SENATE—*Wednesday, September 5, 2007*

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal spirit, the fountain of all goodness, thank You that You have us in the place You want us to be right now. Teach our lawmakers to take seriously their role in solving the problems of our times, that they may fulfill Your plans for their lives. Continue to mold and inspire our Senators, and bless others through their labors. Use Your sovereign wisdom to bring about good results from their decisions and from consequences beyond their control.

Lord, give our leaders the courage to tell us what we need to hear, not what we want to hear. Make them willing to take political risks, to do the unpopular thing when it leads to justice and truth. Draw us together as one people who do Your will so that America may be a light to nations.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, September 5, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CARDIN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this morning, the Senate will be in a period for morning business until 11:30 a.m., with Republicans controlling the first half of the time, the majority controlling the final portion. I ask that be a full 90 minutes because both Republicans and Democrats have indicated a desire to speak. So whatever time Senator MCCONNELL and I take we will not count against that time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, at approximately 11:30 a.m., the Senate will resume consideration of the Military Construction and Veterans appropriations measure. This, of course, is an extremely critical proposal for current members of the Armed Forces and those who have previously served, our veterans.

We got word yesterday from the comanager of this bill, Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, that the President said he would sign the bill in its present state, which is a good message. Therefore, I think we should proceed posthaste to complete this legislation as quickly as we can today. We have business, as I already indicated, we have to finish this week. We will do our best to complete this legislation. I hope we don't have to file cloture on it. I hope we can complete the bill. There was no indication yesterday there would be a lot of amendments. I don't know if there will be any.

When we finish the bill, then we go to the Foreign Operations appropriations bill. That bill is $700 million less than what the President requested. There certainly should be something we can work out in that regard.

Then we have to complete education reconciliation. There is a statutory 10 hours on that legislation.

We can complete all that business very quickly this week or, if necessary, we will work on Friday and Saturday, hopefully not on Sunday.

Monday morning, there will be votes. As I have indicated to the Republican leader, we will have no votes after about 5:30 or 6 p.m. on Monday. On Tuesday, we will have a full day. We might have to work into the night because we hope to be on Transportation appropriations. We will have our last vote about 12:30 or 1 p.m. on Wednesday in relation to the Jewish holiday. We may work past that time, but there will be no votes after midday.

I hope Members will cooperate. Today, we have our weekly recess for party conferences. We are going to come back at 2:15. In the history of the Senate, this is an important day. Someone who has stood for bipartisanship his entire career as a Member of the House of Representatives and as a Senator is coming back. TIM JOHNSON has been extremely ill. He was about as sick as a person can get. He is back. His brain is 100 percent. The right side of his body is not back. His speaking, as he said last week when he announced his coming back in South Dakota—he hoped all Senators would follow his example because his mind works faster than his mouth. The doctor said his speech will return totally. Right now, it is not, but it is still very good. So I hope Senators will come to the floor at 2:15 p.m. to hear his speech upon his return. Senator MCCONNELL and I are going to submit a resolution welcoming him back. So I encourage Members to be here at that time.

We will have some rollcall votes later today, maybe even into this evening. Senator REED and Senator HUTCHISON are the ones managing the Military Construction and Veterans bill.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 2419 AND H.R. 3221

Mr. REID. I have a matter of business, Mr. President.

There are two bills at the desk due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bills by title for a second time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2419) to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes.

A bill (H.R. 3221) moving the United States toward greater energy independence and security, developing innovative new technologies, reducing carbon emissions, creating green jobs, protecting consumers, increasing clean renewable energy production, and modernizing our energy infrastructure, and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for the production of renewable energy and energy conservation.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings with respect to these two bills en bloc.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

RETURN OF SENATOR TIM JOHNSON

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, let me briefly second the observations of the majority leader about the return of our friend, TIM JOHNSON, from South Dakota. We look forward to welcoming him back after the policy luncheons today. It is a remarkable example of grit and determination to fight his way back. All of us on this side of the aisle are certainly happy he is back and look forward to welcoming him back to the Senate family officially, after the policy lunches.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if I may say also—I said this personally to the distinguished Republican leader—Senator MCCONNELL and the entire Republican caucus have been so thoughtful regarding Senator JOHNSON's illness. There were things the Republican minority could have done to have taken advantage of the situation of his being ill. That was never done, not on one occasion. I appreciate that very much. I know Senator JOHNSON does. It speaks well for the Senate.

I don't think I need to say more on that issue other than it is the right thing to do, but sometimes we try to take advantage of a situation politically. The Republican Senators did not do that, even though there would have been times it would have been to their advantage.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I thank the majority leader very much.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will now be in a period for the transaction of morning business until approximately 11:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, and the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half of the time and the majority controlling the second half of the time, with the Senator from North Dakota, Mr. DORGAN, controlling up to 20 minutes of the majority time.

The Senator from Georgia.

SENATOR TIM JOHNSON

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I appreciate this opportunity. Before I make my speech, I join the two leaders in expressing my joy at the return of Senator JOHNSON. He has suffered a tragic event, but his grit, his determination, and I think the prayers of the entire Senate have paid off. I am delighted he is returning to this body, with us, at 2:15 p.m. today.

IRAQ

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I spent the month of August on our break traveling the State of Georgia and did it for a specific reason. I knew that September 15 would be the report period for Ambassador Crocker and for General Petraeus. I knew it was very important for me as a Senator to go to the people of Georgia and find out what was on their minds.

As I introduced myself in every speech I made, I said: As a Member of the Senate, and with our men and women deployed in harm's way, it is absolutely incumbent upon me, first and foremost, to address the Iraq war, to address my votes, and to hear from the people of Georgia on what they feel.

When I returned to the Senate last night and I was on the floor, I had the occasion to listen to a speech by the Senator from New York, questioning, again, our involvement in Iraq and, even in advance of the Petraeus report, taking a position that whatever it was, it would not be good enough and the United States of America should withdraw. So I thought today I would come to the floor and speak not only my mind but I think the consensus of the people of Georgia regarding where we are now and where we may be in the months ahead.

I visited civic clubs, chambers of commerce, garden clubs, the State chamber of commerce and sat for a meaningful hour with Lucy and Rick Harris, the parents of LT' Noah Harris, who died 2 years ago fighting for the United States of America in Iraq. I tried to get every perspective. I even spent half a day with new recruits at Fort Benning at the Third ID on their fourth day of basic training.

Next week is an important week for the United States of America, and the report by General Petraeus is an important report. There are some Members of the Senate who are invested in, whatever it says, staying the course, there are some who are invested in coming home no matter what it says, when, in fact our actions should lie between. We should wait and hear what the general says. We should wait and hear what Ambassador Crocker says. But also it is time for us to start thinking about defining what victory is rather than declaring, as some have done, that we have lost.

We all know there are positive words coming back from Iraq. We know some positive things have happened. But we know it is not done, and we know it is not over. But I think, in defining what victory is, it is important to remember the speech the President of the United States made the day before we all voted to authorize the engagement in Iraq and enforcement of U.N. Resolution 1441.

The President established three precise goals for our involvement in Iraq. No. 1 was to depose Saddam Hussein and find, if they existed, the weapons of mass destruction that every nation in the world thought Saddam Hussein had and U.N. Resolution 1441 delineated; second, to allow the Iraqi people to hold free elections and establish a government of their choosing; and the third goal was to adequately train the Iraqi military so it could successfully defend and protect that fledgling new Government.

On goal No. 1, Saddam Hussein was captured, he was deposed, he was tried by the people of Iraq, and he was executed.

On the weapons of mass destruction, there are those who say we didn't find them. We found all the components. The problem when you find a weapon of mass destruction, when you have a smoking gun, it has already gone off. So sometimes finding the components is better. We did find Scud missiles buried in the sand between Damascus and Baghdad in Iraq, we found traces of sarin gas, we found mobile biological laboratories dismantled, and we found mass graves where hundreds of thousands of Iraqis had been killed. The evidence was there.

Second, in terms of the Government and establishing elections, the Iraqi people in 18 months held three elections, wrote a constitution, and established a government. Goal 2 accomplished.

Goal 3, to adequately train the Iraqi Army so it could defend the people of Iraq and that fledgling government. I think it is very instructive to recognize what has happened in recent days and in past months. Yesterday, the British left Basra, and as they left Basra and their post, who replaced them? Not the American military but the Iraqi military, a clear and distinct sign that the Iraqi military is gaining the ability to defend this fledgling country on their own.

Second, what happened 3 weeks ago. We finally captured and killed the bomber who set off the mosque bombing that set off the sectarian violence about a year and a half ago. Who captured him? Mr. President, 1,000 Iraqi troops with close air support by America, but the ground action was the Iraqis. On the "clear and hold and secure" of the surge, we have Americans and Iraqi soldiers embedded, side by side, holding those parts of Baghdad that we have secured, holding them so reconstruction can take place.

We are making positive steps, and we are on the cusp of the third goal being accomplished. We are not there yet, but we are on the cusp of it.

Where are we? We need to listen to what General Petraeus comes back and recommends, and Ambassador Crocker. I will not prejudge what the report will say because I have not seen it yet, but I think we all know there is enough evidence that we are coming close that it is very important we pay attention to the months ahead, which will be the most critical in our engagement in Iraq.

To that end, I want to share a little bit of the advice of a good friend to me, Lucy Harris, in Ellijay, GA. Lucy and I and her husband Rick and her late son Noah's fiancee—he was killed in Iraq—sat with a reporter and photographer from the Washington Post, and they recorded our conversation that particular day for an article they wrote recently. But I want to share with the Members the Senate some of the advice Lucy gave to me. She lost her only son. Her only son was a cheerleader at the University of Georgia on 9/11/2001 who, upon that tragic day, walked up to the military ROTC on campus as a junior and said: I want to join and get a commission.

They said: You can't because you don't have enough time. You have to have 2 years.

He said: I will make up the time.

Finally, the Army reluctantly agreed, and sure enough, in 18 months Noah Harris got his commission in ROTC and became a second lieutenant in the U.S. military. He volunteered because he wanted to confront the evil and terror he saw on that particular day.

He was known as the Beanie Baby soldier in Iraq. He led a platoon in Iraq, and he carried, in one big pocket on his right leg, bullets, and in another big pocket on his left leg he carried Beanie Babies, and he shared them with the Iraqi kids as he would go through securing and patrolling areas of Baghdad. His unit started carrying Beanie Babies and other good things for the Iraqi kids. While defending freedom and hopefully securing that country, he was also winning the minds of those children.

Tragically, he was lost in the explosion of an IED in Iraq. I attended his funeral and saw the outpouring of love from a thousand people in his community. So when Lucy sat down last week in Ellijay, GA, her advice to me was important and her advice to me was what appears on their car's license plate: IDWIC, those letters, because her son, Noah, who e-mailed back and forth with me before his tragic passing, always said: IDWIC—I do what I can. That was his motto. That is why he went to Iraq, to do what he could for freedom and democracy, for peace and to end terror.

That is what his mom Lucy and Rick do today—they do what they can. In their comments to the reporter, when asked what they think about all the debate going on in Washington about Iraq, Lucy said: I think the debate is healthy. I watch it. I think it is important. I think we should all do what we can, but we need to make sure that my son Noah did not die in vain.

To that end, as I approach the votes we will take—I don't know on what, but I know it will be about Iraq—in the months and weeks ahead following the Petraeus report, I will do what I can to give us a chance to finish the job, win the victory the President outlined at the outset 5 years ago on our entering Iraq, and honor and pay tribute to the sacrifice of the 3,700 or more Americans who have given their lives in the effort of the overall war on terror and in particular the securing of Iraq and the opportunity for a fledgling democracy to take hold in the Middle East.

These are difficult times but not nearly as difficult for us as for the men and women who voluntarily go because they believe in our cause. I stand here today in the Senate hoping that all of us will not prejudge what Ambassador Crocker will say, or General Petraeus, nor should we declare defeat when we have victory within reach, nor should we declare victory if it is not there. But we should move forward in order to honor the sacrifice of the men and women who fight for our country voluntarily every day.

For me, I am going to do what I can. I am going to take Lucy Harris and Rick Harris and Ashley's advice. I am going to honor the life of Noah by listening closely to the report, by recognizing why we went in the first place, and see to it we give ourselves a chance to declare the victory that has been so bravely fought for by the men and women of the U.S. military.

I hope we will all have open minds and open hearts and give thanks for the sacrifices taking place and recognize again why we went in the first place and recognize again how close we are to achieving our goals.

I yield the remainder of my time and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WHITEHOUSE). The Senator from South Carolina is recognized.

IRAQ

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I wish to take this opportunity to talk a little bit about what I think is a very important debate, and that is about Iraq war policy. Next week, I believe, General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker will be coming to the Congress to brief us about the situation as they see it. I think most of us in the Senate are very anxious to hear what our Ambassador has to say and our leading general in Iraq. There are GAO reports about benchmarks. The idea that we are trying to evaluate performance and progress in Iraq is a good thing. Some of the benchmarks have not been met, apparently, some have. It depends upon how you measure. The one thing I would caution my colleagues to not forget is that the biggest benchmark is whether our presence in Iraq should be maintained in terms of our national security interests or should we leave. If we do leave, how does that affect our long-term security interests?

I think the biggest issue facing each Senator is how they view the war in Iraq. This is a legitimate debate. There are two different ways of looking at the engagement in Iraq. Some Senators believe our military presence in Iraq at such levels is propping up the Iraqi Government; they are relying too much upon us, they are putting off the hard decisions because we are doing the fighting and they can kind of take their time, and that we should put more pressure on the Iraqi Government by beginning to withdraw troops.

There is another view that any presence in Iraq is creating more terrorism than it is preventing, that our presence in Iraq is creating instability and problems for the Mideast as a whole, and that we should basically get our eye back on the ball, Afghanistan, al-Qaida operations in other areas.

Those are a couple of views. I hope I fairly summarized it. I do not want to put words in people's mouths. But I think there are a couple of ways of looking at Iraq.

There is another way. It is my way—it does not mean it is right, it is just the way I have come out on this—that Iraq, to me, is part of a global struggle, not just an isolated event.

Whether we should have gone into Iraq is sort of a moot question. The question for the country is: What happens in Iraq in terms of our national security interests? Does it really matter? I would argue that the enemy we are facing in Iraq is threefold. There is sectarian violence within the country. There is Sunni-Shia violence, or people within the Shiia community using violence to try to get the upper hand politically.

There are people, Sunni insurgents, who do not want to have a democracy. They do not want to have a representative government. They are trying to achieve power by the use of violence. So there is definitely some sectarian conflict between Sunni and Shias. That is very real.

But there is also an element in Iraq called al-Qaida. Their goal is not to dominate the Shiia population in Iraq. Their goal is much broader. It is to

make sure that representative government does not take hold in the Mideast in a way that would allow religious tolerance. Their goal is to make sure no representative government would spring up where a woman would have a say about her children.

You know, we are all over the world militarily. You can see what is going on in Germany today. But al-Qaida chose to come to Iraq, I believe not because of what we are doing there or the fact that we are there, but because of what the Iraqi people may try to do. I do believe al-Qaida's international leadership has gone to Iraq to organize extremist forces within that country, religious extremists, because they fear more than anything else another Muslim nation, Islamic nation, Arab nation, being able to come together and live through representative democracy. That is why they are there.

If they can defeat this effort at moderation, destabilize this government and drive us out, I think our worst days lie ahead. No matter how we wish to view Iraq, there is no doubt in my mind what that enemy would say, al-Qaida international would say: They beat America in the Land of the Two Rivers. Bin Ladin has called on all of those who believe as he does: Go to Iraq, join the fight, because now is the time to win a battle in the third world war and America must be defeated, not the Iraqi Shiia population but America.

Now the Iranian involvement in Iraq. I have been on an 11-day tour over there as a Reserve lawyer. That was a wonderful experience, a very small contribution on my part. I learned how hard people work and how smart they are. I am awed by our military. I think every Senator shares that view. But one of the things I have learned from working on rule-of-law programs is how deeply involved the Iranian Quds force and other organizations are in funding militia groups.

The question for us all is why should Iran be involved in trying to fund groups dedicated to killing Americans? The Lieberman amendment that passed without objection in the authorization debate in July was a damning indictment of the Iranian involvement in Iraq. The question must be asked and answered: Why? Why does Iran want to destabilize this government? Why are they supporting extremist groups, mostly in the Shia community but not exclusively, designed to kill Americans? Why are they providing aid and comfort to those groups who wish to destroy our forces?

I argue they view Iraq as a threat, just as al-Qaida does, if the Iraqi Government is able to stabilize itself. The Sunni and Shia Arabs coming together, along with their Kurdish colleagues, to form a representative government that will allow the people to elect their leaders is the biggest threat to Iranian theocracy. They are involved in Iraq from their own self-interest, not the interests of the Iranian people, but the self-interest of the radical leadership within Iran. They understand clearly if Iraq is able to stabilize itself and create a moderate form of government, representative in nature, their nightmare just begins. That is why they are trying to drive us out.

The President of Iran, a questionable character at best, said, I think, last week, they stand ready to fill the vacuum created when we leave. I argue that we need not leave a vacuum that Iran can fill.

There are three enemies: al-Qaida, sectarian violence, and the Iranian elements trying to destabilize the Iraqi Government. One of the biggest problems we have had since the fall of Baghdad is we didn't have enough troops to provide security. After about five or six visits, it was clear to me that the situation was deteriorating in Iraq. Before the surge, I came back more depressed after each visit. The level of violence grew and the secure environment deteriorated.

Now we have a new strategy. We have put more combat power in place. It has made a real difference on the security front. Anbar Province, the western part of Iraq where the Sunnis dominated 6 months ago, was declared lost. It was an al-Qaida safe haven. We have heard the story time and time again. The news of Anbar is not so much that we beat al-Qaida military, not so much that the Sunni Arabs turned on al-Qaida, joined the fight with us against al-Qaida. That is understandable given the way that al-Qaida treated the population in Anbar. What is the most exciting and encouraging is that in 2007 over 12,000 people have joined the local police force in Anbar. The sons of Anbar were called upon by the sheiks to take up arms by joining the police. This new police presence, once it is trained and equipped, will allow Anbar Province to be held by Iraqis.

More encouraging than that, not only are people in Anbar beginning to join institutions that would allow al-Qaida to be defeated in a permanent fashion, they are beginning to reach out to Baghdad, and there is a movement going on between the Maliki government and leadership in Anbar to try to find a relationship where Baghdad is seen by the people of Anbar as a place you can do business. There is a lot of money being spent now by the central government on rule-of-law projects in Anbar. There is an old palace of one of the sons of Saddam that is going to be converted into a legal center where you can have terrorism courts, basic civil trials. You will have housing for judges that will be secure so they won't be assassinated. You will have a police training center there. There is a lot going on in terms of a relationship between Baghdad and Anbar that could lead to reconciliation.

It is very true the political progress we had hoped for at the national level has not yet transpired. But what has astounded me is the amount of local reconciliation going on. Better security has led to better choices. People now feel more secure. They are telling us where al-Qaida operatives are hiding. They are giving us more information than we have ever received before about how al-Qaida operates, and other extremist groups. People are getting more confident to speak out. More than anything else, they are just war weary.

The one thing I have learned on this trip that was more abundant than any other is that Iraqis at the local level, in provinces all over the country, are very war weary. They are trying to bring the country together, their local communities together. They are tired of the killing and the dying.

So as we listen to what Ambassador Crocker has to say, and General Petraeus, we should be mindful of the challenges. To me, the successes are obvious, but the challenges are equally obvious. I never said, for the last 3½ years before the surge, that things were going great in Iraq because, to me, they weren't. Things were getting worse. It was obvious they were. But I do see a turnaround. I think the surge has accomplished some things militarily that have led to better choices, and there is an effort to reconcile the country from the bottom up. It is very real.

The big pressure being applied to Baghdad is not what Senator GRAHAM says or what any other Senator from the United States may say about the Maliki government. The pressure I see on the ground is coming from the people themselves. The people are war weary. They would like their representatives in Baghdad to come together and create a stability that they haven't known for 4 years.

I am hopeful there will be political breakthroughs. Sunday a week ago the five major players in Iraq recommitted themselves to a plan to come back together, reform the government, and reconcile the Iraqi people, passing major legislation. Debaathification, the ability of Sunnis to hold jobs in the government, is a big piece of legislation that would transform Iraq. Local elections, allowing local people to pick their governors and representatives rather than Baghdad politicians making those appointments, if there were local elections, the Sunnis would participate in large numbers. In 2005, they boycotted the election. Now they are ready to engage in politics.

I predict that based on the success of the surge militarily, the efforts of local reconciliation are real, that they are going to move up to the national level, and soon, very soon, we will have some breakthroughs in Baghdad in terms of political benchmarks that will transform the country. That is my hope, my

desire. The way we can achieve that is to pour it on, continue the surge, let it run its course. It has been in place now, I think, since April. Let's keep pouring it on militarily, politically, and economically. We have the enemy on the mat. Let's don't let them up. Morale is sky high. Now is the time for America to exercise good judgment, long-term thinking, and reinforce Iraq instead of withdrawal.

The message to withdraw, no matter how well intended, will not push Iraqi politicians to do anything faster. It will encourage an insurgency that is not being diminished.

Those are the issues that face the Senate as we await news from Iraq. Let's concentrate on the long term. The year 2008 will be here before we know it, but the decisions we make about Iraq will have consequences long after the election of 2008.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TESTER). The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Am I recognized for 20 minutes under morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, let me talk for a moment about the issue of what is our national security. This morning, as I was getting ready for work, I saw another television advertisement put together by people who have accumulated some money and put ads on television. The advertisement is one that says: We have to stay in Iraq. We can't surrender in Iraq. We have to finish the job in Iraq. It says they attacked us on 9/11. The whole implication of the ad is, we are in Iraq because we are fighting the people who attacked us on 9/11. It is the same dishonesty we have heard for a long time.

