoted family man and community leader. He and Margaret, his wife of 52 years, raised five children and have twelve grandchildren. Henry was active in the South Sioux City community, holding a variety of offices in service organizations and receiving numerous awards, including the Optimist Club Service to Youth Award. He was also a founding member of the board of directors of Dakota County State Bank, and he was instrumental in creating a park along the Missouri River.

Henry lived life to its fullest and is an example to us all. He leaves behind a loving family, a grateful community, and a lasting journalistic legacy. Henry was a very special Nebraskan who will be truly missed. May his memory be a blessing.

TRIBUTE TO CONGRESSMAN

EDWARD J. DERWINSKI

HON. JIM JORDAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 27, 2012

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored today to recognize the accomplishments of

former Congressman Edward J. Derwinski, who passed away on Sunday, January 15, 2012, after a long and distinguished career of service to our country.

Ed Derwinski led a fascinating and extraordinary life. An Army veteran, he served in the Pacific during World War II and the postwar occupation. He returned home following his Army service to earn a degree at Loyola University in 1951. After a single term in the Illinois House of Representatives, he was elected to Congress, where he represented Illinois’s Fourth District for 24 years.

The congressman’s fearlessness was a hallmark of his career, as was most clearly evident in his policy toward the USSR. He was of Polish descent and sympathized strongly with Poland’s plight under Soviet rule. To this end, President Reagan appointed him to the State Department, ultimately tapping him as Under Secretary for Security Assistance in 1987. The capstone of his long career of public service was his appointment as the first Cabinet-level Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

As Chairman of the Republican Study Committee, I am proud to note that Ed Derwinski was one of our founding members. Heritage Foundation President Ed Feulner has written that Congressman Derwinski was “the only senior member who was willing to have the group meet in his office in those early days,” as other members “did not want to be viewed as party mavericks by the Republican leadership in the House.” I am grateful for the solid foundation he and his colleagues built nearly four decades ago.

Mr. Speaker, Ed Derwinski is now fittingly buried in Arlington National Cemetery. On behalf of the Republican Study Committee, I offer his family my condolences as we all continue to celebrate the life of such a tireless defender of freedom both at home and abroad.

RECOGNIZING REP. GABRIELLE
GIFFORDS**HON. JOE BACA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 27, 2012

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, it is with a thankful heart that I rise to recognize a dedicated public servant and truly exceptional Member of Congress—Rep. Gabrielle Giffords.

In her time as a Member of Congress, and before that—as a Member of the Arizona State Legislature, Gabby has been a shining example of what a public servant can be.

From supporting our veterans, to working to bring greater fiscal stability and championing home-grown energy—her accomplishments have been many.

But perhaps even more amazing is what Gabby has shown all of us about perseverance and the strength of the human spirit.

We all remember the horrible attack that took place on January 8, 2011, and the impact it had on every single one of our communities and families.

We also remember the bravery of the heroes and first responders, who saved lives on that day.

Gabby’s courage, strength, and resilience remind all of us that the human ties of family, and friendship that connect us are much more important than the ideological and political differences that can divide us.

As we recognize Gabby, let's also take a moment to remember the individuals who lost their lives in this heinous event that occurred in Tucson last January.

In particular, I hope we can all keep a special place in our thoughts and prayers for Christina Taylor Green and her family.

Christina was a nine year old child, who had been recently elected to the student council at Mesa Verde Elementary School.

She was beginning to show an interest in civics, and went to the Congress on Your Corner event that day in order to get a chance to meet her Congresswoman.

Christina had great hopes and aspirations for her future. Sadly, all of that was taken away from her in the blink of an eye.

Let us stand together to honor the lives Christina and everyone else who lost their lives in this terrible tragedy.

We offer our heartfelt condolences to the families, friends, and loved ones they leave behind.

Again—I want to thank Rep. Giffords for her outstanding service to her constituents in Arizona, and to the nation as a whole.

The best wishes and prayers of Barbara and I go out to Gabby, her husband Mark, and her family and friends, on continued happiness and a complete recovery.

REMARKS REGARDING STATEMENT BY RYAN C. CROCKER, THE U.S. AMBASSADOR TO AFGHANISTAN

HON. DANA ROHRBACHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 27, 2012

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, the January 24 statement by Ryan C. Crocker, the U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan, contained two claims that were not worthy of a diplomat of his wide experience.

First, he misstated the rationale for why the United States has spent over 10 years, 1,800 lives, and half a trillion dollars in Afghanistan, claiming, "the United States is committed to supporting the efforts of the central government, to build a strong, secure, democratic, and unified Afghanistan. We have no other aim or goal." As much as we may care about the Afghan people, the defense of America is the only legitimate reason for the deployment of such a large combat force.

We went to Afghanistan in 2001 to avenge the slaughter of 3,000 Americans that was planned by terrorists hiding in that country. We did not go to Afghanistan to indulge in a nation-building social program. What we have done in Afghanistan must be justified on the grounds of whether it has made America more secure. Crocker seems to be moving away from that objective; perhaps because the current policy is failing to meet the security needs of our country. Yet, the current policy he does defend is failing to provide stable, honest government in Afghanistan.