Let me describe again our national security interests and who attacked us on 9/11. We know who did because they bragged about it. They boasted about attacking America. It was Osama bin Laden, al-Zawahiri, and others, the leadership of al-Qaida. And where are they? Are they in Iraq? No, they are in Pakistan, we believe, somewhere between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Let me describe the connection of all of this and our national security interests.

This morning in the newspaper we see that in Copenhagen, Denmark, the police have arrested some terrorists engaged in a terrorist plot with links to al-Qaida. They say these terrorists had traveled to Pakistan for training, and the case against them involves links to militants in Pakistan. Separately, last night a German Federal prosecutor had three suspects picked up and arrested late Tuesday. The suspects were members of a terrorist organization, presumably with connections to al-Qaida. There is evidence the men had trained in camps in Pakistan.

So let's understand, whether this is a surprise to any of us. Here is what we learned in February of this year. Senior leaders of al-Qaida operating from Pakistan over the past year have set up a band of training camps in the tribal region near the Afghan border, according to American intelligence and counterterrorism officials. There was mounting evidence that Osama bin Laden, and his deputy, al-Zawahiri, had been steadily building an operations hub in the mountainous Pakistani tribal area of northern Waziristan. That is from the New York Times, quoting top intelligence sources.

In June: Al-Qaida regroups in new sanctuary on Pakistan border. While the U.S. presses its war against an insurgency linked to al-Qaida in Iraq, Osama bin Laden's group is recruiting, regrouping, and rebuilding in a sanctuary along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, according to senior U.S. military and intelligence officials. The threat from the radical Islamic enclave in Waziristan is more dangerous than from Iraq, which President Bush and his aides call the "central front" of the war on terrorism, according to some current and former U.S. officials and experts.

The National Intelligence Estimate from July of this year says: Al-Qaida is and will remain the most serious terrorist threat to our homeland. We assess the group has protected or regenerated key elements of its homeland attack capability, including a safe haven in Pakistan's federally administrated tribal areas.

Is it a surprise that we pick up the newspaper this morning and see terrorists picked up in Germany, threatening to launch attacks against the largest U.S. base in Europe, and that we read that they trained in Pakistan, likely at an al-Qaida reconstituted training camp? Is that a surprise to us?

We are engaged in a war in Iraq. The television commercial this morning, my colleague this morning, and others, continue to say that is the central fight of the war against terrorism. It is not. It is a civil war. There is widespread sectarian violence. Yes, there are some terrorists there. Yes, al-Qaida is there. But that is not the central part of what al-Qaida has been about.

Al-Qaida did not have a presence in Iraq prior to 9/11. The television commercial this morning says they attacked us on 9/11. Implying that this is why we are in Iraq fighting that war ignores a whole body of truth, the body of truth I have just described. Those who attacked us and boasted of killing innocent Americans on 9/11 are now in a secure hideaway or a safe haven somewhere in Pakistan, not in Iraq.

I ask this question of the President and the Congress: Why should there be any square inch on the face of this planet that is safe or secure for the leaders of the organization that boasted about attacking America? Why should there be any place on this Earth that is safe or secure for those who the intelligence estimate now tells us are plotting new attacks against our country? Why are they safe and secure? Because this country is engaging door to door in Baghdad in the middle of a civil war. That is a fact.

We have people say: You can't surrender. If you try to redeploy, you are surrendering. I say this: What we ought to do is redeploy and understand that our policy is to fight the terrorists first. When we talk about redeploying, we are not talking about not being able to fight terrorists, even in Iraq, to the extent they exist there. We are talking about leaving enough troops for training of Iraqi forces, about fighting terrorists who exist in Iraq, and about force protection. But you redeploy the troops to fight the terrorists first. Why on Earth should we be debating in the Senate, and the President be in Australia today talking to his counterpart in that country about continuing the fight in Iraq, when Osama bin Laden, al-Zawahiri, and others are planning additional attacks against this country? While, at the same time, bin Laden and his henchmen are "safe" and "secure" in or near Pakistan? That is unbelievable.

We need to change tactics. We need a change in course. When we pick up the paper this morning and read about terrorists being picked up in Germany, plotting attacks against the largest American military base in Europe, and they are trained in Pakistan, likely at an al-Qaida training camp, we are experiencing the fruits of bad policy and dishonest representation about where the fight exists. The central fight against terrorism, it seems to me, is to eliminate the leadership of al-Qaida, the very leadership who boasted about killing innocent Americans on 9/11 and the very leadership who our National Intelligence Estimate now tells us are planning additional attacks against our homeland.

We need a change in course. If we stand here and debate this question about, well, if you redeploy, change course here or there, you are surrendering, that is not looking truth in the eye at all. The television commercial I saw this morning—put together, I am sure, by some big money interests that are suggesting somehow we are in Iraq because they attacked us on 9/11—is the perpetration of the same dishonesty we have seen for years.

We have had soldiers in Iraq longer than we were fighting in the Second World War. I want Iraqis to be free. Saddam Hussein is gone. He is dead. He was executed. They now have a new Constitution and a new Government.

Now the question is, Will the Iraqi people have the will to provide for their own security?

We are going to leave Iraq. The question is not whether; it is when. We cannot keep 160,000 American troops in the middle of a civil war in Iraq for any lengthy period of time, especially while Osama bin Laden and al-Zawahiri are in the mountains training additional terrorists whom they then send to Germany and perhaps to our country. We have to change course. That is a fact. I am not giving you my opinion. I am telling you what the National Intelligence Estimate tells us about the greatest threat to our country.

The greatest threat to our homeland, according to the National Intelligence Estimate, is the leadership of al-Qaida, and they are in a safe and secure haven, and they are planning additional attacks against our country. If one does not understand that by reading that which we should read, go back to just prior to 2001 and take a look at the headline on the PDF briefing given to the President in August 2001: "Bin Laden determined to strike in the U.S." It is time we read and it is time we understand. Regrettably, that has not been the case recently. I hope it will as we turn to this debate in a serious way.

The change in course has to be, in my judgment: Fight the terrorists first. That ought to be this country's policy.

That was not why I came to the floor of the Senate today, but I was inspired to remember the television commercial I saw the first thing this morning and then inspired by my colleague's statement about Iraq, once again.

TRADE AND CONSUMER SAFETY

Mr. DORGAN. If I might, in a separate part of the RECORD, I wish to talk about something that showed up in the newspapers this morning as well. I wish to tell you first—this was not in the papers this morning—about something that was a while back. I wish to tell you about a 4-year-old boy named Jarnell Brown. Jarnell Brown was from Minnesota. Jarnell is now dead. Jarnell is dead because he was visiting a friend's house, and he swallowed a small heart-shaped charm that came on a bracelet that came with a pair of Reebok tennis shoes. It turns out that little charm, that little jewelry charm contained 99 percent lead, and it killed Jarnell Brown. It was 99 percent lead.

It came from China, which probably should not surprise us. It suggests, once again, in this global economy—in which we decide we are going to produce elsewhere and ship here, after we spent a century developing standards to protect workers, protect consumers, the kinds of things Americans basically expect to be protected for and from—we decide we are going to outsource all that so we will have all these products made elsewhere and shipped into our country.

So we get tennis shoes, and we get a charm bracelet, and we get a heart attached to the end of the bracelet that is 99 percent lead, and the young boy accidentally swallows that little heart and dies from lead poisoning.

Now, let me talk a bit about this morning's news. Mattel is announcing this morning a product recall. They are recalling 848,000 Chinese-made Barbie and Fisher-Price toys that have excessive amounts of lead. Toys are being pulled from store shelves, including Barbie kitchen and furniture items, Fisher-Price train toys, and Bongo Band drums.

These are innocent enough looking products. But the surface paint on these products contains excessive levels of lead, prohibited under our Federal laws because of the serious threat they pose to human health, particularly the health of young children.

I do not suggest that Mattel has any response this morning other than being heartsick and heartbroken over this situation. Mattel is a good company. But what has happened to Mattel has happened to many other companies. They outsource production and then ship the product into this country, and there is no determination of whether those products are produced under the same conditions we would require in this country.

We only inspect 1 percent of the products that come into this country. So whether it is food or toys or jewelry or other things we require certain kinds of standards with respect to its production here, yet there are no such standards required with respect to production elsewhere. Oh, I know the people who outsource these contracts will say: Well, we require this and that of them. But there is no enforcement, and everyone knows that.

Let me describe a few of the circumstances. I talk about the lead paint. As we know, lead paint is used because it is bright, durable, flexible, fast drying, and, above all, it is cheap. So the Chinese, we now know from products that are being pulled from the shelves, have used lead paint. They mass produce lead paint and coloring agents such as lead chromate that are generally cheaper than other pigments, so we are now seeing the effect of that on store shelves.

This poor 4-year-old boy felt the effect in the most extreme way. He died.

It is not just China, and it is not just toys. FDA inspectors recently intercepted shipments of black pepper with salmonella from India, intercepted crab meat from Mexico too filthy to eat, and produce from the Dominican Republic was stopped 813 times last year for containing traces of illegal pesticides—this is a country with whom we just signed a trade agreement.

Now let me describe—even as we have galloped globally to outsource production but not to develop and maintain the protections for the American consumers on the products coming in—the Food and Drug Administration. Under the Bush administration, the FDA's safety mission I think has been substantially reduced. In fact, the FDA is planning to close 7 of its 13 drug safety labs, and it would close or consolidate a number of its 20 regional offices.

The trend has been to inspect fewer, not more, imports into this country under the administration. The FDA tests, we are told, about 1 percent of imported food. Last year, the FDA took 50 percent fewer samples for testing from imported seafood than it did in the year previous.

The issue is not just China, but China has been in the news more than any other country. Let me describe the circumstance of China because that has become the most notorious offshore platform. Toys, dolls, games, for all of these products China ranks as our No. 1 source of imports; fish, seafood, China is No. 1. Tires, China is No. 1; also for pet food, and toothpaste; and the list goes on. In fact, we have such a giant trade deficit with China—this chart shows what is happening with our trade relationship with China, which I think demonstrates an incompetence that is almost breathtaking for this country, an incompetence with respect to the negotiating of trade agreements and an incompetence with respect to enforcing trade agreements. But aside from that, I describe a circumstance here, and we are seeing it now every day in the newspapers, of the danger to U.S. consumers.

Well, pet food—how many Americans had their pets die as a result of contaminated pet food coming into this country? It was discovered that animal food, pet food from China contained substances that are dangerous to pets. Sixty million packages of pet food under 150 brands were recalled after it was found that ingredients in pet food could be dangerous to pets.

Seafood—the U.S. FDA banned the import of five types of farm-raised fish and shrimp from China after they were found to contain unsafe drugs, some of which cause cancer.

Now, I am telling you what they have found and banned, and I am telling you they have only inspected 1 percent.

Toothpaste, Chinese-made toothpaste sold in dollar stores—the FDA has warned consumers to throw out any toothpaste made in China. In fact, they not only found some of the toothpaste was contaminated with a dangerous ingredient, they found other toothpaste that was contaminated with the ingredient and did not list the ingredient on the toothpaste box.

Toys and jewelry—I mentioned Mattel. There are others. Mattel has had three very substantial recalls of

Chinese-made toys in the last 5 months. Again, my guess is the executives of that company are heartsick about what is happening. But it is a result of exporting manufacturing and not having the protections with respect to the conditions under which that product is manufactured—the protections for American consumers that we have always come to expect.

I did not mention with respect to toys, the RC2 Corporation recalled 1.5 million of these little toys, Thomas & Friends from its Wooden Railway product line, made by Hansheng Wood Products Factory in China using lead paint.

According to a spot check recently, it was announced 20 percent of Chinese-made jewelry contains potentially poisonous chemicals, including lead.

Automobile tires—a tire importer called Foreign Tire Sales recalled 255,000 Chinese-made tires in August because they lacked a safety feature that prevents tread separation.

I do not need to go through much more but only to say this: These are real serious issues. I started by talking about a young 4-year-old boy named Jarnell Brown. He died. There are real consequences to these issues. We spent a century developing standards in this country to protect workers, to protect consumers, and we built something very special and very important in this country.

Now, under a galloping global economy, in which the rules have not kept pace, we are told: Well—do you know what?—we are going to outsource manufacturing because we can pay people 30 cents an hour in sweatshops somewhere around the world, and we can have it manufactured for less money.

Well, if that cheap product is unsafe for your health, if that product—whether it is food or vegetables or toys or jewelry—if that product is harmful to your health, we need to rethink the standards by which we engage in this global economy. Yes, it is a global economy, and I do not suggest we are going to retreat from the global economy. I do suggest this: We should participate in the global economy on our terms. We should describe what kind of participation we will have with respect to this economy in a way that is fair to our workers, that earns a decent wage in this country, and in a way that protects our consumers for whom we have established certain consumer protections.

I know someone will say that is regulation. Yes, it is regulation. I spoke on the floor of the Senate one day, when I held up a package of beef. I asked consent to do that. You have to have consent to hold up a package of beef on the floor of the Senate because it is an object to show. I said: I do not think anybody can tell me where this beef came from. I know they could not because it is not labeled.

So then I read the description of what the investigator found, the inspector found when he went to a plant in Hermosillo, Mexico, and inspected a plant that was processing beef, slaughtering cattle, processing beef and shipping it to the United States. He found carcasses hanging under a hot roof, with flies and feces all over the carcasses. He described horrendous things that I read on the floor of the Senate and led me to ask: Does anybody want to buy beef from that circumstance?

Well, guess what. It was the only time that plant had ever been inspected—the only time. As a result, the plant lost its license. It then was sold, then changed its name, and was relicensed. It is now selling beef to the United States and has never again been inspected.

I use that only to say it is exactly the same coin—the flip side of the same coin, of lead paint coming in a heart-shaped toy from China that a young child swallows and, as a result, dies.

I have introduced legislation dealing with the other side of this as well with respect to workers' rights, dealing with sweatshop labor and conditions under which people are working in sweatshops in other parts of the world; working in sweatshops and, in some cases, producing these kinds of products. Why? Because it is cheap. Cheap labor, cheap products. Use lead; it is cheap. The problem is it is harmful to your health and especially harmful to children. The legislation I have introduced dealing with the issue of sweatshops and being fair to American workers would ban the product of sweatshop labor coming into this country. That bill, which is S. 367, has 12 bipartisan cosponsors.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to add Senator CLINTON today as a cosponsor to that piece of legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, if we look at these issues in the context not of trying to destroy the advantages of a global economy but in the context of trying to make certain the protections we have developed for our country—protections that have allowed us to create a wonderful place in which to work and consume—if we can, with respect to our participation in the global economy, raise standards rather than lower ours—if we can do that, then we will have done something significant. But that is not what has been happening. What has been happening in this country is a race to the bottom, and a rush to embrace the refrain by some who want to produce where it is cheap and sell here and run their income through the Cayman Islands to avoid paying taxes, and they say, You know, we don't want any more regulations. I understand that. They want to avoid regulations. They want to avoid paying a decent wage. They want to go to offshore manufacturing platforms some place and produce little bracelets with little hearts that are made with 99 percent lead to ship into this country. That doesn't work. It won't work anymore. Somehow, as a country, we have to find a way to stop it.

My colleague Senator DURBIN has a piece of legislation on the safety of food imports, which I am working on with him. I have also described the sweatshop labor bill I have introduced, and it is a bipartisan bill, and my hope is we can move and begin to address these issues.

I know there are others who are going to want to speak in morning business, and as soon as they come I will discontinue mine, but I do want to make a couple of other points about this country's economy.

When one looks at the last century or so, we created a place that is pretty unusual on this Earth and we did that because we cared about American workers, and we created a manufacturing base that was the strongest in the world. You cannot long remain a world economic power without a first-rate manufacturing base, and we are now seeing that some don't care about a manufacturing base. Let's outsource to wherever we can find the cheapest labor. Let's outsource to not only where we can find the cheapest labor, but also where we can combine that with the lack of regulations. We can allow that to exist in circumstances where those who produce and pump chemicals into the air, chemicals into the water. Well, the problem with that is you are not only confronted with what is called "the China price," the China price with respect to goods—you have to compete with the China price—you also now understand the term "the China haze," because we are breathing pollutants that come from China. We all live in the same fishbowl. Things we long ago abandoned in this country because we understand it causes cancer, causes terrible danger to human health, we are now breathing again in this country because of a phenomenon called the China haze.

I know I have described China at some length today. It is not only China we need to be concerned about with respect to what are fair rules and fair requirements with respect to our participation in the global economy. But I don't think we should any longer ignore the consequences about what we read in the paper this morning: the recall of hundreds of thousands of additional toys that are shipped into this country to be sold on store shelves and to be played with by American children when, in fact, they contain amounts of lead that are harmful or dangerous to our children. We can't ignore that.

I congratulate the companies that are recalling those products, but we shouldn't have had a reason to recall them in the first place. They should

have been produced under conditions that we would have known in this country to be safe, that represent the standards we long ago have required in this country. That has not been the case, and I think that because it is not the case, it raises a great many questions. I also, as I indicated earlier, believe at the very time we are seeing all of these products coming into this country that can cause serious problems for human health, at the very time we see that, to see this administration decide to retract on those issues and begin to actually inspect fewer rather than more products, at a time when we are inspecting only 1 percent of all of that which comes in, I think that is a serious step in exactly the wrong direction.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and make a point of order that a quorum is not present.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IRAQ

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the situation in Iraq and the continuing efforts of this administration to paint a rosy picture and to cling to straws when the situation on the ground and common sense suggest just the opposite.

Some have argued that the surge in Iraq is working, but all you have to do is look at the facts to know that is not the case. The President went to Anbar Province, which at the moment he is touting as a place of success, but we all know what is happening in Iraq. Many other provinces are in terrible shape. In Iraq, in a certain sense, when you push on one end of the balloon and make things a little better, something pops out at another end.

The fallacy of the President's new policy is amazing. Are we placing our faith in the future of Iraq in the hands of some warlords, some tribal leaders who at the moment dislike al-Qaida more than they dislike us? Make no mistake about it: They are no friends of Americans. Is this the vaunted clarion cry for democracy in the Middle East that the President announced when he started the buildup in Iraq? Obviously not. This is a policy of last resort. This is a policy of desperation. To say at the moment that some warlords in one province in Iraq happen to be shooting at al-Qaida when 6 months from now they could easily turn around and resume shooting at Americans, which they did in the past, is nothing to base a policy on. What kind of policy is it? What are the odds that 6 months from now, the fragile and perilous situation in Anbar will reverse itself and collapse? We have heard of success stories every 6 or 8 months: This province, this town, this city—they are clear, they are safe. Then, because of the basic facts on the ground, we revert to the old situation.

Let me be clear. The violence in Anbar has gone down despite the surge, not because of the surge. The inability of American soldiers to protect these tribes from al-Qaida said to these tribes: we have to fight al-Qaida ourselves. It wasn't that the surge brought peace here; it was that the warlords took peace here, created a temporary peace here, and that is because there was no one else there protecting them.

As I said, we have heard about successes in the past. They are temporary. They are not based on any permanent structural change or any permanent change in the views of Iraqi citizens. We have heard about success in Baghdad. We have heard about success in Fallujah. We have heard about success in this province and that province, and it vanishes like the wind. So now, at a time when the people of America are crying out for a change in course, are some going to base a temporary situation in one province—Anbar—based on a few warlords who don't believe in democracy and who don't like America, as a way to continue the present misguided policy? It makes no sense.

It makes no sense because the fundamentals in Iraq stay the same. There is no central government that has any viability. The Shiites, the Kurds, and the Sunnis dislike one another far more than they like or want any central government, and these two facts doom the administration's policy to failure. Only 7 or 8 months ago when the President began the surge, he said it was to give the present Government breathing room, to strengthen the Maliki government. Today, we have more troops, more military patrols, more death, and the Iraqi Government grows weaker. How can we regard the Bush-Petraeus surge as a success when its central goal—to strengthen the Government—has failed? Again, more troops, more American deaths this summer than any other, and yet the Government is weaker, when the very purpose of the surge was to strengthen the Government and, in the President's words, to give it breathing room. By the President's own words, the Government is suffocating while the surge goes on. It doesn't have breathing room.

Why isn't it apparent to the President? Why isn't it apparent to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that the stated goal of the surge is failing? Strengthening the central government has not happened. As the surge and the number of troops goes up, the strength of the central government goes down. That equation says failure in the Bush-Petraeus surge.

The goal is not a military goal. In the President's own words, it is to give the Government of Iraq greater stability, greater breathing room, and that Government, by just about every standard, is worse off than it was before. Again, because a few warlords and tribal leaders are now temporarily on our side for the moment, even though they are not loyal to us, they don't like us and they dislike the central government, that is why we should continue the present course in Iraq? It makes no sense.

Then those on the other side of the President say, give us a chance; you are already declaring defeat. If this were 2003 or 2004 or 2005 or maybe even 2006, maybe those words would have some resonance with the American people. But there has been new plan after new plan, new hope after new hope, and they all are dashed within months. Why? Why? Again, because the fundamentals on the ground don't change. The Kurds, the Shiites, the Sunnis dislike one another more than they like any central government.

If you look at the benchmarks, they show that. The independent GAO report showed little progress being made in meeting the 18 military and political benchmarks set out by Congress. The draft report from last week showed only three of the benchmarks had been met. However, over the weekend, the Pentagon revised the report and now miraculously an additional four benchmarks were "partially met." Despite the apparent efforts by the Pentagon to edit this independent report, it will sadly take much more than a red pen to correct the failures of the President's Iraq policy.

So the surge, by the President's own stated goal, has failed. The central government is weaker. The fundamentals on the ground continue to deteriorate. There continues to be no loyalty to a central government in Iraq and no loyalty to Maliki, who seems to almost revel in his incompetence. The bottom line is very simple: We are worse off, not better off, not even the same, in Iraq today than we were 6 months ago. The position of America, the position of democracy, the position of stability, continues to erode.