Crocker claims in his second misstep, "Rumors that the United States has a plan to divide Afghanistan or change its form of government are, frankly speaking, lies that dishonor the sacrifice of more than 1,800 American service members who have died in the cause of a unified Afghanistan, governed by its Con-

stitution." While it is true that the U.S. has no plan, certainly a discussion on how to change the current corrupt and incompetent system in Kabul has been going on for a long time.

Questions like whether governors and mayors should be elected or appointed and what constitutes a sustainable Federal system are for the Afghans to decide by democratic methods which depend on free debate.

Ambassador Crocker seems to want to stifle the debate on how to reform and improve the Afghan structure so as to leave behind a more sustainable and legitimate government in Kabul when the U.S. and its allies withdraw in 2014. It is not a "lie" that such a debate is in progress, nor is the debate a "dishonor" to those who have died fighting enemies of the United States.

Indeed, it would be a dereliction of duty not to look for alternatives to the present failed policy. Many Afghans feel that the current governmental structure will not survive beyond 2014 because it has not created a system that is rooted in the people. It's over centralized form, remote from tribal and village society, does not command the allegiance of those who will have to fight to protect Afghanistan after 2014.

Crocker's attempt to insult and discredit those who engage in an honest dialogue is not what one would expect from a professional diplomat and trouble-shooter with his reputation. Though he has had a long and distinguished career in the State Department, he has never held elected office nor served in the Legislative branch. He, thus, does not fully appreciate the role and authority of members of Congress to engage in spirited debate and oversee how U.S. policy is conducted in foreign lands.

I ask that the full text of Ambassador Crocker's statement be printed in the RECORD at this point.

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES,
Kabul, Afghanistan, January 24, 2012.

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR CROCKER FROM REMARKS DELIVERED AT THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT MEDIA INFORMATION CENTER

A free and independent media plays a vital role in any democracy by keeping the public well informed of key issues, as do government spokespersons who provide accurate information to those who report the news.

Afghanistan's media and the government spokespersons who interact with it—but do not control it—are important elements in our close bilateral relationship.

And it is a close, multi-dimensional relationship that is vitally important to both our countries. That is why we are negotiating a long-term Strategic Partnership that will affirm our mutual commitment far into the future. Afghanistan will not be left alone.

Simply put, the United States is committed to supporting the efforts of the central government, to build a strong, secure, democratic, and unified Afghanistan. We have no other aim or goal.

Rumors that the United States has a plan to divide Afghanistan or change its form of government are, frankly speaking, lies that dishonor the sacrifice of more than 1,800 American servicemembers who have died in the cause of a unified Afghanistan, governed by its Constitution.

It is for the same cause that American taxpayers have provided billions of dollars over the past decade, supporting the government and people of Afghanistan in rebuilding this country, supplying electricity, improving health, and giving access to education, as

well as our support for the Afghan Government Media Information Center. We will continue this important work with our Afghan partners through our long-term strategic partnership.

Let me also address another false and absurd rumor: that the United States is seeking a secret deal with the Taliban at the expense of the Afghan government and people.

As you know, Ambassador Grossman was just in Kabul. During his visit, we engaged in a comprehensive discussion on the way forward with President Karzai, his senior advisors, and with the leadership of the High Peace Council.

Afghanistan and the United States both support a peace process for Afghanistan. But only Afghans can decide the future of Afghanistan.

President Karzai, in his speech to Parliament, spoke in support of opening an office in Qatar for the Afghan Taliban. For a peace process to succeed, Afghans must talk to Afghans. The President also spoke of Afghan government contacts with representatives of Hizb-i Islami. This is another example of an Afghan-led process that we are pleased to support.

As Secretary Clinton said after she met the Qatari Foreign Minister earlier this month, nothing has been concluded on the opening of an office, and more work needs to be done.

As Ambassador Grossman said, that work includes first, direct contact between Qatar and Afghanistan on the subject of the opening of any office.

Secondly, for an office to open, we also need to have a clear statement by the Afghan Taliban against international terrorism and in support of a peace process to end the armed conflict in Afghanistan.

And for reconciliation to take place, we are in full agreement with the Government of Afghanistan that three conditions must be met by the Taliban and other armed insurgents: a complete break with al-Qaida; an end to violence; and respect for the Afghan constitution, including its protections for women and minorities.

SBA LOAN PAPERWORK REDUCTION

HON. JANICE HAHN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 27, 2012

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, during my short time in Congress, I've met with over 50 small businesses in my district to listen to their concerns. Over and over they tell me that their biggest obstacle in working with the Small Business Administration is the arduous amounts of paperwork needed to access SBA loans. If we are going to get our economy back on track, we need to make sure our small business owners and entrepreneurs have access to capital.

That is why I am introducing the SBA Loan Paperwork Reduction Act, which will make permanent the SBA's pilot Small Loan Advantage Program which features streamlined paperwork, with a two-page application for borrowers and a faster approval time. Small business owners are having a hard enough time in this economy without having to spend their valuable time and resources wading through a mountain of paperwork.

By passing this bill, we will ensure that our entrepreneurs are given the chance to succeed and our small business owners can access the capital they need to grow and hire more workers.