If there was ever a need for a change of course in Iraq, it is now. I plead with my colleagues from the other side of the aisle. You know we have to change course. The President has thrown you this magical sort of temporary solution—Anbar Province. Don't be fooled. It is no different than Fallujah was a few years ago, or Baghdad, or all of these other "successes." They are not successes because the facts on the ground are the same.

The American people—three-quarters—cry out for a change of course in Iraq. The President doesn't hear them. The President doesn't look at the facts on the ground. The very same fallacies

that led us into this war—that there were weapons of mass destruction and Iraq was at the center of a nexus of terrorism—are now blinding my colleagues on the other side of the aisle from changing course in Iraq—the same types of false statements and pretenses. It is time to change course for the sake of the soldiers who are valiantly defending us; for the sake of moving on and having America focus on other international problems and not have them be exacerbated by the war in Iraq; for the sake of the $500 billion to $600 billion we spent that could be spent here on education and health care and infrastructure; for the sake, ultimately, of the greatness of this great country of ours, we must change course in Iraq. We must do it now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

DEFECTIVE PRODUCTS FROM CHINA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, over the August recess, my wife and I were invited to a friend's house for a barbeque. A number of young couples were there with their toddlers. It was a lot of fun watching these kids take their first steps and laughing as they played with one another. One of the fathers turned to me during the course of the barbecue and said, "Well, it looks like it is going to be a Christmas without toys; there is nothing safe that we can buy anymore." I thought to myself that many of the headlines that occupy our attention here in the Congress are headlines ordinary families are not watching closely. But when it comes to something as basic as the toys they buy for their kids and whether they are safe, a lot of families are tuned in.

All across America, there is a growing concern. What this father said to me was, "Dick, I thought if they put the stuff on the shelf, it had to be safe, right?" I wish I could answer yes. The honest answer is no. What is put on the shelf across America isn't necessarily safe. We are learning that over and over again. It comes down to some basic concepts of whether Government has an important role to play when it comes to toys and other parts of our lives. We can certainly ask the people who live, or used to live, in New Orleans, whether Government is important. When Hurricane Katrina hit and the levees broke and they lost their homes, families had to move hundreds of miles away. They understand that when Government fails you, as it did in New Orleans, life can be very difficult. Or, of course, you can go to Minneapolis now and see what is left of an interstate highway bridge built to Government standards, subject to Government inspection, which collapsed, killing innocent people and causing havoc all across that great part of our Midwest.

The same thing, unfortunately, is true when it comes to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. This is a commission created back in the 1970s when people started asking hard questions about things they were buying and driving, whether they were safe. A movement started that led to passage of legislation creating this watchdog agency. There was a huge mandate we gave them: Make sure the things we put on the shelf for Americans are safe, that the products are not defective or unsafe. That may be too big a task for any one agency.

Over the years, what has happened is that this agency, instead of growing to meet the challenge, has been shrinking as the challenge grows. Today, there are 401 people working at this agency, responsible for reviewing trillions of dollars worth of products made in the United States and imported into the United States to make certain they are safe. I am familiar a little with this agency because I recently became chairman of a subcommittee that handles its appropriation. When you look at the amount of money we are spending there, the President asked for about $63 million for the Consumer Product Safety Commission. This agency has been limping along for years with hardly any money being infused into it and very few employees being added to the payroll. So, as a result today, the 401 employees have a huge mandate. I am hoping, in the next appropriation cycle, to improve and include additional money for this commission. In fact, our full committee reported $70 million, which is about a 10-percent or more increase in the appropriation for this agency. Seventy million dollars is still not enough, but it is significant at a time when we are spending $12 billion a month in Iraq—$12 billion a month. Here we are arguing about what is small change—what is lost with single-bid contractors in Iraq every day. We are worrying about whether we can come up with $10 million for an agency that is responsible for the safety of products we buy.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission finds that of the defective and unsafe products sold to Americans, two-thirds of them are imported, and two-thirds of those come from one country, which is China. Over and over again, month after month, year after year, China continues to send us defective products. This isn't a new thing. It reflects what is going on as the Chinese economy moves from the Dark Ages into the 21st century global economy and tries to accommodate differences in culture and taste and consumer appetite around the world. So we see a lot of problems. The problems didn't come to our attention until earlier this year. It is interesting how that happened. The first thing that caught our attention was pet food, the dog and cat food we were giving to our pets. Families across America found out it was unsafe, and these helpless animals were dying. A little investigation found out it was traced back to a food product sent from China that was injected with the chemical called melamine for the purpose of making it appear to be more valuable. It was economic fraud. Somebody in China put this melamine chemical into this protein product to make more money, even though melamine is unfit for human or animal consumption. Well, all across America, millions of pet owners went into a panic. They pulled pet foods from the shelves and worried about whether there was more in the chain and whether more animals were going to die. It was an interesting psychology there. We knew all along that the Chinese were sending us suspect products. But at this point in time animal owners across America, feeling a special responsibility to that helpless pet they loved and is a member of their family, were up in arms. Why are we letting the Chinese do this, send these products to America?

Then do you know what came next? Toothpaste. This was a good one. We discovered antifreeze in toothpaste made in China. Antifreeze. It turns out that they used, instead of glycerin, a form of glycol—close enough, I guess—which is a component of antifreeze. When the Chinese were confronted with toothpaste with antifreeze in it being sold around the world, they had an ingenious response. They said: As we understand it, you are not supposed to swallow toothpaste. What a great defense that was.

Then more scandals followed. Along came the toy scandal, which we are in the middle of right now. The Chicago Tribune ran a lengthy series about a toy that caught my attention because I bought one for my grandson, called Magnetix. It is kind of cool. It looked like old erector sets with magnets. My grandson jumped on it, making elaborate creations because the magnets stuck to one another. The tiny magnets were about the size of a little pill. If you looked at them, you might mistake them as something you could eat if you are a 1- or 2-year-old. You might pop them in your mouth. If you swallow one, no problem. If you swallow two, it is a big problem because the magnets would adhere in your intestines, requiring surgery and, in some cases, cause death. It turned out to be a design flaw in the product. I know my kids and grandson are pretty tough on their toys. If you were tough on the Magnetix toys, these magnets would pop out, and toddlers, not knowing better, would stick them in their mouths and swallow them like candy, not knowing the dire consequences that could follow.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission was called into the case and the Chicago Tribune story tells us that what happened was not encouraging because the laws are so weak in America,

and the commission had to sit down and negotiate with the company that made this deadly toy on a press release announcing that the toy should be recalled. The lawyers for the commission sat down with the lawyers for the toy company and got into this long battle about what exactly they would say in the press release to recall the toy. Meanwhile, of course, it is still being sold in America while the debate continues. So the laws fundamentally, when it comes to the protection of American consumers, are not strong enough. They don't require the kind of notification of defect and danger we should expect as consumers. They don't put the burden on the manufacturer of a defective product to recall it immediately. They give that manufacturer too much leeway when it comes to even taking a product off the shelf or putting a warning label on the shelf. It turns out that with this administration, the Bush administration, they have appointed people to the Consumer Product Safety Commission who have been leaning more toward the makers of toys and products and away from protecting consumers. There was a gentleman—a former attorney general of New Mexico named Harold Stratton. He came on and, frankly, reassured the National Association of Manufacturers that they didn't have to worry about this Consumer Product Safety Commission getting out of hand. He appointed a Mr. Mullan as the agency's general counsel, who time and again seemed to find reasons not to recall defective products and give those making them a little more time to make more money off of something that may be a little dangerous. The commission didn't do too much in terms of helping consumers.

Today, it is a commission that limps along because it doesn't have the three commissioners it needs to operate. It only has two. Promulgating new rules and coming up with new initiatives is hampered because they don't have enough people to do it. Had the Bush administration tried to fill the vacancy? Who did they send? A person who, unfortunately, had a resume that showed he was following on in the tradition of Mr. Stratton and Mr. Mullan. He was a person with a background on the manufacturing side and not the consumer side.

This is an agency for consumers that we have to count on. So when the administration doesn't fill the vacancy, it creates a problem in the administration. I have been disappointed by the Consumer Product Safety Commission recently. Mattel today has a third toy recall. They are recalling millions of toys because of lead paint and other dangers. Bob Eckert, the CEO of Mattel, made a special trip to meet with me in Chicago over the break. I respect him. He understands that if his company is going to succeed, parents have to trust the products they buy with the name Mattel on the box. He gave me his assurance—proven by today's press release—that they are going to pull every unsafe and dangerous toy off of the shelf that his company had anything to do with.

You might ask yourself, why do we have lead paint coming in on toys from China? Let's get down to basics. It is not because lead paint is cheaper in China. No. It is because the workers who are making the toys are paid about $75 or $80 a month. It is because those workers have no idea what those toys are all about. They never see these in the world they live in. They don't have any idea what America is about. They may not have any concept of what we consider to be safe and healthy. They are being told to make this toy, paint it, and move it down the line. The companies have a responsibility to watch these workers and have certain standards, but the bottom line is this: When we go to the lowest cost workers in the world to make our products, we should not be surprised when oftentimes those products are unsafe, unhealthy, and defective. With the Chinese, the list of products they send to us that are unsafe goes far beyond those that are the jurisdiction of the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

The Food and Drug Administration looks at food products, such as pet food and other food products, imported from all over the world, and each month they report to Americans which countries are sending the most dangerous food products to America. Guess which country ranks No. 1 or No. 2 every single month? China. Same issue. Time and again, we find that the Chinese are not living up to standards we expect in America.

When I think back to this barbecue I attended, most American families think the Senate and the House, Congress and the President are protecting them, that we are doing our job. When 1 out of every 100 shipments coming into this country is inspected, when we have some ports where the volume of imports overwhelm the one or two inspectors on the job, then, frankly, we are not keeping faith with the American people, and that is the reality.

I say to my colleagues in the Senate that we have voted for expanding global trade, and I think we must. America cannot get rich doing business just among ourselves and doing one another's laundry, but we never voted to compromise the health and safety of American families, and we shouldn't now.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission has to accept its responsibility to be more forward thinking, to use their statutory authority to protect people, particularly children. Families who walk into toy stores in America should not have to play Chinese roulette when they are buying toys for Christmas, and that is the reality today. It is time for the Consumer Product Safety Commission to use their statutory authority effectively. It is time for the President to fill the vacancy on that Commission with a person who is truly a consumer advocate. It is time for Congress to put the resources into the Consumer Product Safety Commission so it can start doing the job it promised it would do when it was created almost 40 years ago. Until then, we are going to have to rely on importers, manufacturers, and retailers in America to restore the confidence of American families in the toys they will buy for this holiday season.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY). Morning business is now closed.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2642, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2642) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I am pleased to resume consideration of the fiscal year 2008 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and related agencies appropriations bill.

To recap the essentials which I discussed yesterday, the bill provides $109.2 billion in funding, including $44.5 billion in mandatory spending and $43 billion in discretionary funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs. Overall discretionary funding in the bill totals $64.7 billion. That is a $4 billion increase over the President's budget request. Most of the increased funding is targeted at expanding and improving veterans health care, which is an essential requirement for our obligation to the veterans, and also it recognizes that as generations of veterans are aging, those veterans from Korea and World War II and the Vietnam conflict, we also have a new era of veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq, and this money is essential.

This bill represents a landmark commitment to our troops and their families and our Nation's veterans by investing in urgently needed military construction projects and in expanding health care services to our veterans.

For the Department of Veterans Affairs, the bill includes $29 billion for direct medical services for veterans. This

level of funding is equal to the amount requested by the veterans service organizations in the independent budget. Each year, our veterans service organizations prepare an independent budget, not based upon what the administration thinks they can afford but what veterans need. This is one of the few times we have been able to meet that objective of the veterans service organizations within their independent budget. It will allow the Department to increase its resources for both physical and mental health care for veterans, and it will give the Department the resources it needs to expand research and treatment of traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorders. At a time when scores of veterans are returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan with these often invisible wounds, this increased funding in this regard is urgently needed. It has been estimated that perhaps 30 percent of those who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan have received either traumatic brain injuries or have post-traumatic stress or both, and we have to be able to respond to those concerns.

The bill also includes needed funding for military construction of facilities and housing for our troops and their families. We are a nation at war, and our military forces need the best possible facilities to work, train, and to hone their skills, and their families need the best possible housing and quality-of-life facilities, such as chapels and childcare centers, to see them through the strain and hardship of repeated and lengthy deployments.

As I have said before, this bill is supported by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the veterans service organizations. The President, in his Statement of Administration Policy released yesterday, signaled his intention to sign the bill as reported out of the committee, and I hope that intention is carried through.

There is no reason the Senate cannot complete work on this bill at a reasonable hour today. In fact, I have spoken with the majority leader, and he has indicated to me that it is his desire to move this bill today, to complete work on it today, and to be able to have a vote on final passage we hope sometime today. I urge my colleagues, if they have amendments they wish to offer, to bring them to the floor as soon as possible. It takes a long time to deal with some of these issues, to vet them, to clear the amendments, and the slower the amendments are presented to us, the longer it will take to complete action on this bill. But the majority leader is committed to finishing this bill today, and I share that commitment. The Senate cannot afford to drag its feet on this bill. Our men and women in uniform, our Nation's veterans are depending on us to provide the resources they so urgently need. I urge my colleagues to move quickly to pass this bill.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, in Iraq and Afghanistan, like so many conflicts before, our servicemembers have done absolutely everything that has been asked of them. They have answered the President's call to war with honor and a sense of duty we have come to expect from our Nation's bravest men and women. They have performed under enormous pressure in the middle of a civil war, they have left behind loved ones who count on them, and they have continued to put their lives on the line every day.

Unfortunately, at home, their commitment to service has not been met yet by an administration that is committed to care for them. From poor conditions at VA facilities around the country, lack of PTSD counselors, benefits claims backlogs that keep our veterans waiting for months and months and months and sometimes years, it is very clear that so far this administration has failed to account for our Nation's veterans and to count them as a cost of this war. It is unacceptable that servicemembers who fought overseas are returning home and being forced to fight their own Government for the care and services they need.

Today, with the bill that is in front of us, the VA bill, we take a major step toward reversing that trend and the Bush administration's failure to care for our heroes. The funding for our veterans included in the VA bill is more than $3.6 billion over the President's request. After years of cutting corners on caring for our heroes, we are finally putting forth an honest assessment of what these men and women need.

This bill takes into account the additional strains on the VA system that simultaneous wars and new battlefield realities present. It is an investment that represents nearly all of the independent budget, which is the recommendation of the funds needed to care for our veterans and is compiled by our veterans service organization.

This bill invests in improving health care, expanding mental health services, and constructing new facilities that are really needed. It is going to mean, when this bill is passed and signed by the President, more qualified health care workers, better prosthetics that our servicemembers are asking for, and more accessible veterans facilities. It is also going to mean, importantly, thousands of new VA case workers who will help us reduce that unacceptable delay that we have heard about from so many of our veterans when they come home and try to access their benefits.

It will improve conditions at our VA facilities. It will add an increased investment in polytrauma and mental health care facilities that will drastically improve treatment for PTSD and traumatic brain injury and catastrophic injuries as well. Most of all, this bill means after years of neglect our Government is again going to honor our veterans' sacrifices.

This bill and all it provides could not come at a more crucial time. As a member myself of both the appropriations subcommittee that is responsible for this bill and the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I have heard numerous times firsthand about the VA's shortcomings in caring for our veterans. In fact, last month on the August break I held a Senate Veterans' Affairs field hearing in Takoma, WA, to specifically examine the challenges that men and women are facing when they come home. At that hearing I spoke with Brandon Jacobs. He is a veteran of the Army and National Guard, and he served in Iraq. He said a lot more has to be done to raise awareness of post-traumatic stress syndrome and combat-related stresses. He talked about how we needed to not only increase access for him and his fellow servicemembers, but also for the families that struggle when a loved one returns home with an invisible wound.

I also heard from a young man, Dan Purcell. He is an Iraq veteran who said he didn't "want to be treated as a tool that could be casually discarded when broken or found to be no longer useful." What a tragic statement from someone who served us overseas, that when he comes home he feels like a discarded tool because he has been broken. That is not how we should be treating our veterans, and that is not how this VA/HUD bill treats our veterans.

This bill that is before us finally takes the important steps that are necessary to recognize Brandon and Dan and so many others who are part of the costs of this war. We also have to make sure our troops are ready and that they receive the training they need before we send them overseas. I am very pleased that within this bill, the military construction investments that are made will help our country do a better job in training the men and women we asked to serve us in our military. In my home State of Washington, our military facilities play a very important role in our Nation's security. We have Fort Lewis in Tacoma, where we are training the Stryker Brigades at the center of the fighting in Iraq, we have Fairchild Air Force Base in Spokane that plays a major role in our air defense, and we have the Naval Air Station Whidbey Island that helps patrol the Pacific shores. It is extremely

critical that these bases, which serve such vital roles, receive the funding they need.

The bill that is in front of us today does just that and provides more than $635 million in improvements for Washington State military installations. I thank Senators REED and HUTCHISON for their special attention and recognition of the needs of our bases in my home State of Washington and across the country. Their leadership on this bill has been outstanding.

I know the chair and ranking member will be on the Senate floor throughout today. The leader has told us that he wants this bill finished by this evening. I urge all Members who have any amendments to come this afternoon to get their amendments offered because we do have to wrap up this bill. We are very aware of the timelines that are approaching, the very short amount of time that is left to get our numerous appropriations bills through. We intend to move them through. In order to do that we ask Members to come to the floor today, offer their amendments, let's work through them and get this bill passed so we can get it sent to the President.

It is important to pass this bill because this bill recognizes that any time we invest in building our military and improving training for our troops we invest in their care. I remind my colleagues what George Washington famously observed one time:

> The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any way war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their country.

The bill in front of us reverses President Bush's failures and carries through on the commitment that our very first President discussed. It keeps our military strong by honoring the sacrifices of our heroes with the funding that meets their needs.

I note this bill has been endorsed by the Disabled Americans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Paralyzed Veterans of America, AMVETS, and the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, among many other veterans service organizations that take so much time out of their own lives to fight for our veterans and recognize the critical funding for this bill.

I note an AP article from this morning that says the Secretary of the VA, Secretary Nickolson, has said in a letter to key lawmakers they do not need additional funding, they just need this bill passed. I note we have heard that song before, and that song was wrong.

We have to do the right thing. This bill is critical. The additional funding in this bill, I think every Member knows is needed. Every one of us has been out there and talked to the men and women who have come home from Iraq, to their families, and heard from PTSD counselors on down the line who have visited facilities or Walter Reed or seen facilities in their own States. They know this funding is needed. I encourage my colleagues to come to the Senate floor, offer their amendments, get this bill expeditiously to conference and sent to the President. I encourage the President and Secretary not to challenge us on the need for funding but to do the right thing; recognize the care of our service men and women is part of the cost of war. It is an obligation we have to meet.

We are meeting it with this bill, and I hope we can get it done quickly so our veterans, many men and women who have served us, will know this country is doing right by them.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

H.R. 327

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I wanted to spend a few minutes noting some things in the press about H.R. 327 and my hold on that bill. This is a bill which is very well intended. It is to help prevent suicide among our veterans.

I have been in the medical field since 1978–1979, that is. Approximately 6 to 10 percent of my practice has been associated with depression, treating clinical depression, suicidal ideation, posttraumatic stress disorder, and other issues.

We need to offer our veterans whatever we can offer them in terms of helping them deal with what they have been through and also helping our veterans who have no connection with their war experience in terms of treatment of depression.

Our veterans have the right to expect the legislation we craft to deliver on good intentions. H.R. 327, frankly, does not do that. One of the serious flaws with H.R. 327 is that every veteran is preconditioned with a mental status exam. So if you are a World War II vet and you have a sore throat and you go to the VA clinic in Muskogee, under 327 you have to undergo a thorough mental status exam before you can have your sore throat treated. That is Congress hitting a gnat with a cinder block. It is wasteful of our dollars. It portends to have Congress practicing medicine, when, in fact, we do not know how to practice medicine, and you cannot.

What this bill sets up is that Congress is going to mandate the doctor-patient relationship or the patient-PA or the patient-nurse practitioner or the patient-social service or licensed medical social service masters. What we have decided is to interject, because of the tragedies that we have seen in the last couple of years, a mandated form of treating suicide, depression, and risk of harm.

I have reached out to Senator HARKIN on this bill. I offered to make some simple changes. We were rebuffed. Then what we saw in the press is that I wanted to hold this only because of how somebody might not be able to have their second amendment rights guaranteed. That is hardly the situation at all. What I really am holding this bill for is because, first of all, it is bad medicine. No. 2, it duplicates and mandates things we should not be doing. It takes away from the professions within the VA who know what they are doing. It steps on and it interrupts what the VA is already implementing to a good extent and to a great degree.

There is another very serious concern with this, which is that it mandates the tracking of veterans who have mental health issues. The vast majority of our veterans do not have mental health issues, but the assumption under this bill is they all have to be screened for it. That would be like me, with every patient that I ever see in my practice, the first thing I have to do is make sure, because they were in the military, that they do not have some type of mental health disturbance coming back. It is insulting to our military men and women who have given their lives, given their blood, given their time, given their honor, and given their sacrifice to assume they cannot do that without having some disruption in their capability to function in this society. So it is highly insulting to the vast majority of our veterans.

Now, the question is, How do we solve the problem of depression and posttraumatic stress disorder that leads to suicidal thought, ideation, and behavior? That is what we ought to be doing. And what we are doing is creating a set of circumstances that may have an impact probably not any greater than what the VA is doing now but will, in fact, take away great resources from other mental health issues as well as other health issues within the VA.

Let me give you some statistics, if I may. The VA is 3 years into a mental health strategic plan that has been markedly successful in improving the quality of care and ensuring that high-risk factors such as suicidal ideation are considered when veterans are assessed or impact or enter the VA system. The VA has suicide prevention coordinators in every VA facility in this country. They have a hotline 24/7. They have hired over 3,000 mental health staffers just since the end of 2005. So they have recognized what was the problem. They are responding to it. They have two suicide prevention centers of excellence that are geared up

and working on the very specific issues associated with our military and post-traumatic stress disorder from combat.

Between 2002 and 2007, the VA spent 2½ times the percentage of their budget as we spend in all other health care on mental health. So they are already addressing the issue.

The other thing that is disturbing is this tracking of what they will do. They are not going to be tracking the data, they are going to be tracking individual veterans under this bill. That violates their own civil liberties. If, in fact, you have encountered the VA and because you were screened, not of your choice and not because you had signs or symptoms, because of that, that becomes a part of your record. You automatically are limited in lots of things that you cannot do in this country because you served your country. Now you have a mental health screening, an indication on your VA chart that would forbid you from becoming a police officer, an airline pilot, or an EMS, many other professions within this country. The idea that we are going to track individual veterans and their mental health status rather than the data—this bill specifically states that we are going to track the veterans, not the data—is wrong.

Finally, this bill sets out a peer counseling provision that has already been proven in the literature to not be effective. Yet it is mandated in this bill. So what this bill is about is the Senate practicing medicine and mandating ways to do things that the VA itself has already started. It is 3 years into a program of which they are using experts in the field to guide them, and we are using emotion and response.

I am going to continue to hold this bill until we work on the issues to guarantee freedom of veterans in terms of tracking of their data and them individually, in terms of securing the data about them—the VA has had two serious leaks on veterans health care data in the last 7 years—and also working to make sure we use a mental status exam when it is indicated and not create a system that is an affront to all the people who have served the country.

With that, I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, at 12:31 p.m., the Senate recessed until 2:16 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Acting President pro tempore.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RETURN OF SENATOR TIM JOHNSON

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to join my colleagues in welcoming a colleague and a friend, Senator TIM JOHNSON, back to the Senate.

Senator JOHNSON's return today to this illustrious Chamber marks an incredible journey that took him from normal daily life, to near death, to a remarkable recovery.

For the last 8 months, people from all walks of life, both Democrats and Republicans, have approached me wanting to know how Senator JOHNSON was doing, and nearly every single one of those individuals told me they were praying for him.

Shortly after this happened, I was traveling in Iraq and Afghanistan and I ran into military personnel, members of the diplomatic corps, other civilians, all asking how Senator JOHNSON was doing, all offering up their prayers and support.

I happen to believe it was those prayers from across South Dakota, across the United States, and from around the world that brought Senator JOHNSON back from his life-threatening condition.

Since being released from the hospital, Senator JOHNSON has learned how to walk and talk again. His doctors have been amazed at his progress. For some of us, it is no surprise. Having faced him in a closely fought campaign, I know how tough this man is. After all, Senator JOHNSON has a strong Scandinavian background, something we both share. Without question, today marks an important milestone in Senator JOHNSON's recovery.

Many of us will never know the struggles Senator JOHNSON and his family have been through. In fact, most of us take for granted our health, and we take for granted our time with family and friends, birthdays and holidays.

For me, Senator JOHNSON's experience has made me pause and appreciate the little things that make life so precious. Senator JOHNSON turned 60 in December, and the party, obviously, had to be delayed. Upon returning to South Dakota last week, Senator JOHNSON and his family celebrated both his 60th birthday and Christmas. I am guessing it was his best birthday and Christmas ever.

While Senator JOHNSON and I come from different political backgrounds, we have worked to put our differences aside as we represent the people of South Dakota. In fact, since I was elected to the Senate in 2004, we have worked closely on a number of issues of importance to South Dakota—everything from a highway bill, to an energy bill, to drought relief, water projects, and, of course, saving Ellsworth Air Force Base from closure under the BRAC process.

I firmly believe that because he and I worked to put our differences aside, our offices were able to coordinate easily to serve the State of South Dakota during his hospitalization and recovery.

The Senate is a very close-knit body, and it is noticeable when a Senator is absent for any length of time. Today, however, that absence no longer exists. By the grace of God, through the prayers of thousands upon thousands of Americans, by the support of an amazing wife Barbara and family, and network of friends, and by his sheer will and determination, Senator JOHNSON is back.

TIM, I know today means a great deal to you and to your family, and it is good to see you back in the Senate.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 306, which was submitted earlier today.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the resolution.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 306) concerning the return of Senator Tim Johnson:

Whereas Tim Johnson is returning to the United States Senate after an absence to recuperate from an intracranial hemorrhage suffered on December 13, 2006: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That, as Senator Tim Johnson returns to the Senate, his fellow Members of the Senate extend their warmest welcome and express their personal happiness at his return, and offer their very best wishes for his continued good health.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 306) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

Mr. THUNE. Thank you, Mr. President.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from South Dakota is recognized.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, thank you. It sure does feel good to be back here again.

I wish to thank Senators THUNE, REID, and MCCONNELL, as well as all my colleagues, for their warm welcome back. In so many ways, the words and prayers from you and your spouses, on both sides of the aisle, supported both Barbara and me and gave us strength. You will never know what that meant to us.

I also wish to thank Representative HERSETH SANDLIN for her incredible support throughout these tough times.

The MILCON appropriations bill is now on the floor, and I must also thank Senator JACK REED for working with my staff and for his leadership on the bill.

Before I get too far along in my remarks, it must already be clear to you that my speech is not 100 percent. My doctors tell me it will get there.

But my thoughts are clear and my mind is sharp, and I am here to be a voice for South Dakota in the Senate. With patience, persistence, and faith I have come back, and my will to keep fighting for South Dakota is strong.

My ability to think is paramount, so I hope now, as I return to my office, people focus on my work more than how quickly I walk these days.

Last week, I went home to South Dakota. Today, I come home to the Senate.

This has been a long and humbling journey—a journey that has taken longer than some people have liked, and I count myself among them.

But I return to work today to this great body with a renewed spirit and a sharper focus. I better appreciate today what individuals and families go through when they face crippling hardship—whether that hardship be the consequence of catastrophic health issues, economic hardship, or lack of an opportunity to reach one's full potential in life. I believe I have been given a second chance at life. I vow to take that second chance and work harder than ever to be the best I can be for my State and for my Nation; to be a voice for those individuals and families who so often are ignored or forgotten; and to fight to live up to the ideals that have made this Nation great. That is my focus and that is my commitment to my constituents back home in South Dakota and to the people of this great Nation, and to my colleagues here in Washington.

It has been the greatest honor of my life to stand for and by the people of South Dakota. I cannot thank them, as well as the Members of this Chamber, enough for your patience and support. Today, my work begins anew. I relish the task. It is great to be home.

Thank you and, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before my Republican colleagues leave the floor, I want to repeat what I said this morning when the Senate opened—the only person here was Senator MCCONNELL—and that is what the Republicans have done during the illness of Senator JOHNSON has been exemplary. There have been occasions when, for partisan advantage, the minority could have taken advantage of the majority as a result of TIM being incapacitated. That was never done, even though there were opportunities to do that. As I said this morning, I personally appreciate that. I know the Johnson family does. More importantly, Mr. President, the American people do. This is the Senate, and I will always remember during the past 8 months as we have waited for TIM to return how—I repeat—the Republicans never once tried to take advantage of his illness. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

Mr. President, TIM JOHNSON is a fourth generation South Dakotan. I want to underline the fact that JOHN THUNE and TIM JOHNSON remind me of HARRY REID and JOHN ENSIGN, because we too had a very difficult race for the Senate, and it ended up very similar to the THUNE-JOHNSON race. But we have set those differences aside and now are friends. Above all, I say to my friend JOHN THUNE, I admire and appreciate what you have done in helping TIM in his absence and for being the person who would not allow anything to be done that would in any way harm TIM JOHNSON on a partisan basis. Thank you very much, JOHN.

I have learned a lot about TIM JOHNSON in the past 8 months. I know he went to school at the University of South Dakota, that it is there he met Barbara, his wife. It is in a town called Vermillion that he started his law practice, and it is there that he saw success in the legal field. He served 4 years, starting in 1982, in the House of Representatives in the State of South Dakota. He has received many awards: Outstanding Citizen of the State of South Dakota, first recipient of the Billy Sutton Award for legislative achievement. He was elected to the House in 1986. During that year he was responsible for passing more legislation than any of the other 50 first-term Members.

He has now been in the Senate doing outstanding work. I noticed on his resume, of course, he listed the Appropriations Committee, the Budget Committee, the Banking Committee, the Energy Committee, the Indian Affairs Committee, but he left off the Ethics Committee. He was chosen on that committee to be the chair of that committee, because he is the example of an ethical, honest legislator and person.

TIM and Barbara still have their home in Vermilion, but I have gotten to know that family so well. Brooks served and is serving in the U.S. Army, having been a combat veteran in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. He is now an Army recruiter. Brendan is a lawyer and has a law practice and is doing excellent work. Kelsey and I—during her father's illness—spent lots of time together, especially waiting for her brothers to come. It took a couple of days for them to get here from around the country, as air travel out of South Dakota is not that easy.

As you proceed through life, you find people that you have such admiration for. Of course, we all admire TIM. But there is a person in this Chamber—and I know the Senate rules. We are not to refer to people in this Chamber, but I hope people will forgive me today in recognizing someone I will never forget, and that is his loving wife Barbara.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

I think Barbara and I will never forget—TIM was unconscious at the time—the first night TIM got sick. The reason I mention this is there was a doctor—and I don't want to in any way embarrass TIM or his family, but I think the man deserves recognition. I was asked to be with Barbara, and I was happy to be there with the children coming that first terrible afternoon. Things weren't going well. Barbara recognized it at first that he wasn't doing well. The doctor came and said, We are going to have to relieve the pressure. I am going to have to go into his skull. I said to this doctor, How many times have you done that? He said, Innumerable times. He was not an old man, but he was surrounded by old neurologists and neurosurgeons.

He came back a while later, an hour and a half, maybe, and he said, I am going to have to do an angiogram; I don't know what is going on in his brain. So they put something in to look at his brain. I said, How many times have you done that? He said over a thousand times. Then he comes back about an hour and a half or 2 hours later and tells us they are going to have to operate on TIM. It is going to take a long time, probably about 7 hours. After he worked all of this time, I said to him, Who is going to do this, because he had to be getting tired by then. He looked at Barbara with these piercing eyes, and said, I am going to do it. That is what I do. He said, I am not only a neurosurgeon, I have a subspecialty in the blood supply to the brain. He walked out of that room, and we had so much confidence in his ability that we felt TIM was going to make it. That man's name is Dr. Vivek Deshmukh. I haven't had the opportunity—I wanted to make sure TIM came back here—but some day I am going to be able to express to him on a personal basis how he handled this man's illness. TIM wasn't there, only in spirit, but this doctor deserves recognition, and I hope that is what I do with my little speech here today.

Amidst the daily scuffles that take place here in the Senate, we have the press, but many Americans may not realize we are a family. We sometimes joke about it, but we are, and this proves it. Sometimes people say this Senate family is dysfunctional, and maybe sometimes it is. But despite our quarrels on policy and politics, the 100 men and women who serve in this Chamber have the deepest respect and admiration for each other. We care about each other's health, families, and

all the things that go on outside the walls of this Capitol building. I have dear friends, and we all do in this Chamber, but my admiration and respect for TIM JOHNSON is difficult to calculate.

When he fell ill in December of last year, we were all touched by this unfortunate incident. But as we look at what happened, we have heard this overused term: Maybe it was a blessing in disguise, because TIM JOHNSON was taken immediately to George Washington Hospital where they have a team of physicians as good as any place in the world to take care of his injury—maybe not of other injuries, not other illnesses, but for this one it is as good as any place in the country. Had it happened the next day, he would have been on an airplane going to South Dakota. Had it happened the next day, he would have been on an Indian reservation in South Dakota. So maybe, maybe his misfortune was a blessing. Maybe it was a blessing.

We all prayed for him. We all hoped for his recovery. We couldn't watch his recovery because he was away from us most of the time. We all prayed for his recovery with hope for his strength. TIM's wonderful wife Barbara, whom I have already mentioned, said last month:

I have learned a lot about Tim Johnson during the last months. I have learned that he is extremely determined. How he has gotten through this and maintained an even balance I will never understand. His sense of humor and just the: OK, I know what I have to do, I am going to go ahead and do it, and he does it.

So these past months, with humor and determination that Barbara mentioned, we all in the Senate now know what she is talking about.

TIM, I am so glad you are back. I am so happy that your mind is 100 percent. We have all been told your speech shortly will be 100 percent, and you should know it is 95 percent right now. We throw words around like we are happy to have you back, but I have to say in front of the whole world, TIM, we love you. I love you.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on behalf of the entire U.S. Senate Republican Conference, let me say as well, we welcome back to the Senate our good friend, the senior Senator from South Dakota. The entire Senate family was thrown into a state of shock and worry when TIM JOHNSON was rushed to the hospital for emergency brain surgery last December. The person who seemed most calm was the woman we just recognized up in the gallery: his wife Barbara. She struck an early note of hope. She said she and the rest of the Johnson family were "encouraged and optimistic." Those aren't the words most of us would choose in a moment such as that, but the Johnsons had been there before, and they seemed to know TIM would be back, back here, before all was said and done; they would make sure of it.

TIM credits Barbara with helping him overcome prostate cancer in 2004, and it was his support that helped her through a couple of serious illnesses of her own. They always overcame the obstacles, working as a team, determined to push through. They are real fighters. For many, this seemed as if it would be the fight of their lives.

But just 2 months after surgery, Barbara and the Johnson children, Brooks, Brenda, and Kelsey, were telling people, "We've got our TIM back."

TIM was completely focused on recovery. He went through weeks and weeks of intense rehab. And soon enough, he started to get back to the clips and do the office work from his hospital bed.

When they released him from rehab, this gritty great-grandson of a South Dakota homesteader made a bold decision—actually a prediction—saying he was absolutely "determined to get back in the saddle."

Thanks to the committed care of doctors and therapists, the prayers of constituents and colleagues, and, above all, the loving care of Barbara and their children, TIM's Senate colleagues can also say, with a real sense of joy, that they too "have their TIM back."

I yield the floor.

(Applause.)

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I join in this chorus to say how privileged and humbled I am to stand before this body and welcome back my friend and fellow colleague, Senator TIM JOHNSON. TIM and I served in the House together. We came to the Senate in the same year. I went up to campaign in South Dakota, and he has been a great friend to Illinois. I have known him more than 20 years.

I remember when I heard he had been stricken. I was stunned, as everybody was across America. As has been said before, the prayers of millions reached out to TIM and his family in their hour of need.

For those who don't know TIM JOHNSON, he is not a typical politician. He doesn't really struggle for media attention, as some of us might; but he got a lot more attention than he ever thought he would because the whole world watched anxiously during those moments of surgery and recovery and rehabilitation. There wasn't a place you would go anywhere in America that TIM JOHNSON wasn't asked about. "How is he doing?" "What is the latest?" "When is he coming back?"

Those of us who knew TIM and what he had done in the Senate and House, those of us who know his great family knew he would be back. He is one of those tough Scandinavians—not really flashy but solid. You just knew he was going to make it. I thought to myself, of all of us who could have suffered this terrible illness, this is one man who will be able to make it back. I also knew something that has already been alluded to. When TIM and Barbara took those vows to stand by one another in sickness and in health, they really meant it because they have proved it over and over again to one another. Loretta and I went by the hospital one day and it wasn't a good day to visit, so we left a note. We have come to know how close they are and supportive of one another.

It wasn't just Barbara's strength but the strength of the whole family that came through in TIM's recovery. He has done such a remarkable job today. He has brought out the humanity of the united states Senate. We can put aside the issues and the bickering, the fighting and the party labels, and really show that, when it gets down to it, we are part of a family that really cares about one another on a personal basis.

We are so glad to have you back, TIM. We wish you the best. We will be back in the Appropriations Committee fighting for South Dakota and Illinois real soon. Thank you.

(Applause.)

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANDERS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

JOSHUA OMVIG SUICIDE PREVENTION ACT

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor at this TIME to respond a little to the comments made prior to the recess for our Republican and Democratic caucuses today, made on the floor by the Senator from Oklahoma, Mr. COBURN, regarding the bill called the Joshua Omvig Suicide Prevention Act. I want to lay out what the bill does, where we are on it, and respond to some of the objections that the Senator from Oklahoma raised.

Shortly before the Senate adjourned for the August recess, we sought unanimous consent to pass this bill, the Joshua Omvig Suicide Prevention Act, and send it to the President for his signature. Unfortunately, an objection was lodged on the other side of the aisle by—as we know from this morning—the Senator from Oklahoma. I am saddened by the objection to this legislation.

My staff and I have spent a great deal of TIME trying to understand the reasons behind this objection and respond

to the concerns that have been raised. I thought it would be helpful for my fellow Senators, and anyone who is watching, if I took some TIME to review why I believe the Senate needs to act now to pass this important bill, and why I find it so puzzling that one Senator would object.

Let me give a little bit of history. I introduced this legislation, along with my colleague from Iowa, Senator GRASSLEY, after learning about the case of a young Iowan—his name was Joshua Omvig—who tragically took his own life shortly after returning home from an 11-month deployment in Iraq. Joshua was a member of the U.S. Army Reserve, 339th MP Company, based in Davenport, IA. Before leaving for Iraq, he was a member of the Grundy Center Volunteer Fire Department and the Grundy Center Police Reserves. He was honored to serve his country in the Reserves and hoped to return to his community to serve as a police officer. Please remember what I just said. He was honored to serve his country in the Reserves, and he hoped to return to his community to serve as a police officer. Keep that in mind. I will return to it later.

His family is convinced that if the Veterans' Administration had more services for veterans in place, Joshua would have received the help he needed and he would still be alive. But rather than withdrawing into their grief, Joshua's parents have dedicated themselves to ensuring no other family has to suffer this way. Ellen and Randy Omvig, Joshua's parents, have assisted countless veterans and their families in navigating the VA system. They have been outspoken advocates of improved mental health services for servicemembers and veterans. In April, the Omvigs testified before the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee on the importance of appropriate suicide prevention, early detection, and treatment programs for our veterans. The goal of the Joshua Omvig Act is simple: to improve suicide prevention and early detection and to improve assistance to veterans in crisis in order to prevent suicides among those who have so bravely served our country.

We know there is an urgent, overwhelming need for this bill. A study in last month's issue of the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health found that those who have been in combat are twice as likely to commit suicide as those who have never served in a war.

The Veterans' Administration estimates that more than 5,000 veterans take their lives each year. These numbers are certain to increase dramatically, given the growing number of soldiers returning from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. Suicide rates are 35 percent higher for Iraq veterans than for the general population. Let me repeat that statement. Suicide rates are 35 percent higher for Iraq war veterans than for the general population. The Department of Defense recently reported that the Army is seeing the highest rate of suicide in 28 years.

So what does the Joshua Omvig Veterans Suicide Prevention Act do? It directs the Department of Veterans Affairs to create a comprehensive program to address the troubling rate of suicide among veterans returning from combat. The legislation takes a multifaceted approach toward the prevention of suicide. It emphasizes the importance of social support, family involvement, readjustment services, as well as further research to decrease the number of suicides among our veterans. It also boosts training for all Department of Veterans Affairs staff, contractors, and medical personnel who interact with veterans, teaching them to identify risk factors

Mr. REID. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

Mr. HARKIN. Yes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is my understanding the Senator from Iowa is speaking on veteran suicide; is that right?

Mr. HARKIN. Yes.

Mr. REID. I spoke briefly yesterday morning. A 19-year-old—as the Senator knows, my dad killed himself, so I understand something about suicide—a 19-year-old soldier from Las Vegas came back to Las Vegas. He told his parents and everybody else he didn't want to go back to Iraq. I think they said they gave him medicine—Prozac, whatever it was—and sent him back. In a matter of a few days, he killed himself.

Suicide is a devastating problem. It is a problem in the civilian population. Mr. President, 31,000 people kill themselves every year. We don't understand the issue at all. We haven't studied it enough. What is going on in the civilian side is a mere shadow of what is going on in the military.

Mr. HARKIN. That is true.

Mr. REID. We have had hundreds of soldiers who have killed themselves in Iraq. A lot of them are not suicide reported.

I so admire and appreciate what the Senator from Iowa is doing with regard to this legislation. It is so very important. Suicide is a national problem, and with the emotional and mental problems our troops are having coming back, we have to get to the bottom of this issue and see what we can do to prevent further deaths.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I thank my leader for joining with me on this issue. I respond to him, I just said—I don't know if the leader was on the floor at the time—that suicide rates for Iraq veterans—Iraq veterans—is 35 percent higher than the general population. The Department of Defense has said their suicide rate in the Regular Army is at the highest rate in 28 years.

I say to the distinguished Senator from Nevada, this bill I am talking about was introduced in the House earlier this year. There were 154 cosponsors on both sides of the aisle. This bill, the Joshua Omvig suicide prevention bill, passed the House in March 423 to 0—423 to 0. We can't get much better than that.

It came to the Senate. The Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee had three hearings on it and the House had two hearings, for a total of five hearings. Every veterans group, every veterans support group, disabled veterans, everyone came to testify on the need for this legislation.

We went through the committee process, had the hearings, and had all the testimony. Joshua's parents testified. We brought it out on the floor for a unanimous consent agreement before we left on the August break. It passed the House 423 to 0. Then I found there was an objection raised.

I started to nose around to find out who raised the objection. It was Senator COBURN from Oklahoma. I talked with the Senator from Oklahoma. He said, first of all, he was upset that there were not any hearings. He told me that right out in the back of the lobby. I said: Senator, we had hearings. We had three in the Senate, two in the House. Well, he had to go check on it.

Then he raised other objections and came on the floor this morning to say why he has objections. Now I am going to respond to those objections in kind to let the Senator know his objections are unfathomable.

So here we are faced with a dire situation among our veterans, with the highest suicide rates ever, and we are trying to pass legislation to direct the Department of Veterans Affairs to do certain things to set up processes and procedures so that our veterans will have the kind of counseling and the kind of medical intervention so they do not commit suicide, and yet we have one objection raised.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if I could direct another question to my friend. We have so much to do in the Senate. Certain measures expire at the end of the fiscal year. But I say to my friend, I feel very strongly about this issue, for obvious reasons. Everyone should understand, if people want to stop us from moving forward on this legislation, they are going to have to vote accordingly. We are not going to let one or two Senators stop us from moving forward on this bill.

I have the greatest respect for Dr. COBURN, the junior Senator from Oklahoma. I hope the Senator's conversations with him will bear fruit and we can move forward tonight. But if they don't, we are going to figure our way past this before we leave here this year, OK?

Mr. HARKIN. I appreciate it.

Mr. REID. Every day we wait is another person calling—as I remember it,

and it has been a long time ago now, I say to my friend, a long time ago. My dad was a lot younger than I am right now when he killed himself. I can remember that phone call. I can remember that phone call. I had a wonderful morning. I had been out to watch Muhammad Ali work out. I spent many hours with Muhammad Ali. I got back to the office and Joan Shea, the receptionist, said: Your mother is on the line. I said: Hi. She said: Your pop killed himself. What is this about?

So anyway, 31,000 people get phone calls such as that every year on the civilian side, and we have probably thousands of other people who commit suicide who are not listed as suicides. And then we have the situation the Senator from Iowa just indicated. The people who are coming home are 35 percent higher, in a ratio of killing themselves, than the people in the civilian population. That is scary.

The other problem, I say to my friend, is Active-Duty soldiers, troops also have problems. Every day we don't do this bill is another day someone is going to kill themselves.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I thank the leader. I ask the leader, if we can, if the objection is not withdrawn, I hope we can bring the bill up and move the bill legislatively on the floor.

Mr. REID. I have indicated to the Senator, we are going to do that. We, of course, have to see what is ahead of us, but it is something about which I feel strongly. The floor staff is watching Senator HARKIN and me talk today. We will figure out a way to do it.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I appreciate the sensitivity of the Senator from Nevada, our distinguished majority leader, on this issue.

Basically, what the bill does, again as I said, is to boost training for all Department of Veterans Affairs staff, contractors, and medical personnel, teaching them to identify risk factors for suicide and refer veterans to the appropriate mental health counseling and mental health centers.

As I said at the outset, this has been the most bipartisan piece of legislation I can imagine. Senator GRASSLEY and I introduced it in the Senate, appropriately since Joshua Omvig was from Iowa. We have 30 different cosponsors from both sides of the aisle. It was introduced in the other body by Congressman LEONARD BOSWELL of Iowa, who is the Congressman from the district in which Joshua Omvig lived. In fact, it is that version of the bill we are trying to pass today.

I may have misspoke earlier. He secured 152 bipartisan cosponsors of the bill. It passed the House in March by a vote of 423 to 0. No Republican objected over there. No one; 423, not a single dissenting vote. That is why I was so surprised and, quite frankly, dismayed when an objection was raised on the other side of the aisle preventing passage of the bill before the August recess.

How many more veterans have committed suicide since that time who might have been, through counseling, through outreach, through some way given the appropriate support services so they wouldn't have to commit suicide?

This morning, the Senator from Oklahoma, Mr. COBURN, offered several reasons for his objection. That is what I would like to respond to now.

He mentioned that the bill is duplicative of the VA's plans to prevent suicide and that veterans' receipt of benefits would be contingent on the screening. He also raised concerns about the validity of the peer counseling provisions of the bill. Finally, he expressed concern that if the VA asked veterans about their mental health, this information might be used to inhibit their ability to purchase handguns. All of these concerns are unfounded, and I want to explain.

In 2004, the VA developed a series of suicide prevention initiatives as part of a comprehensive mental health strategic plan. All well and good. Unfortunately, very few of the initiatives have been implemented. During the first 2 years following development of the plan, a Government Accountability Office report found that the VA did not even spend $100 million of the $300 million that was specifically allocated for this initiative. One-third of the money specifically allocated was not spent.

I think our veterans have paid a steep price, a tragic price for this foot dragging. When the VA has announced plans to undertake suicide prevention initiatives, usually it is in response to some highly publicized incident. They usually announce the plans and then they do not follow through.

For example, in February the VA finally announced it would put suicide prevention crisis counselors in VA facilities. That was only after the tragic, high-profile suicide of Jonathan Schulze, a marine who received two Purple Hearts for his service in Iraq. When Schulze informed his local VA facility that he was thinking about killing himself, he was told he was 26th on the local VA's waiting list for VA mental health services. He went home and killed himself that night. In response to that, the VA said: We are going to put VA suicide prevention crisis counselors in all VA facilities.

Although they announced it, 7 months later they have still not fully implemented this initiative. Yes, if there is a tragic case like that, the VA will come out and say they are going to do things. Seven months later they still have not implemented the initiative.

What would our bill do, the Omvig Act? The Omvig Act would require the Veterans' Administration to designate a suicide prevention counselor at each medical facility. No more foot dragging; it would require them to do that right now.

In late July, the VA announced the implementation of a 24-hour suicide prevention hotline. That is also in the Joshua Omvig bill. That VA plan has been around since 2004. Three years later they say they are finally going to put it into effect. I suppose that is some kind of progress. But by writing this very sensible provision into law, we will ensure that the VA does not backslide on this either. As part of its 2004 strategic plan, the VA set a plan to train all front-line staff on suicide prevention. In 2004, they said that. They still have failed to provide this training. Maybe that is what the Senator from Oklahoma is saying is duplicative. Yes, we say you have to have a 24-hour suicide hotline. The VA said they were going to do that in 2004. They said they were finally going to implement it in July. It still isn't manned, and the counselors they said they were going to have do that in February, 7 months later they haven't done that. We say you have to do it. Is that duplicative? No, it is putting into law and mandating that the VA has to do this.

The Omvig Act directs the Secretary to ensure that staff members have the training necessary to identify risk factors for suicide and to make appropriate referrals for assistance. Is that too much to ask? Is that too burdensome for veterans who put their lives on the line in Afghanistan and Iraq and other places? It just says the staffs have to have the training necessary to identify risk factors for suicide to make appropriate referrals for assistance.

The VA said they were going to do that in 2004, but they never have. Because they have not done this, many Armed Forces personnel who have been discharged and have VA benefits are not receiving these services. The Omvig family and numerous veterans support groups testified during our hearings about the importance of outreach to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues and to assist veterans and their families in transitioning to civilian life. This legislation, the Omvig bill, would establish a program to provide education and outreach to families to help them identify symptoms of mental health problems and to encourage families to seek assistance.

The VA inspector general issued a report this May, confirming that the VA is falling short of the necessary system-wide implementation of suicide prevention programs—their own inspector general. They found that many VA clinics lacked properly trained staff. Need I repeat myself? They did not provide 24-hour services and provided inadequate mental health screening. That is their own inspector general.

The inspector general also found that the VA had not established best practices research to ensure a standard of suicide prevention.

The Omvig bill addresses all these issues. The aim of the bill is to improve early detection and intervention, provide access to services for veterans in crisis and thereby prevent suicide among those who have put their lives on the line to defend our Nation.

The Senator from Oklahoma objected. He expressed concern that the receipt of benefits would be contingent on the screening, and that there is no opt-out provision. Let's look at this. The fact is, the Department of Defense already requires soldiers returning from deployment to complete a checklist of symptoms such as anxiety, difficulty sleeping, suicidal thoughts. There are no opt-outs for this mental health screening because these programs are critical to ensure that those with mental health concerns receive the assistance they need.

The DOD, the Department of Defense, says if you are going to be redeployed, you have to have mental health screening—no opt-out. We are saying the screening provision in the Omvig bill does not mandate a formal checklist of mental health symptoms. It just ensures that medical professionals incorporate questions about veterans' mental health into primary care visits. In other words, what we are trying to say is mental health care should be integrated into primary health care. That is all we are saying.

Just as a medical professional would ask questions about risk factors for heart disease, it is responsible medicine to ask about risk factors for suicide, especially among this group since the data show how high it is, how high the incidence is of suicide.

Doctors ask their patients all the time if they are getting enough exercise and eating healthy. They should also ask if a veteran is sleeping well and if they have been anxious. These questions are critical in order for doctors to get a full picture of the veteran's health and well-being.

I want to make it very clear, the bill does not make the receipt of benefits contingent on veterans undergoing a separate mental health screening. Rather, it merely seeks to incorporate into their screening process, into their primary health care process, this process, that the health professionals are incorporating appropriate questions about suicide risk into their practice. Not to do this is totally irresponsible.

The Senator from Oklahoma also mentioned his concern that the peer counseling provisions in the bill are not effective. Again, I am surprised by this as there is a large body of research that peer support programs are effective in alleviating post-traumatic stress symptoms, PTSD symptoms and depression, reducing the likelihood of hospitalization and increasing social support. President Bush's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health recognizes peer support approaches as an emerging best practice in helping people to recover from traumatic events.

Who better to counsel with a soldier who has served in Iraq and had a lot of trauma, or from Afghanistan who had a lot of trauma, than a peer, one of their own peers to talk to them about it, or their families? Peer support approaches offer a low-cost and effective supplement to traditional services in which transitioning veterans can talk to someone who had similar experiences and understands what they are going through. This is well-recognized, evidence-based service that allows veterans to talk to someone who had similar experiences and, as I said, understands what they are going through. How can there be an objection to that?

Finally, regarding the concern of the Senator about veterans' ability to access firearms, I am very puzzled. This bill ensures that the VA takes appropriate measures to follow up with veterans who are at risk for suicide. OK. There are strict privacy laws that govern the doctor-patient relationship. Privacy laws prevent the release of information about any patient. There is an exception if the patient is a serious threat to himself or others, but no medical professional can refer an individual to the background check system that would limit access to firearms.

Let me repeat that: No medical professional can refer an individual to the background check system that would limit access to firearms. This can only be done through the judicial process. In other words, before an individual can be placed on the NICS list where they can't purchase a handgun—and this prevents an individual who is mentally ill from purchasing a firearm—a judge must make a determination that the individual belongs on that list.

As many of my colleagues are aware, there is legislation that has passed the House and was recently approved by the Judiciary Committee that would encourage States to do a better job reporting to the NICS system in the wake of the tragic shootings at Virginia Tech. If Senators have concerns about how the NICS system operates, it seems to me that legislation is the appropriate venue for those concerns. But to hold up the Omvig suicide prevention bill that delivers critical suicide prevention services to veterans based on concerns related to an unrelated pending bill is very troubling.

There is an editorial that appeared in the New York Times on August 30. Let me read from that. Here is what the editorial in the New York Times said on August 30:

As the Army's suicide rate hits record levels in the Iraq war, there's small wonder practically everyone in Congress wants to deal with the parallel emerging crisis of depressed veterans tempted to take their own lives. Everyone, that is, except Senator Tom Coburn, Republican of Oklahoma. He stands alone in blocking final passage of a suicide prevention bill in fear that the government's record-keeping on troubled vets might somehow crimp their ability to purchase handguns.

Even the craven gun lobby should manage some shame at this example of Second Amendment idolatry. The House has unanimously approved a measure mandating the screening of all veterans for suicide risk, but Senator Coburn worries that veterans' medical data might be appropriated by other agencies to deny that all-encompassing right to wield arms on the domestic front.

Again, the editorial goes on.

The Senator's office points to another bill near passage—prompted by the Virginia Tech gun massacre—that would encourage states to do a better job of listing mentally troubled individuals on the Federal roll of risky gun purchasers. But tying these two measures together is itself evidence of defective reasoning, or at least scurrilous politicking. The Virginia Tech measure has nothing to do with veterans and affects only those Americans formally judged by a court to be mentally disturbed.

It is an eminently good thing that the anti-suicide measures would require medical specialists to keep track of veterans found to be high risks for suicide. But that's to care for them as human beings, under that other constitutional right to life—liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Respect for the grave sacrifices by veterans requires the Senate to strike down the Coburn ploy and hurry this vital measure to President Bush.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the full editorial be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, Aug. 30, 2007]

LOCKED, LOADED AND LOONEY

As the Army's suicide rate hits record levels in the Iraq war, there's small wonder practically everyone in Congress wants to deal with the parallel emerging crisis of depressed veterans tempted to take their own lives. Everyone that is, except Senator Tom Coburn, Republican of Oklahoma. He stands alone in blocking final passage of a suicide prevention bill in fear that the government's record-keeping on troubled vets might somehow crimp their ability to purchase handguns. Even the craven gun lobby should manage some shame over this absurd example of Second Amendment idolatry.

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track of veterans found to be high risks for suicide. But that's to care for them as human beings, under that other constitutional right—to life liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Respect for the grave sacrifices by veterans requires the Senate to strike down the Coburn ploy and hurry this vital measure to President Bush.

Mr. HARKIN. Lastly, Mr. COBURN spoke on the floor and mentioned his staff had made suggestions about the language. Again, I am very surprised to hear this. Staff from my office and Senator GRASSLEY's office met with Senator COBURN's staff before the recess in an attempt to resolve any differences.

Their staff made no suggestion as to what it would take to lift Senator COBURN's hold. Over recess, I instructed my staff to make attempts to meet with his staff, but his staff was always unavailable. Over the last few days, we once again attempted to reach out to his staff in an effort to move the bill. But, again, we have not heard anything back.

We suggested we would be willing to work with Senator COBURN on the tracking language he was concerned about. But we have not heard anything from his office until the Senator spoke on the floor this morning.

This bill has received full consideration, as I said, in the House and the Senate. It passed without a single dissenting voice in the House. Is the Senator from Oklahoma saying there are 423 totally irresponsible people in the House? I mean, there are people in the House every bit as conservative as the Senator from Oklahoma. They did not raise any objections to this. We had three hearings in the Senate on the bill, two hearings in the House.

Josh Omvig's parents testified before the Senate VA Committee in April. I wish to recount something they said. At the beginning of my remarks, I mentioned that Joshua Omvig, before he went into the military, had been a member of the Grundy Center Volunteer Fire Department and Police Reserve.

He had hoped to return to serve his community as a police officer. I said: Remember that, because I am going to return to it. I now return to it.

It was his dream to one day become a police officer. As he pursued that dream, he worked alongside many Grundy Center fire and policemen. Here is what Mr. Omvig said to the committee:

> The day after Josh's suicide, the Grundy Center police department and fire department had a time where a professional counselor was brought in to help them cope and deal with what happened that day. Do we as a nation take the same measures for our troops who have served for us for months in a combat area? Are we providing our military men and women the appropriate services to help them assimilate to civilian life? Are we providing them with what they need to survive the peace? Ellen and I have to say "No" not at this time. We can and must do more!

Now, I saw Joshua's parents at the time when they were here in Washington. And, you know, it is always awkward to talk to parents about the death of any of their children, especially a young person taking his own life. I said to both the parents: Was there any indication? I mean, do you have any idea why Joshua would take his own life?

Mr. Omvig said: Yeah, I know exactly why. I said: Why? He said: Well, Joshua always wanted to be a police officer, all his life growing up. That is why he volunteered on the police reserves, volunteer fire. He went into the service thinking that would help him to become a police officer. He was worried that if he sought mental health services, he would never be able to become a police officer. What a shame. What a shame that in this country we still treat mental health like that. That is why we have to do a better job.

That is why counseling, someone talking to Joshua, one of his peers who has been through the same thing who may have then gone on to become a police officer could say: You can get mental health help. You can get the necessary treatment, and you can still become a police officer.

Well, while we delay and fail to act, we are losing more and more veterans to suicide. As I said, the VA plan was written 3 years ago, and they are still not implementing it.

The PTSD program treatment at Walter Reed accepts only 65 patients each year. Yet more than 45,000 veterans sought medical help for posttraumatic stress disorder in the first 3 months of 2007; Walter Reed accepts 65 a year.

The VA must be better equipped to deal with veterans who are in crisis. With this bill, we can ensure that the VA will provide comprehensive and critical services, even when the issue is not in the headlines because of some tragedy. We need to hold the VA accountable.

As I said, even their own inspector general said they were not living up to it, our GAO said they were not. We need to make it clear that preventing suicide among our veterans is a congressional and national priority. For our veterans who have served their country, fought for our country, many times they are being left to fight their own private mental health life wars alone, private wars they too often lose.

I urge the objecting Senator to reexamine this important bill, reconsider his objection. Lives are at stake. We need to move forward with the Joshua Omvig Veterans Suicide Prevention Act as quickly as possible.

I yield the floor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008—Continued

Mr. REID. Mr. President, what is the matter now before the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. H.R. 2642, the Military Construction Appropriations Act.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, Senator REED is in the Chamber or at least in the building. He and Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON have been wanting to move this bill.

I indicated, and the distinguished Republican leader agreed with me this morning, we need to move this legislation.

If there are no amendments that are going to be offered, we should move to third reading. If there are amendments that are going to be offered, I would hope someone would notify the cloakroom immediately, Democratic or Republican cloakroom, and we will certainly be as considerate to them as necessary.

But unless something happens pretty soon, I think we should move to third reading. If there are amendments, the two managers of the bill are happy to deal with those amendments. We are going to finish this bill tonight. I would hope on this bill I do not have to file cloture, on Military Construction and Veterans. I do not think that would be appropriate.

But if there are no amendments and simply people let us return to final passage of this, I have no alternative. It would send a terribly bad message. Both the distinguished Republican leader and I think we should move forward. I hope we can. We are going to finish the bill tonight or I will file cloture on it tonight.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mrs. MCCASKILL). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam President, I rise today to speak in support of H.R. 2642, an act making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008.

Let me say at the outset, the leadership of this committee has done a tremendous job in bringing forward legislation that hopefully will receive the strong bipartisan support of this body. I am especially thankful for the great work of Senator JACK REED and Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON and Senator TIM JOHNSON and his staff for having moved forward in developing a package that, at the end of the day here, will hopefully receive the support of most of the Members of this Chamber.

This legislation is important for us as we move forward to try to make

sure we are doing everything we can for a strong America. This is important for us, for our military, for our men and women in uniform, and for our veterans. It is essential legislation which we must pass and which we all hope the President will sign into law.

With respect to military construction, the bill provides $8.9 billion-plus for our Active-Duty construction efforts and $929 million for the National Guard and Reserve construction. This includes key projects around the country for the Army National Guard. This is a significant improvement over what the President requested for the National Guard. It will be part of making sure we have a strong military for America.

Second, the legislation fully funds the 2005 recommendations of the BRAC, the Base Realignment and Closure Account. That BRAC recommendation which was approved by this Senate and by the Congress now 2 years ago is an important document that charts the way forward for the American military. This legislation will fully fund the recommendations of that legislation.

Third, with respect to Veterans Affairs, I am proud that this legislation will provide $87.5 billion for the VA. That is an increase of almost $3.6 billion over what the President requested. That increase will go to veterans health care and make sure our PTSD and mental health issues and TBI issues that we are seeing in great numbers as we are involved in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan—that we are providing the right kind of care to our veterans.

I am appreciative of the national issues that are embraced in this legislation that will allow the funding to move forward and to make those projects a reality.

I wish to comment on a few provisions in this legislation that are important to my State of Colorado. I must say, as we worked on these matters over the years, it has been my honor to work closely with Senator ALLARD as we worked on important projects for our veterans and for our military in my State.

I wish to mention the Fitzsimons VA Hospital. There is $61 million in this legislation for Fitzsimons. Today in Colorado, the VA hospital in Denver is in very rough, shoddy condition. Our veterans deserve better. Over the last decade, there has been an effort in Colorado to try to establish a VA hospital that can become one of the crown jewels of our national health care. We are fortunate today that, under the leadership of MAJ Andy Lobb and others, we have found a site at what is the old Fitzsimons Army hospital which has been turned over to the city of Aurora and to an authority that is rehabilitating that site. At that site today, we have already located the health facilities and hospitals for the University of Colorado. We are about ready to open a brand-new children's hospital at this center. The VA hospital is the next move in the creation of what is going to be a crown jewel for health care and for biotech in the Rocky Mountain West. The Fitzsimons VA Hospital is very much a part of that program, but at its core it is making sure we in America are standing up and giving to the veterans of our country the health care services they deserve.

Next, Fort Carson. Fort Carson is a very important military installation in my State and helps us protect our Nation. Many of the men and women who serve and have trained at Fort Carson are now serving in Iraq and in Afghanistan. There is $470 million in military construction funds for Fort Carson. That amount of money will accommodate the arrival of an additional 12,000 Active-Duty and 18,360 Active-Duty family members who are currently moving to Fort Carson. I am very proud of the inclusion of that amount of money in this legislation because it will allow us to warmly welcome the soldiers who are coming to Fort Carson, as well as their families, with the kinds of facilities they deserve.

Schriever Air Force Base is part of our national defense. As I say, Colorado is blessed to be the crown jewel of the Nation's homeland defense and national security. We do that through many of our military installations, including Schriever Air Force Base. It is part of the air and space integration program. It is the place where we have our Air Force Space Command. It will receive $24.5 million for construction of the facilities that are needed there.

The U.S. Air Force Academy, located since the 1950s in El Paso County in Colorado Springs, is one of our Nation's premier institutes in training the future military leaders of our country. It is an installation of which I am very proud. This legislation includes $15 million for upgrades to the academic facilities at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

The National Guard and Reserves station at Buckley Air Force Base in Aurora, CO, is an important part of the Army installations in our State. This legislation will add $7.3 million to replace the outdated squadron operations facility that houses the F–16s of the 140th Air Wing of the Colorado National Guard.

This is important legislation, and I am proud to be a supporter of this legislation.

We also will be speaking at a later time this afternoon or this evening on several other amendments I want to bring forth which are important amendments to the future of the State of Colorado but also very important to the future of our Nation's military and assuring that our military has the appropriate training facilities. We will be speaking to an amendment I will be calling up in short order.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANDERS). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MENENDEZ). Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2686

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I have an amendment I would like of offer, but since I do not see a manager here, I will explain the amendment first and then ask that the amendment be brought up as soon as I finish my comments.

The amendment I will offer will strike an earmark from this bill that takes $4 billion intended for America's veterans and transfers it to the well-to-do citizens of Beverly Hills, CA. It is remarkable that we are even considering a veterans bill that contains an earmark for a facility on Wilshire Boulevard—the main street through Beverly Hills—a site barely 3 miles from the ritzy shops of Rodeo Drive.

This earmark prevents the Veterans' Administration from taking highly valuable land in one of America's most lucrative real estate markets and putting it to work for our veterans. It would require that 200-plus acres in the middle of Beverly Hills that could be better used to generate revenue to care for America's veterans to sit empty.

The earmark completely undermines the results of over 3 years of study performed by nonpartisan, independent experts. It also undermines the authority of the Veterans' Administration to best help veterans around the country, not just those in the Beverly Hills area. The language on page 44 of the Senate substitute prohibits the Veterans' Administration from taking any action to:

> exchange, trade, auction, transfer, or otherwise dispose of, or reduce the acreage of, Federal land and improvements at the Department of Veterans Affairs West Los Angeles Medical Center, California, encompassing approximately 388 acres on the north and south sides of Wilshire Boulevard and west of the 405 Freeway.

The Veterans' Administration estimates that reuse of this land would result in approximately $4 billion in savings—that is $450 per square foot for 205 acres—that would go directly to the Veterans' Administration for future construction since the receipts are deposited into Veterans' Administration accounts under its enhanced-use lease authority. We should note that the Veterans' Administration's enhanced-use lease authority specifically allows the Veterans' Administration to lease land and retain receipts from the lease.

In addition, the Veterans' Administration can place an option to buy in the lease, whereby the property can be sold shortly after commencement of the lease, allowing the Veterans' Administration to retain the sale proceeds. This process was used in 2005 to sell property in downtown Chicago and the Veterans' Administration realized $50 million in proceeds. All can be used to better the health care of veterans.

As important, this prohibition that is written into this earmark would result in voiding the Capital Assessment Realignment for Enhanced Services process, known as CARES, which has been agreed to by Congress and the administration. Much like BRAC, one exception could undermine the entire process that was based on veterans' needs and not on earmarked interests.

CARES is a systemwide process to put the Veterans' Administration's infrastructure to the best use for the current and future health care needs of veterans. This process was completed in May of 2004, and approved on a bipartisan basis by Congress and the administration. All medical construction budget requests since the completion of the study have complied with CARES recommendations and passed by Congress; that is, until today, if this bill passes.

The study identified 18 sites which called for downsizing or disposal but which were naturally very controversial. Consequently, it was decided each of these sites needed "further study and analysis." Some of these studies have been completed, and realignment has begun, but the West Los Angeles study is still in process.

The White House recently weighed in against this earmark, saying in its Statement of Administration Policy:

> The Administration strongly opposes the earmark provision that prohibits the disposal or transfer of property at the 388-acre West Los Angeles Medical Center. This language circumvents the recommendations in VA's nationwide infrastructure study, the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES). The original decision on this property would have allowed VA to designate a portion of the campus for disposal or leasing . . . it is likely that the restrictive Senate language would eliminate more than $4 billion of revenue, which would be used to improve facilities around the country for our Nation's veterans.

The central concerns of those opposed to the reuse of portions of the 388-acre facility seems to be that it will result in large commercial development. However, in the statement of work for the West L.A. project, the Veterans' Administration has included the following:

> Because of a commitment made by a previous Secretary of Veterans Affairs, certain reuses of the property for commercial purposes were not considered in this study. In this context, the term "commercial" [includes] . . . uses such as shopping malls, movie theaters, convenience stores, fast food outlets, industrial/manufacturing activities, and other like operations. . . .

So the Veterans' Administration is listening to the community and is considering their concerns.

In August of 2005, the Veterans' Administration issued an interim report, describing several options available for reuse of the land, but a final decision is still pending, and there is not yet a timetable as to when a decision will be made.

Two public hearings—in May and September of 2005—have taken place, and one is taking place tomorrow night at the VA Center in West L.A. We should let the process we put in place run its course and not overrule the recommendations of independent experts and the Department of Veterans Affairs who are looking out for the needs of America's veterans.

If every Member of this body were to begin blocking modernization of the VA system every time a well-connected constituent in their State complains, America's veterans would be saddled with outdated infrastructure and their health care needs would not be met.

I wish to put this earmark in perspective because it would be the most wasteful and questionable earmark we have seen since the infamous "bridge to nowhere." The "bridge to nowhere" was extremely troubling, but at its heart was only an egregious waste of taxpayer dollars. This earmark, sadly, is much worse. It takes money—$4 billion of money—which would be used to care for the brave men and women who fought for our country and turns it over to build a park for Beverly Hills. We should all be able to agree that a community with an average household income of $125,000 a year has a sufficient tax base to build a park and does not need a $4 billion handout from the Federal Government. The men and women who wore America's uniform need the money a lot more than the men and women who live in this part of L.A.

In fact, the Los Angeles Times editorialized on this situation recently, citing "the compelling demands for park space" in Beverly Hills as the best use of $4 billion. I disagree with the L.A. Times, as I often do, that $4 billion that belongs to veterans should stay with the Veterans' Administration.

Let me repeat, according to the judgment of the L.A. Times, the best use of $4 billion is a public park between Beverly Hills and Sunset Beach. This defies common sense, and we should all disagree with it.

My amendment is very simple. It would strike this language from the bill and preserve the VA's ability to make changes at this property that could generate over $4 billion for our Nation's veterans, as well as create a better facility that better serves the health care needs of our veterans. It would also preserve the integrity of the VA's process for realigning its infrastructure to meet the current and future health care needs of veterans and ensure that decisions are made according to the needs of our veterans, instead of the local desires of America's most rich and famous citizens.

I encourage my colleagues to support my amendment.

Mr. President, I would like to move that we set aside the pending amendment and that my amendment be sent to the desk and called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WEBB). No amendment is pending.

Mr. DEMINT. Then, Mr. President, I send my amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

> The Senator from South Carolina [Mr. DEMINT] proposes an amendment numbered 2686.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

> (Purpose: To strike section 225, relating to a prohibition on the disposal of Department of Veterans Affairs lands and improvements at West Los Angeles Medical Center, California)
>
> Beginning on page 44, strike line 20 and all that follows through page 45, line 23.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CANTWELL). The Senator from California is recognized.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I come to the floor to oppose the amendment just presented by Senator DEMINT. I worked very hard to get a provision in the military construction bill regarding this major piece of veterans property in the center of Los Angeles. I want to begin by thanking Senator REED and Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON for agreeing to put this legislation in the Military Construction bill. This is 388 acres—388 acres—in the middle of Los Angeles. It is bisected by Wilshire Boulevard. It is near Santa Monica Boulevard. It is a large piece of property, and on that property is a 1,000-bed veterans hospital.

The property was deeded in 1888 following the Civil War by two families to the Federal Government to be used specifically and permanently as an Old Soldiers' Home for the use of veterans. As many Members know, California has the largest number of veterans in America—over 2 million—and over 300,000 veterans are enrolled to use the facilities in this State of which this facility is prime. At the time, as the population of disabled and elderly veterans

grew following the end of the Civil War, the Government decided to respond by establishing a number of national homes throughout the United States.

In March of 1888, Senator John P. Jones and Arcadia B. de Baker donated their Santa Monica ranch lands in southern California to establish the Pacific branch of the National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers.

The deed reads very specifically:

That whereas by an act of Congress approved March 2, 1887 to provide for the location and erection of a branch home for the disabled volunteer soldiers west of the Rocky Mountains, the Board of Managers of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers were authorized, empowered, and directed to locate, establish, construct, and permanently maintain a branch of said National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers.

The sole purpose outlined in the original deed was affirmed in 2002 by then Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony Principi when he visited the site and again when he issued a May 2004 decision regarding plans for the modernization of VA facilities elsewhere.

What has happened is the administration sees this land dedicated to veterans and says: Aha, there is a higher and better use for this land. We can make $4 billion if we lease out the unbuilt-upon parts of this land. That is what they have done under the radar screen. They have leased out to an automobile rental agency. They have leased out to a Fox movie lot. This is veterans land. This is land that was deeded to veterans to be used by veterans, not to be used by Fox movies, not to be used by automobile rentals. The administration admits if they do this, they can raise $4 billion in commercial rentals from this land, thereby taking this hospital, now in its park-like setting, and encrusting it with high rise buildings along Wilshire Boulevard.

Well, let me tell my colleagues what has happened. The veterans community has risen up in Los Angeles and said: We are the largest veterans community anywhere in the Nation. You are taking land deeded to us. You are going to lease it, rent it in any way you can for this higher and best use, which is high-rise construction, and they don't like it. The neighbors don't like it. The city doesn't like it. The Board of Supervisors doesn't like it. Yesterday, the L.A. Times editorialized against it.

So this amendment is not an amendment just concocted out of my brain. This is an amendment that has been worked on for a long time, with Members of the House who represent this area and with the Military Construction Subcommittee of Appropriations. We want to preserve the integrity of the land that was originally granted for use as an Old Soldiers' Home for veterans purposes in this new modern-day era and do it in a way where we have access to the largest number of veterans anywhere in the United States.

I find it shocking that the Department of Veterans Affairs went ahead and leased parts of this land. The VA continues to this day film production on the property. It recently allowed Fox Studios to construct a set storage building there.

In 1996, a 65,000-seat NFL football stadium was proposed for the open space on the west L.A. VA until Congress stepped in and passed a resolution to prohibit the action. Once again, I have asked Congress to step in and prohibit the commercialization of this site. It should be used for veterans purposes.

So when I was in Los Angeles in August, I met with former Mayor Dick Riordan and Eli Broad to discuss various options. No decisions were made, but they have a vision for this. The important thing is that it not be commercialized; that for the financial problems of the administration, they shouldn't commercialize this land. They shouldn't sell it to the highest bidder. They shouldn't go for the highest and best use. They shouldn't build high-rise construction. I will tell my colleagues, if it happens, there will be an uprising from the neighbors in the area because this land is right off of the 405 freeway, and congestion and difficulties will result. I find it rather a crass gesture to take veterans land that is dedicated to veterans, that has a large hospital, 1,000 beds in it, that serves tens of thousands of enrolled veterans—no other city serves so many veterans—and go ahead and commercialize this site.

So what this does is stops that commercialization of the site. The California delegation is united, whether it is in the Senate or whether it is in the House. I can give my colleagues two pages—and I will give my colleagues some of them—of people supporting this legislation: the County of Los Angeles; the City of Los Angeles; Zev Yaroslavsky, chairman of the County Board of Supervisors; Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa; Representatives HENRY WAXMAN, BERMAN, HARMAN, and SHERMAN; City Council members, every one of them; State Senator Kuehl; Assemblyman Feuer, Assemblywoman Bass, Assemblywoman Brownlee; Santa Monica mayor; Santa Monica council; AMVETS Post 2; AMVETS Post 116; American Legion Post 123; VFW Post 875; Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 446; the Bel-Air Association; the Beverly Glen Association; Blair House; the Brentwood Community Council; and on and on—the Coalition for Veterans Land; the Federation of Hillside and Canyon Associations; Friends of Westwood; the Pacific Palisades. It is virtually all of west L.A. that is saying: Don't sell this land for commercial use.

What the Department has announced is that they intend to make $4 billion by selling this land. You and I know what is going to go on this land: commercial, office, high-rises because that is what you get the money from. It would be a travesty.

One of the things we now know is that traumatic brain injury is a major injury from this war. We need to build on veterans facilities, not take their land away.

So I would say, Senator DEMINT, take back this motion. It is the wrong thing to do. Administration, I know you have a statement saying you oppose the amendment, but the city of Los Angeles, the county of Los Angeles is united.

So, Madam President, I move to table the amendment, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, it is just an interesting note that the man who gave this land, the 300-plus acres, to veterans was a United States Senator at the time, John P. Jones. He actually was a Republican from the State of Nevada, and he served 30 years in the Senate, from 1873 to 1903. So he was a 50-percent owner of this land, and it was a wonderful gift to the veterans. I think it should not be destroyed. Thank you.

I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I withdraw my motion to table at this time because I know Senator BOXER is coming to the floor and wishes to address this question, and Senator DEMINT may wish to also respond, and I will remain and propose the motion at a later time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is withdrawn.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I have come over to the floor, and I am a little out of breath because this

amendment was somewhat of a surprise to me, although Senator FEINSTEIN was a little worried about it possibly coming. I am sorry Senator DEMINT isn't on the floor at this moment because I would like to look him in the eye and tell him that his amendment is misguided. It does damage to the veterans of this country and the faith they put in us.

As Senator FEINSTEIN eloquently stated, and just reiterated to me, the individual who gave this land for the veterans happened to be a Republican from Nevada who wanted to make a commitment to our veterans. So here we have a circumstance that is so bizarre because this amendment that Senator FEINSTEIN wrote, which Senator DEMINT is trying to pull out of the bill, and is now in the bill, is a very wise one. It is one that keeps faith with the veterans of this country at a time when they deserve that support.

In some ways, I say to my colleagues, we have battled many times on this floor for California and for the environment and for women's rights and all the rest. But I remember when another administration at another time tried to sell the Presidio army base for billions of dollars, when the people were promised it would be a park and it was written in legislation that it would be a park. That administration said we could get billions of dollars. But the fact is that certain things you cannot put a price on because, in the long run, it is the wrong thing to do. In the long run, it is wrong in this case to harm our veterans.

Now, here we have this land. As Senator FEINSTEIN has explained to my colleagues, it is in the middle of Los Angeles. Land is a precious commodity in Los Angeles. We have a huge number of veterans who need services in Los Angeles—maybe the highest concentration of veterans in the country. I would have to check that out, but I would not be surprised; it is certainly one of the highest concentrations. Here we are in the middle of a war and we all know the horrors our soldiers are facing. We know there are great unmet needs in the Veterans' Administration all over this country, and certainly in California. For example, we didn't even have a burn unit in California and this war has brought so many problems with serious burns.

We finally were able to accommodate some beds in San Diego for that purpose. We finally were able to accommodate some of those who have lost their limbs because they were not able to get the services in California.

This, I say to my friend, Senator DEMINT of South Carolina, is not the time, not the place, not the moment to say to our veterans: You are not important; it is more important to have a rental car agency here or a movie studio here. This is not the time to tell that to our veterans. They are sacrificing.

We may have to have a women's clinic there someday. We may want to expand services for homeless veterans. Those of us who have lived through the Vietnam era know that homelessness followed our veterans. And still when you go on the streets of our cities, whether it is San Francisco, Los Angeles, or anywhere else, you will find a third to 45 percent of our veterans are from that era. They are Vietnam-era veterans who are homeless and struggle.

We may need to have job training centers for these returning veterans. Posttraumatic stress—my senior Senator made the point that we are now learning the depth of the problems we have. Is this the time to take this land away from the veterans? It is outrageous, and it is wrong.

Senator FEINSTEIN has absolutely done the right thing in this bill. I praise all of her colleagues on the committee. I wrote to Mr. Nicholson about this issue several months ago saying: Why are you doing this? I will ask to place that letter in the RECORD in a moment.

Senator FEINSTEIN is right not only for our community in southern California but for the veterans throughout this country.

I sent a letter on June 6, 2007, on this subject to the Honorable James Nicholson, Department of Veterans Affairs. I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the letter I sent to Secretary Nicholson.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING,
Washington, DC, June 6, 2007.

Hon. R. JAMES NICHOLSON,
Department of Veterans Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY NICHOLSON: I am writing to you regarding the development of the West Los Angeles VA property and to urge you to ensure that its land and facilities are used by and for the veterans of the Los Angeles area.

I believe that two important facts should serve as the overriding guidelines for the discussion about the West LA VA property. First, as has been pointed out many times, this property is veterans' property—given to veterans, to be used by veterans—and should not in any way be viewed as excess property to be sold, leased, or used for other purposes. I oppose the use of an Enhanced Use Lease for any project at the West LA VA. It is for this reason that I fully support Congressman Waxman's and Senator Feinstein's legislative efforts to preserve the land for veterans' use.

The second important fact is that at least one million veterans reside within a 50 mile radius of the West LA VA property, more than in 42 other states combined. When we consider that this number continues to grow and that the recent additions to the veterans rolls are sometimes severely disabled, more services rather than fewer services will be needed over time. Additionally, a remarkable number of the homeless population of the area are veterans, many of whom suffer from substance abuse or mental health problems. In Los Angeles County alone, it is estimated that at least 18,000 veterans are without shelter or a place to live. A broad range of services are desperately needed for them.

As the master plan for this property is developed, many people are looking to the Department of Veterans Affairs to use this property to support veterans and their needs. The veterans of the Los Angeles area benefit greatly from the services offered there now, and it is crucial that with the increasing numbers of returning veterans it remain a facility fully committed to serving them—they deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,

BARBARA BOXER,
U.S. Senator.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I talked about the fact that at least a million veterans reside within a 50-mile radius of the west Los Angeles VA property, more than in 42 other States combined. When we consider that this number continues to grow, this is clearly the wrong thing to do.

Let me say that what my colleague has done in this bill is in concert with everyone in our area. I don't think she or I would walk in and offer an amendment that was a direct blow to a community in South Carolina. We would never do that. That would not be the right thing to do.

The community is opposed to what Mr. DEMINT wants to have happen. Local government, many veterans, from the mayor's office, to the city council, to the board of supervisors, to the full congressional delegation, there is enormous support for the provision that Senator FEINSTEIN has placed in this bill. Dozens of local veterans groups are in support of her provision.

I am going to read some of these supporters because I want to give a sense to my colleagues that they should stick with us on this issue because Senator FEINSTEIN's language that she got placed in this bill is strongly supported.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the entire list.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

County of Los Angeles; City of Los Angeles; Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors; Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa Representative Henry Waxman; Blair House; Brentwood Community Council; Brentwood Homeowners Association; Cahuenga Pass Neighborhood Association; Citizens for Veterans Rights; Coalition of Homeowner Associations-Council District 5; Coalition for Veterans Land; Federation of Hillside and Canyon Associations; Friends of Westwood; Holmby Hills Homeowners Association; Holmby Westwood Property Owners Association; Mandeville Canyon Association; Pacific Palisades Chamber of Commerce; Pacific Palisades Community Council; Pacific Palisades Residents Association.

Roscomare Valley Association; Santa Monica Canyon Civic Association; Save Westwood Village; St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Parish; Sullivan Canyon Homeowners Association; Representative Howard

Berman; Representative Jane Harman; Representative Brad Sherman; L.A. City Council President Eric Garcetti; L.A. City Council Member Jack Weiss; L.A. City Council Member Bill Rosendahl; State Senator Sheila Kuehl; Assemblyman Mike Feuer; Assemblywoman Karen Bass; Assemblywoman Julia Brownlee; Santa Monica Mayor Richard Bloom; Santa Monica Councilman Bobby Shriver; Former Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan; Former Assemblywoman Fran Pavley; AMVETS Post 2; AMVETS Post 116.

American Legion Post 123; VFW Post 875; Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 446; Bel-Air Association; Beverly Glen Association; Tract 7260 Homeowners Association; West L.A. Chamber of Commerce; West L.A. Neighborhood Council; West of Westwood Homeowners Association; Westside Neighborhood Council; Veterans Park Conservancy; Westwood Gardens Civic Association; Westwood Hills Property Owners Association; Westwood Homeowners Association; Westwood South of Santa Monica Homeowners Association.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I will name a few. The County of Los Angeles, the city of Los Angeles, Representative WAXMAN, and every other Representative from that area; HOWARD BERMAN, HARMAN, SHERMAN, the L.A. City Council president, State Senator Sheila Kuehl, all those local folks, former Los Angeles Mayor Riordan, AMVETS Post 2, AMVETS Post 116, American Legion Post 123, VFW Post 875, Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 446, and then a slew of homeowners associations, including the Coalition of Homeowner Associations Council District 5, the Coalition for Veterans Land, Friends of Westwood, and it goes on and on.

Then we have the religious community: St. Paul the Apostle Catholic parish. We have the chamber of commerce. We have the neighborhood council. It just goes on. The park conservancy, the civic association. The administration is wrong to take this action.

Senator FEINSTEIN is right. She mentioned colleagues on the committee who were very helpful to her. It is very important to note that she moved in a very bipartisan way.

In conclusion, I thank my colleague, Senator FEINSTEIN, for withdrawing her motion to table to give me this opportunity to express myself because I think what she did was so important, and certainly she spoke for both of us when she did it.

I hope she will make this motion to table at the appropriate time, and we can table this amendment and send a message tonight to the veterans across this country that we stand with them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Madam President, I join Senator FEINSTEIN and Senator BOXER in their efforts to preserve this property in west Los Angeles as a VA facility and not turn it over to developers. This is commensurate with the deed that originally granted this property to the United States back in 1888. The deed reads as follows:

Whereas, by an act of Congress approved March 2, 1887, to provide for the location and erection of a branch home for the disabled volunteer soldiers west of the Rocky Mountains, the board of managers of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers are authorized, empowered, and directed to locate, establish, construct and permanently maintain a branch of said National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers.

The purpose of this donation and the purpose that has been preserved over these many years has been to provide a place where veterans can be hospitalized, and it has become part of not only the Veterans' Administration system, it has become part of the culture of the community of Los Angeles.

The purpose of the original deed has been reaffirmed numerous times. It was reaffirmed in 2002 by then-VA Secretary Anthony Principi when he visited the site and when he issued a May 2004 decision regarding plans for the modernization of VA facilities nationwide. In fact, a document released by the VA previewing the September 6, 2005, Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services—the CARES process—of the local advisory panel meeting regarding the west L.A. VA site states the following:

It is important that the VA preserve the integrity of the land originally granted for use as an old Soldier's home.

And that is the purpose of the language included in the appropriations bill by Senator FEINSTEIN.

The CARES process was akin to the BRAC process used for the military, going around and looking at the uses of all the Veterans' Administration facilities around the country and concluding what is the best and highest purpose.

It is terribly important that the conclusion of this panel, very recently, is that it is important that the VA preserve the integrity of the land originally granted for use as an Old Soldiers' Home. That is what Senator FEINSTEIN proposes to do, and it would be undercut by the amendment of Senator DEMINT.

I join Senator FEINSTEIN and Senator BOXER as they are trying not only to preserve the integrity of this land but also to preserve the integrity of the community of west Los Angeles.

I had occasion to drive by this area, and I will stand corrected by the local geographic experts, but it is a place of open space and tranquility in a very large metropolitan area. So it is a value beyond the VA system; it is a value to the community of Los Angeles. That is why there is a huge number of supporters of this initiative by Senator FEINSTEIN and Senator BOXER: the County of Los Angeles, the city of Los Angeles, Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, chairman of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Representative WAXMAN, our colleagues in the House—all these individuals are standing shoulder to shoulder on this issue. This is consistent with the original donation of the land. It is consistent with the evaluation of the Veterans' Administration as to how they should use the land, and it is consistent with the community of Los Angeles.

I applaud and commend the Senators from California for their efforts.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I particularly thank Chairman REED for putting this provision in the bill. I am very grateful. I am also very grateful for his defense of it today.

I thank my friend and colleague, Senator BOXER, for her help on the floor, for her support, and for her continuous advocacy on behalf of California.

The bottom line is, would you sell the National Mall for profit? Would you sell Roosevelt Island for profit? Would you sell any part of the federal highway system for profit? Why would you take land that has been dedicated for veterans purposes and lease it out for profit when we know, as Senator BOXER said, we have thousands of homeless veterans, and right now there is a proposal moving forward to possibly build some homeless units for veterans on that facility?

This land was deeded to the Federal Government, a huge amount of land, for the purpose of veterans, not for Fox movie studios, not for Enterprise, or whatever car rental agency, but for veterans in a city with the largest number of veterans in the United States, and over 322,000 veterans enrolled to use that facility, with a hospital of 1,000 beds on that facility. You are going to begin to lease out that land?

I think it is terrible, just terrible. The next step would be the National Mall. We ought to resist this effort. There are a lot of ways to make money, but I think the worst way is to make money off veterans at this point in time.

I very much resist this amendment. I join with my friend and colleague, Senator BOXER, in resisting the amendment. I join with the committee chairman in resisting this amendment. I join with the ranking member of the committee in resisting this amendment. I hope there will be a very strong vote.

Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays, and I move to table the amendment.

Once again, I will withdraw my motion to table for the greater good of getting a unanimous consent agreement, I hope.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REED. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REED. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the following be the only first-degree amendments remaining in order to H.R. 2642, that they be subject to second-degree amendments which are relevant to the amendment to which it is offered, that no other amendments be in order: Feingold amendment No. 2661, Obama amendment No. 2658, McCaskill amendment No. 2660, Hutchison amendment No. 2681, Coleman amendment relating to conventions, Sanders amendment No. 2664, Tester amendment No. 2669, Salazar amendment No. 2662, Murray amendment No. 2677, Landrieu amendment No. 2679, Stabenow amendment No. 2680, Stevens/Inouye amendment No. 2682, Allard amendment relating to VA land transfer in Denver, the pending DeMint amendment, and the Brown amendment No. 2673; that when the Senate resumes consideration of the bill on Thursday, the only amendments remaining for disposition be No. 2664, No. 2662, No. 2673, and the Coleman amendment relating to conventions, and passage, with no further debate or motions in order except for debate specified in an order related to the vote sequence; that upon disposition of all amendments, the bill be read a third time and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill; that upon passage, the Senate insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses and the Chair be authorized to appoint conferees, with the previous order relating to points of order remaining in effect with respect to this bill; that upon disposition of H.R. 2642, the Senate then proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 265, H.R. 2764, the State, Foreign Operations Appropriations Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. LOTT. Reserving the right to object, if I can inquire for clarification, what this really means, then, is that we will have one vote tonight on the pending DeMint issue, and the other remaining four amendments and final passage would occur without other intervening business tomorrow morning; is that correct?

Mr. REED. That is correct.

Mr. LOTT. Thank you very much. That is basically what you just read.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mr. LOTT. And for the sake of one other issue under my reservation, I would like to ask that a quorum be put in place, just temporarily. So I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the quorum call?

Hearing no objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Is there objection to the unanimous consent request?

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I ask that one additional amendment be added to the list to be voted on tomorrow, Thursday. It would be the McConnell amendment No. 2666.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Is there objection to the request to modify?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from California is recognized.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I move to table amendment No. 2642, the DeMint amendment. If I might correct that, it is 2686, the DeMint amendment.

I move to table and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN), the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD), the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. BROWNBACK), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAIG), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 66, nays 25, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 312 Leg.]

YEAS—66

Akaka	Durbin	Murkowski
Alexander	Feinstein	Murray
Baucus	Gregg	Nelson (FL)
Bayh	Harkin	Nelson (NE)
Bingaman	Hutchison	Pryor
Bond	Inouye	Reed
Boxer	Isakson	Reid
Brown	Johnson	Roberts
Byrd	Kennedy	Rockefeller
Cantwell	Kerry	Salazar
Cardin	Klobuchar	Sanders
Carper	Kohl	Schumer
Casey	Landrieu	Smith
Cochran	Lautenberg	Snowe
Coleman	Leahy	Specter
Collins	Levin	Stabenow
Conrad	Lieberman	Stevens
Corker	Lott	Tester
Cornyn	Martinez	Warner
Dole	McCaskill	Webb
Domenici	Menendez	Whitehouse
Dorgan	Mikulski	Wyden

NAYS—25

Allard	Ensign	McConnell
Barrasso	Enzi	Sessions
Bennett	Feingold	Shelby
Bunning	Grassley	Sununu
Burr	Hagel	Thune
Chambliss	Hatch	Vitter
Coburn	Inhofe	Voinovich
Crapo	Kyl	
DeMint	Lugar	

NOT VOTING—9

Biden	Craig	Lincoln
Brownback	Dodd	McCain
Clinton	Graham	Obama

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote, and lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise to first of all say I am sure I am going to be supporting this underlying bill; military construction is such a critical component of our overall defense programs. But there is a collateral issue I would like to address for a minute. I, first of all, ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD an article from the Moody Air Force Base newspaper from February 1 of this year.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Air Force Print News Today, Feb. 1, 2007]

MOODY OPENS DOORS TO NEW HOUSING

(By Tech. Sgt. Parker Gyokeres)

MOODY AIR FORCE BASE, GA.—Team Moody celebrated the completion of the first new single family housing units with a ribbon cutting ceremony Jan. 31, at the new Magnolia Grove Housing area.

The $52 million project provides 383 three and four-bedroom homes in Magnolia Grove, each with no less than 1,630 square feet of space.

Dignitaries attending the ribbon cutting ceremony included Maj. Gen. Del Eulberg, Air Force Civil Engineer, Col. Joe Callahan, 23rd Wing commander, and leadership from American Eagle Communities LLC.

"This is a big day for the Airmen and families of Team Moody," said Colonel Callahan. "The Magnolia Grove homes are the nicest base housing units I have ever seen in the 31 years I have been living in base housing. Moody Family Housing has created a community that any Airman would be proud to live in." Moody Family Housing is a 50-year, joint public-private partnership between American Eagle Communities and the U.S. Air Force.

"The partnership is intended to improve standards of living for current and future base housing residents," said Louis Screws, 23rd Civil Engineer Squadron housing flight chief.

The homes are fully owned and maintained by American Eagle under rules agreed to in the project's transaction documents.

"The Air Force benefits because they receive quality new housing without the up-front money a military construction contract requires," said Mr. Screws. "American Eagle can use private sector financing and private resources to build these homes faster, better and more economically using local codes and standards."

The units are built with an all-metal framing system that arrives partially assembled in a kit for a single home. It takes only four days for a team of eight workers to frame an entire house, said Rich Safranic, Moody Family Housing quality assurance director.

By using all-metal construction, the materials are less expensive to transport, stronger than wood, will not burn and can be recycled easily, said Mr. Safranic.

American Eagle plans to use this construction technique for every home in Magnolia Grove, and with an average of five homes a week arriving at the site, every time-saving measure is essential, added the quality assurance inspector.

Moody Family Housing expects to hand over an average of one house a day to Air Force inspectors for certification, said Naomi Hendricks, Moody Family Housing project director. The construction on Magnolia Grove housing is scheduled to be completed this December.

The first residents of Magnolia Grove will be the 94 families currently residing in the "Courts" townhouses of the Quiet Pines housing area.These units are scheduled to be demolished as the residents are relocated. MFH will then use the land for new senior leadership housing, said Mr. Screws.

American Eagle purchased 700 acres of peanut farmland along the southern edge of Moody. There will be 383 single-family units built on 150 acres of this property. The American Eagle Communities has permanently donated approximately 200 acres to the Banks Lake Wildlife Refuge Area. The remaining 350 acres are being set aside for future base-housing growth.

"We are the first major installation to accomplish the goal of creating a new community using a privatized partnership like this," said Lowell Klepper, 23rd CES deputy base civil engineer. "Moody has been working towards this point for more than 20 years."

Mr. CHAMBLISS. I note for the record that after 4 years of work on a housing privatization contract and the millions spent, exactly two houses have been built. This article talks about a celebration at Moody Air Force base upon the completion of these two homes. The problem is, neither one of these two houses has ever been occupied, and the privatization issue at Moody has developed into a real mess.

The Air Force entered into a real estate transaction with Carabetta Enterprises Inc. for privatized housing at Moody Air Force Base. The estimated cost of the project has exceeded available funding by $25 million, and the project lender stopped funding in March of 2007 to prevent all funds from being expended. At least three other Air Force bases—Patrick Air Force base in Florida, Little Rock Air Force base in Arkansas, and Hanscom Air Force base in Massachusetts—have similar contracting delays with privatized housing projects associated with this same contractor.

Despite having declared bankruptcy in the 1990s and supposedly being embroiled in a series of previous lawsuits over Government contracts, the Carabetta organization was allowed to form a new joint entity, American Eagle Communities LLC, and has won Government contracts in five States for a total $3.3 billion. American Eagle won the $50 million contract for the Moody Air Force Base Magnolia Grove privatized housing project, hired one of its principals to be the general contractor, and now has left dozens of local subcontractors unpaid for months, resulting in numerous liens being filed, a complete lockdown of the site, and millions of dollars in unpaid bills to local subcontractors.

There has been concern that we have 1,000 new personnel who are going to be coming into Moody by 2009 under the BRAC, and this housing project is specifically designed to accommodate the influx. I have written two letters to the Air Force expressing my concern and inquiring about the delay and the intended plan of action. In response, the Air Force has said that because it has no legal agreements with the contractor, issues of nonpayment between the contractor and subcontractors must be resolved through the legal system.

That is not an acceptable answer. The Air Force is a contractor. This directly affects the quality of life of Air Force personnel at Moody Air Force Base as well as the other bases that have contracts with this particular contractor. Air Force personnel are suffering because of the poor performance of this contractor, and the Air Force should have been more proactive to fix this problem before we got to this point.

I have several questions on this issue that have yet to be answered. I am specifically asking the Air Force to answer: First, what were the factors contributing to the decision to award Carabetta Enterprises, Inc. this contract, given their known previous defaults and bankruptcy declarations? Secondly, is the Air Force currently taking steps to terminate this contract and, if so, what steps are they taking and, if not, why not? Thirdly, what is the plan for housing the incoming Air Force personnel slated to live in the new quarters at Moody Air Force base as well as the other bases that are affected by the default of this contractor?

In my opinion, this issue is also ripe for an IG investigation to figure out exactly what went wrong, why this contractor was awarded a $3.3 billion contract for privatized housing, covering five States, work on all of which has been halted.

I urge the Air Force's expeditious attention and resolution of this issue.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I wish to bring up several amendments for consideration. These amendments have been cleared on both sides of the aisle.

AMENDMENT NO. 2661

I call up amendment No. 2661 for Senator FEINGOLD regarding a VA mental health GAO report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Rhode Island [Mr. REED], for Mr. FEINGOLD, proposes an amendment numbered 2661.

Mr. REED. I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To require a report from the Comptroller General on the adequacy of mental health care services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense to female members of the Armed Forces and female veterans)

On page 50, between lines 17 and 18, insert the following:

SEC. 408. (a) ASSESSMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES FOR FEMALE SERVICEMEMBERS AND VETERANS.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct an assessment of the adequacy of the mental health care services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense to female members of the Armed Forces and female veterans to meet the mental health care needs of such members and veterans.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than September 1, 2008, the Comptroller General shall submit to the Subcommittees referred to in section 407 a report on the assessment required by subsection (a).

Mr. REED. I know of no further debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 2661) was agreed to.

Mr. REED. I move to reconsider the vote and to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2658

Mr. REED. I call up amendment No. 2658 for Senator OBAMA.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Rhode Island [Mr. REED], for Mr. OBAMA, proposes an amendment numbered 2658.

Mr. REED. I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide that none of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used to enter into a contract in an amount greater than $5,000,000 or to award a grant in excess of such amount unless the prospective contractor or grantee makes certain certifications regarding Federal tax liability)

On page 50, between lines 17 and 18, insert the following:

SEC. 408. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used to enter into a contract in an amount greater than $5,000,000 or to award a grant in excess of such amount unless the prospective contractor or grantee certifies in writing to the agency awarding the contract or grant that the contractor or grantee has filed all Federal tax returns required during the three years preceding the certification, has not been convicted of a criminal offense under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and has not been notified of any unpaid Federal tax assessment for which the liability remains unsatisfied unless the assessment is the subject of an installment agreement or offer in compromise that has been approved by the Internal Revenue Service and is not in default or the assessment is the subject of a non-frivolous administrative or judicial appeal.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Mr. REED. I know of no further debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 2658) was agreed to.

Mr. REED. I move to reconsider the vote and to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2660

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 2660 for Senator MCCASKILL regarding the VA Inspector General Web site.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Rhode Island [Mr. REED], for Mrs. MCCASKILL, proposes an amendment numbered 2660.

Mr. REED. I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide a mechanism by which individuals can report to the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs cases of waste, fraud, or abuse with respect to the Department of Veterans Affairs)

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. (a) ANONYMOUS REPORTING OF WASTE, FRAUD, OR ABUSE.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall establish and maintain on the homepage of the Internet website of the Office of Inspector General a mechanism by which individuals can anonymously report cases of waste, fraud, or abuse with respect to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) LINK TO OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL FROM HOMEPAGE OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish and maintain on the homepage of the Internet website of the Department of Veterans Affairs a direct link to the Internet website of the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there debate?

If not, the question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 2660) was agreed to.

Mr. REED. I move to reconsider the vote and to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2677

Mr. REED. I call up amendment No. 2677 for Senator MURRAY regarding the transfer of funds from the VA to the Secretary of Health and Human Services to train psychologists.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Rhode Island [Mr. REED], for Mrs. MURRAY, proposes an amendment numbered 2677.

Mr. REED. I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to transfer funds to the Secretary of Health and Human Services to train psychologists)

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. (a) AUTHORITY FOR TRANSFER OF FUNDS TO SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO TRAIN PSYCHOLOGISTS.—Upon a determination by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs that such action is in the national interest, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may transfer not more than $5,000,000 to the Secretary of Health and Human Services for the Graduate Psychology Education Program to support increased training of psychologists skilled in the treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and related disorders.

(b) LIMITATION ON USE OF TRANSFERRED FUNDS.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services may only use funds transferred under this section for the purposes described in subsection (a).

(c) NOTIFICATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall notify Congress of any such transfer of funds under this section.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there debate?

If not, the question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 2677) was agreed to.

Mr. REED. I move to reconsider the vote and to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2679

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 2679 for Senator LANDRIEU regarding a report on the progress of the veterans hospital in New Orleans.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Rhode Island [Mr. REED], for Ms. LANDRIEU, proposes an amendment numbered 2679.

Mr. REED. I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To require reports on the reconstruction of the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, New Orleans, Louisiana)

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. (a) REPORTS ON RECONSTRUCTION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER IN NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA.—(1) Not later than October 1 and April 1 each year, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations a report on the current status of the reconstruction of the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in New Orleans, Louisiana. Each report shall include the following:

(A) The current status of the reconstruction of the Medical Center, including the status of any ongoing environmental assessments, the status of any current construction, and an assessment of the adequacy of funding necessary to complete the reconstruction.

(B) If reconstruction of the Medical Center is subject to any major delay—

(i) a description of each such delay;

(ii) an explanation for each such delay; and

(iii) a description of the action being taken or planned to address the delay.

(C) A description of current and anticipated funding for the reconstruction of the Medical Center, including an estimate of any additional funding required for the reconstruction.

(2) The requirement in paragraph (1) shall cease on the day that the reconstruction of the Medical Center referred to in that paragraph is completed.

(b) REPORT ON DESIGNATION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER IN NEW ORLEANS AS POLYTRAUMA REHABILITATION CENTER OR POLYTRAUMA NETWORK SITE.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations a report setting forth the recommendation of the Secretary as to whether or not the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center being reconstructed in New Orleans, Louisiana, should be designated as a tier I polytrauma rehabilitation center or a polytrauma network site.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 2679) was agreed to.

Mr. REED. I move to reconsider the vote and to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2680

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 2680 for Senators STABENOW and LEVIN renaming a clinic located in Alpena, MI.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Rhode Island [Mr. REED], for Ms. STABENOW and Mr. LEVIN, proposes an amendment numbered 2680.

Mr. REED. I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To designate the Department of Veterans Affairs clinic located in Alpena, Michigan, as the "Lieutenant Colonel Clement C. Van Wagoner Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic")

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. LIEUTENANT COLONEL CLEMENT C. VAN WAGONER DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CLINIC.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The Department of Veterans Affairs clinic located in Alpena, Michigan, shall be known and designated as the "Lieutenant Colonel Clement C. Van Wagoner Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the Department of Veterans Affairs clinic referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Lieutenant Colonel Clement C. Van Wagoner Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic".

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there debate?

If not, the question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 2680) was agreed to.

Mr. REED. I move to reconsider the vote and to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2681

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 2681 for Senator HUTCHISON regarding a clinic lease in Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Rhode Island [Mr. REED], for Mrs. HUTCHISON, proposes an amendment numbered 2681.

Mr. REED. I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out a major medical facility lease in fiscal year 2008 in an amount not to exceed $12,000,000 to implement the recommendations outlined in the August, 2007 Study of South Texas Veterans Inpatient and Specialty Outpatient Health Care Needs)

At the appropriate place in the bill, insert:

SEC . The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out a major medical facility lease in fiscal year 2008 in an amount not to exceed $12,000,000 to implement the recommendations outlined in the August, 2007 Study of South Texas Veterans' Inpatient and Specialty Outpatient Health Care Needs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there debate?

If not, the question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 2681) was agreed to.

Mr. REED. I move to reconsider the vote and to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2669

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 2669 for Senators TESTER, BROWN, MCCASKILL, SALAZAR, JOHNSON, and BYRD regarding the VA mileage reimbursement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The Senator from Rhode Island [Mr. REED], for Mr. TESTER, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. JOHNSON, and Mr. BYRD, proposes an amendment numbered 2669.

Mr. REED. I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide, with an offset, an additional $125,000,000 for the Veterans Beneficiary Travel Program)

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. (a) ADDITIONAL AMOUNT FOR MEDICAL SERVICES.—The amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this title under the heading "MEDICAL SERVICES" is hereby increased by $125,000,000.

(b) AVAILABILITY.—Of the amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this title under the heading "MEDICAL SERVICES", as increased by subsection (a), $125,000,000 shall be available for the Veterans Beneficiary Travel Program. The amount available for the Veterans Beneficiary Travel Program under this subsection is in addition to any other amounts available for that program under this title.

(c) OFFSET.—The amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this title for the Veterans Health Administration under the heading "MEDICAL ADMINISTRATION" is hereby decreased by $125,000,000.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there debate?

If not, the question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 2669) was agreed to.

Mr. REED. I move to reconsider the vote and to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2682

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 2682 for Senators STEVENS and INOUYE regarding a VA rural health report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Rhode Island [Mr. REED], for Mr. STEVENS, for himself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. INOUYE, proposes an amendment numbered 2682.

Mr. REED. I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To require a report on access to medical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs to veterans who live in remote rural areas)

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. (a) REPORT ON ACCESS TO MEDICAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO VETERANS IN REMOTE RURAL AREAS.—Not later than six months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report setting forth the following:

(1) A description of the following:

(A) The unique challenges and costs faced by veterans in remote rural areas of contiguous and non-contiguous States when obtaining medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(B) The need to improve access to locally-administered care for veterans who reside in remote rural areas.

(C) The need to fund alternative sources of medical services—

(i) in areas where facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs are not accessible to veterans without leaving such areas; and

(ii) in cases in which receipt of medical services by a veteran in a facility of the Department requires transportation of such veteran by air due to geographic and infrastructural constraints.

(2) An assessment of the potential for increasing local access to medical services for veterans in remote rural areas of contiguous and non-contiguous States through strategic partnerships with other government and local private health care providers.

(b) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this section, the term "appropriate committees of Congress" means—

(1) the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Subcommittees referred to in section 407.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there debate?

If not, the question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 2682) was agreed to.

Mr. REED. I move to reconsider the vote and to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2688

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 2688 for Senator ALLARD regarding a land transfer to the VA.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Rhode Island [Mr. REED], for Mr. ALLARD, proposes an amendment numbered 2688.

Mr. REED. I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to modify certain instruments to allow the City of Aurora, State of Colorado, to convey to the United States certain non-Federal land to be used by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the construction of a veterans medical facility)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. (a) In this section:

(1) The term "City" means the City of Aurora, Colorado.

(2) The term "deed" means the quitclaim deed—

(A) conveyed by the Secretary to the City; and

(B) dated May 24, 1999.

(3) The term "non-Federal land" means—

(A) parcel I of the Fitzsimons Army Medical Center, Colorado; and

(B) the parcel of land described in the deed.

(4) The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(b)(1) In accordance with paragraph (2), and subject to each term and condition required under paragraph (3), to allow the City to convey to the United States the non-Federal land to be used by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the construction of a veterans medical facility, the Secretary may execute such instruments as determined by the Secretary to be necessary to modify or release any condition under which the non-Federal land would revert to the United States.

(2) In carrying out paragraph (1), with respect to the non-Federal land, the Secretary shall alter—

(A) each provision of the deed relating to a reversionary interest of the United States; and

(B) any other reversionary interest of the United States

to authorize the use of the property to include use as a veterans' facility in addition to use for recreational purposes.

(3) The Secretary shall carry out paragraph (1) subject to such terms and conditions as the Secretary determines to be necessary to protect the interests of the United States.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there debate?

If not, the question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 2688) was agreed to.

Mr. REED. I move to reconsider the vote and to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. REED. Unless my colleague has anything to say, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FORT MONMOUTH

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I would like to take a few moments to discuss an important issue with the manager of this bill, Senator REED, and with my colleague from New Jersey, Senator MENENDEZ.

Mr. REED. I am happy to discuss this issue with my colleagues from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I thank the Senator. I would like to first thank the Senator and Senator HUTCHISON for putting together a good bill. Everyone in this body agrees that we must support the men and women of the military while they are serving overseas and when they return home, and I believe this appropriations bill meets that demand.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I agree and I support this legislation as well. It will provide critical money to make sure our veterans are given the health care they deserve.

Mr. REED. I thank the Senators from New Jersey. We have no greater responsibility than to our veterans, and I am proud of the bill we were able to complete in committee and now offer on the floor.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, this bill also strengthens our military bases, providing money for military construction efforts and improvements at bases, and to support projects related to the Defense Base Realignment and Closure Act of 2005, known as BRAC. While I support strengthening our bases and their overall infrastructure, some disturbing information has come to light about the BRAC process and the closing of the Fort Monmouth Army base in New Jersey since our Appropriations Committee completed work on this bill that warrants our immediate attention.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, fighting wars involves not just the men and women on the ground overseas but also dedicated workers here at home. It depends on the training and research done at military bases like Fort Monmouth. Fort Monmouth provides intelligence and reconnaissance support for our Armed Forces, making them more effective fighters and protecting their lives.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Fort Monmouth researchers also develop critical technology for our Armed Forces, such as "Warlock Jammers," which were engineered at Fort Monmouth and modified for use in Iraq. This equipment emits radio frequencies that interfere with the signals that set off improvised explosive devices known as IEDs. The military was able to deploy them within 60 days of their development, and they started saving American lives.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I agree that great work has been done at Fort Monmouth to support our military and it deserves recognition. Fort Monmouth has played an important role in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the men and women working there are to be commended.

Mr. MENENDEZ. The BRAC Commission knew about that important work and wanted to make sure our troops in the field would not be harmed by closing the base. They included a requirement that the Secretary of Defense issue a report to Congress proving that "movement of organizations, functions, or activities from Fort Monmouth to Aberdeen Proving Ground will be accomplished without disruption of their support to the Global War on Terrorism."

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Yet more than 2 years after the BRAC Commission vote, the administration has failed to produce this report. To make matters worse, the Army is trying to move personnel out of Fort Monmouth now, before it has even considered the effect on our Armed Forces. Before the Army starts to shift work out of Fort Monmouth, we need to know that it won't hurt our troops.

Mr. MENENDEZ. When we raised concerns about this to the Army, it halted the transfer and our understanding was that the Army would wait until the report required by BRAC was completed. But now the Army has reversed course and plans to start transferring people soon.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. This is simply unacceptable. No personnel should be transferred out of Fort Monmouth until the Department of Defense has submitted the report to Congress proving that the closure of Fort Monmouth will not hurt troops in the field.

Mr. REED. I thank the Senator for his thoughts. It is my understanding that the Army plans to issue a report on Fort Monmouth by the end of the year. I can also assure my colleagues from New Jersey that the Senate Armed Services Committee as the authorizing committee will continue its oversight of the BRAC process.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise to offer for the RECORD, the Budget Committee's official scoring of H.R. 2642, the Military Construction and Department of Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2008.

The bill, as reported by the Senate Committee on Appropriations, provides $64.745 billion in discretionary budget authority for fiscal year 2008, which will result in new outlays of $38.327 billion. When outlays from prior-year budget authority are taken into account, discretionary outlays for the bill will total $55.001 billion.

The Senate-reported bill is at its section 302(b) allocation for budget authority and $20 million below its allocation for outlays. No points of order lie against the committee-reported bill.

I commend the distinguished chairman of the Military Construction and Department of Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee for bringing this legislation before the Senate. I ask unanimous consent that the table displaying the Budget Committee scoring of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

H.R. 2642, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS, 2008

[Spending comparisons—Senate reported bill (in millions of dollars)]

	Defense	General purpose	Total
Senate-Reported Bill:			
Budget Authority	21,556	43,189	64,745
Outlays	13,302	41,699	55,001
Senate 302(b) allocation:			
Budget Authority			64,745
Outlays			55,021
House-passed bill:			
Budget Authority	21,371	43,374	64,745
Outlays	13,259	41,573	54,832
President's Request:			
Budget Authority	22,071	38,672	60,743
Outlays	13,264	39,120	52,384
Senate-Reported Bill Compared To:			
Senate 302(b) allocation:			
Budget Authority			0
Outlays			−20
House-passed bill:			
Budget Authority	185	−185	0
Outlays	43	126	169
President's Request:			
Budget Authority	−515	4,517	4,002
Outlays	38	2,579	2,617

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I express my strong support for the level of funding provided for the Department of Veterans Affairs in the pending Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill for fiscal year 2008. I also take this opportunity to congratulate Senators REED, BYRD, and the other members of the committee for their hard work on this measure.

This bill truly reflects our commitment to fully fund veterans' health care and benefits. Indeed, the bill before us closely tracks the level of funding recommended by the Veterans' Affairs Committee in our Views and Estimates to the Budget Committee. This legislation would provide a $6.5 billion increase for VA health care over last year, $3.6 billion more than the President requested. This represents the largest increase in funding ever for VA health care. I am very pleased that there are additional funds included in this amount for the treatment of traumatic brain injuries, TBI, and for VA mental health programs, to treat the "invisible wounds" that many veterans suffer from after serving in combat. These are two areas of vital importance to servicemembers returning from Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

I also thank the Military Construction-VA Appropriations Subcommittee members for their support of the VA Office of Inspector General. The $16 million increase for the OIG will enable that office to continue conducting extremely valuable oversight of VA. The VA inspector general has consistently been vitally important to the Veterans' Affairs Committee in the execution of our oversight responsibilities. The OIG is the central gear in VA's internal controls and quality assurance mechanism.

I would like to take this opportunity to raise the issue of Priority 8—so-called middle-income—veterans and their current exclusion from the VA health care system. The majority members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, in our Views and Estimates, endorsed re-opening enrollment to these veterans. That recommendation was followed. The omnibus health care authorization bill recently reported out by the Veterans' Affairs Committee contains a provision that would allow these veterans back into VA. We would fully allow the VA Secretary to close enrollment off at any time. It is my view that adequate funding to reopen enrollment exists.

I want to also express my strong support for the $21.5 billion in funding for military construction projects included in this bill. This bill fully funds the administration's request for BRAC and the President's Grow the Force Initiative. It also includes the much needed funding necessary to repair and maintain the military facilities that are so critically important to the readiness and well-being of the Armed Forces. I am particularly in support of the bill's inclusion of $929 million for National Guard and Reserve construction. We have asked our National Guard and Reserve troops to commit significant sacrifices for this Nation and we should be prepared to provide these brave men and women the support they need to fulfill their duties.

I thank Senator REED and the other subcommittee members for their work on this bill and for sending the right message to both our Nation's veterans and those currently serving. We have made a commitment to providing support both before and after active service, and this measure honors that commitment. I urge my colleagues to support swift passage of the legislation before us today.

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about a critical issue regarding Iraq and Afghanistan veterans' health care needs. America's Armed Forces are sustaining attacks by rocket-propelled grenades, improvised explosive devices, and land mines almost daily in Iraq and Afghanistan. These injured soldiers require specialized care from providers experienced in treating their unique health challenges. These blast injuries result from the complex pressure waves generated by an explosion. Air-filled organs such as the ear, lung, and other organs surrounded by fluid-filled cavities such as the brain and spinal cord are especially susceptible.

Earlier this year, I visited with a soldier named Mack Richards who sustained blast wounds to his wrist and ankle in Iraq, as well as traumatic brain injury, or TBI. This soldier recounted to me his difficulty and frustration in receiving treatment for his brain injury. He was left at an army base far from home for months before he was sent back to his family and finally received therapy from our local rehabilitation facility.

Congress has been assured that veterans with brain and other complex injuries are able to access the specialized treatment they need. However, Mack's story is not unique, and I think the time has come to question what role the underutilized capacity in civilian rehab can play. That is not to devalue VA efforts and the great facilities the VA has to offer, but to ask how civilian providers can complement VA facilities and improve the care afforded our veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

The large numbers of traumatic brain injury survivors returning home from war highlights the need to leverage all of the resources available to us for the successful treatment and rehabilitation of our injured troops. Tapping into existing civilian TBI research and treatment capacity can help improve outcomes and supplement the care systems being developed at both the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

This is an issue which I know can stir up sensitivities given the diversity of our veteran population. I want to make it clear that I am fully committed, as are many of my colleagues, to ensuring the VA has the resources and strength to offer sustainable and top quality care for every American veteran. That said, the public and civilian sectors must come together to meet the needs of our newest generation of wounded warriors. This is not unprecedented. In the past, the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs have contracted with civilian clinicians and providers to make up the TBI continuum of care.

The VA has shown tremendous effort in addressing the needs of our returning troops, given the enormous challenges we face. However, I believe the large volume of returning veterans with increasingly complex health care needs require an increasingly dynamic approach to better serve those who have given so much for our country. The need for timely treatment and immediate rehabilitation expertise and capacity requires additional resources and flexibility for the VA to form partnerships to ensure top notch care for our service personnel. And, if this care can be provided closer to veterans' community and family support networks, then it is a win-win as families can be kept together and servicemembers can more easily transition back into their daily routines.

I have included language in this bill requesting the Department of Veterans Affairs to report to Congress on the conditions and criteria used for contracting with civilian rehabilitation providers, and outreach efforts being conducted to inform veterans and those who advocate on their behalf about such treatment options. I look forward to working with the VA and my colleagues to make sure our veterans have access to the care their sacrifices and personal injuries require.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT JON BONNELL, JR.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I speak today with great sorrow as we have lost a great American. A Fort Dodge native, Marine Sergeant Jon "J.J." Bonnell died while serving his country in Iraq on August 7, 2007. Sergeant Bonnell stepped on a roadside bomb while on duty between Baghdad and Fallujah. He was part of the 1st Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, based in Camp Pendleton CA. My prayers and deepest sympathy go out to J.J.'s parents, Jon Bonnell, Sr., and Denise Rork, as well as to his 3 sisters and all his family and friends. I also wish to express my sympathy to the community of Fort Dodge, who not only lost a fine young man, but an exemplary soldier.

J.J. will be remembered fondly and missed dearly. Only 22 years old, multiple students at Fort Dodge Senior High School referred to J.J. as a "hero," a label he greatly deserves. Making the ultimate sacrifice, J.J. deserves the gratitude of every American. An uncle described J.J. by saying "He loved doing what he did, and he gave the ultimate sacrifice. He said he was ready for the ultimate sacrifice." This speaks volumes for J.J.'s character, and we as Iowans and Americans are fortunate and honored to have a man with J.J.'s devotion and dedication serving our Nation.

J.J. enlisted in the Marine Corps as a senior in high school in 2003. He assisted victims of the 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia after his first tour in Iraq. A deeply dedicated marine, his grandmother recounted that J.J. "thought all the marines were heroes." On behalf of all Iowans, I offer my most sincere appreciation for J.J.'s service to our Nation. I ask my colleagues in the Senate, and every American, to take a moment and remember with honor and gratitude the ultimate sacrifice of a true patriot, Sgt. Jon Bonnell, Jr.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO THE EASTERN KENTUCKY CONCENTRATED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM, INCORPORATED

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, Incorporated, EKCEP, for their recent accomplishments at the 2007 Workforce Innovations Conference.

The 2007 Workforce Innovations Conference provides the opportunity for State and local government officials, workforce and economic development officials, as well as private sector representatives to assemble and discuss new ideas about workforce development issues. During this conference, Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program's Coal Services Program was awarded the U.S. Department of Labor's Recognition of Excellence Award for "Leveraging the Power of e3 Partnerships." The U.S. Labor Department's Employee and Training Administration presents Recognition of Excellence honors in five different categories. The e3 partnerships category presents value in projects that demonstrate sustained partnerships between employers, educators, and economic development leaders.

The EKCEP's Coal Services Program uses a variety of services that tackle the needs of employers and job seekers, such as crucial training for new coal miners and seasoned miners who need new training to increase mine productivity. Training is easily accessible for miners through Kentucky Community and Technical College System locations as well as a mobile miner training unit equipped with a high-tech classroom that features a computerized three-dimensional mining simulator.

I now ask my fellow colleagues to join me in congratulating the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program for their achievements and commitment in helping Kentucky's largest industry and our Nation's largest energy source.•

TRIBUTE TO ALEX SOTO

• Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, today I congratulate Mr. Alex Soto as he nears the end of his term as the 102nd president of the Nation's largest insurance association, the Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America, IIABA. Mr. Soto was elected to the IIABA's executive committee in 2001 and was installed as the association's president last September.

Founded in 1896, IIABA, or the Big "I" as it is better known, is the Nation's oldest and largest association of independent insurance agents and brokers, representing a network of more than 300,000 agents, brokers, and their employees. During his term as president of the Big "I," Alex Soto has been a leader on a number of issues for the association including natural disaster insurance, regulatory reform, and producer compensation. He is a national leader on enhancement and enforcement of building codes, which is an important issue in our home State of Florida. Notably, as chairman of the National Branding Committee and president of the IIABA, Alex devoted significant time and energy to the development and promotion of the "Trusted Choice" brand for independent agents. Thanks to his leadership, the Trusted Choice initiative has successfully created a distinctive mark that conveys the virtues of the independent agent insurance delivery system.

Alex Soto is also a great American success story. He came to the United States as a political refugee after fleeing communist Cuba in 1960 at the age of 11. When he arrived in this country, he did not speak any English and had to completely start over, learning the language, customs, and assimilating. Alex has gone on to achieve numerous accomplishments and is now the president of InSource, Inc., a successful and growing independent agency in Miami. He holds a degree in international affairs from Florida State University, the Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriter, CPCU, designation, and the Associate in Risk Management, ARM, designation. Alex has served as the chairman of the Florida Association of Insurance Agents, FAIA, and before that, as president of the Independent Insurance Agents of Dade County. He was vice chairman of the Florida Property Casualty Joint Underwriting Association, FPCJUA, in 1995–1996, as well as a member of the Governor's Commission on the Florida Insurance Crisis in 1993, and the Insurance Fraud Task Force in 1997.

In addition, Alex is active in his community. He has taught numerous insurance courses with the FAIA and at the University of Miami. He also serves as a trustee of the Archdiocese of Miami Trust. He was a member of St. Hugh Catholic Church Parish Council and a member of the Grove Outreach Center.

I sincerely thank Alex Soto for his work with the IIABA over the years and for his commitment to his profession, his community, and our State of Florida. His efforts are greatly appreciated. I am proud to count Alex as both a constituent and a friend. I wish him, his wife Patt, and their family all the best in their future endeavors.•

TRIBUTE IN HONOR OF MACDONALD GALLION

• Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to MacDonald Gallion, who passed away on Saturday, August 11, 2007. For 13 years, MacDonald Gallion served as Alabama's attorney general. He was a personal friend of mine and along with the entire State of Alabama, I mourn his passing.

Born in Montgomery and raised in Birmingham, MacDonald Gallion moved to Tuscaloosa in the 1930s to attend the University of Alabama. While at the university, MacDonald Gallion studied law and subsequently received his bachelor of law degree in 1937. That same year, he returned to Birmingham where he began his law practice.

In 1941, following the start of World War II, MacDonald Gallion took a leave of absence from his law practice to enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps. He served his country with great valor, witnessing extreme combat in the South Pacific. While serving abroad, he was wounded at Saipan and was later awarded a Purple Heart. He received several other honors for courage and returned to the United States as first lieutenant.

Upon his return from war, MacDonald Gallion relocated to Montgomery to serve as assistant attorney general for the State of Alabama. However, after several years, he resigned to return to private practice.

Later, MacDonald Gallion would again be called to serve his State. He was appointed special counsel to Governor Gordon Persons during the historic Phenix City Trials and was asked in 1955 to serve as chief assistant attorney general to Attorney General John M. Patterson. In 1958, MacDonald Gallion was elected to serve as attorney general for the State of Alabama. He would again be elected to this position in 1966.

MacDonald Gallion served two terms as Alabama's attorney general. During his tenure, MacDonald Gallion led successful litigation in several significant cases including one that established Alabama's offshore oil and gas rights. This historic ruling would later pave the way for the State's multimillion-dollar trust fund. He also led the successful litigation against loansharks. At the time, this was the largest litigation of its kind in the United States.

Active in his community, MacDonald Gallion was a member of many civic organizations and legal associations. He held the position of assistant editor at the Alabama Lawyer and was listed among the "Who's Who in America." He was instrumental in the founding of the Alabama District Attorney's Association. For his many accomplishments and contributions to Alabama, MacDonald Gallion was inducted into the Alabama Senior Citizens Hall of Fame.

MacDonald Gallion will be missed by his son Thomas Travis Gallion III, and his daughter Mallory Gallion Bear. He will be remembered for his dedication and decades of service to the State of Alabama. I ask the entire Senate to join me in recognition of the life of MacDonald Gallion.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:49 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agrees to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2358) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint and issue coins in commemoration of Native Americans and the important contributions made by Indian tribes and individual Native Americans to the development of the United States and the history of the United States, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House disagrees to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2669) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to section 601 of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2008, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon.

Ordered, that Messrs. GEORGE MILLER of California, ANDREWS, SCOTT of Virginia, HINOJOSA, TIERNEY, WU, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Messrs. DAVIS of Illinois, BISHOP of New York, Ms. HIRONO, Messrs. ALTMIRE, YARMUTH, COURTNEY, MCKEON, KELLER of Florida, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Ms. FOXX, Messrs. KUHL of New York, WALBERG, SOUDER, EHLERS, Mrs. BIGGERT, and Mr. PRICE of Georgia, be managers of the conference on the part of the House.

The message further announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 23. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish the Merchant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund to provide benefits to certain individuals who served in the United States merchant marine (including the Army Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service) during World War II.

H.R. 694. An act to establish a digital and wireless network technology program, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2850. An act to provide for the implementation of a Green Chemistry Research and Development Program, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2992. An act to amend the Small Business Act to improve trade programs, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3020. An act to amend the Small Business Act to improve the Microloan program, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 377. An act to establish a United States-Poland parliamentary youth exchange program, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 196. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the Rotunda and grounds of the Capitol for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

At 6:00 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the following resolution:

H. Res. 632. Resolution relative to the death of the Honorable Paul E. Gillmor, a Representative, from the State of Ohio.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 23. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish the Merchant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund to provide benefits to certain individuals who served in the United States merchant marine (including the Army Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service) during World War II; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

H.R. 2850. An act to provide for the implementation of a Green Chemistry Research and Development Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 2992. An act to amend the Small Business Act to improve trade programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

H.R. 3020. An act to amend the Small Business Act to improve the Microloan program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

MEASURES DISCHARGED

The following measure was discharged from the Committee on Foreign Relations, and referred as indicated:

S.J. Res. 17. A joint resolution directing the United States to initiate international discussions and take necessary steps with other Nations to negotiate an agreement for managing migratory and transboundary fish stocks in the Arctic Ocean; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bills were read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 2419. An act to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3221. An act moving the United States toward greater energy independence and security, developing innovative new technologies, reducing carbon emissions, creating green jobs, protecting consumers, increasing clean renewable energy production, and modernizing our energy infrastructure, and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for the production of renewable energy and energy conservation.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-2890. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Technology), transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report on the Mentor-Protege Program for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-2891. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting,

pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; South Carolina: Revisions to Ambient Air Quality Standards" (FRL No. 8457-2) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2892. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Pyriproxyfen; Pesticide Tolerance" (FRL No. 8142-4) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2893. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revisions to Consolidated Federal Air Rule" (FRL No. 8459-5) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2894. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revisions to the California State Implementation Plan, South Coast Air Quality Management District" (FRL No. 8452-1) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2895. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revisions to the California State Implementation Plan, Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District and San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Technical Amendment" (FRL No. 8458-9) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2896. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Two Optional Methods for Relative Accuracy Test Audits of Mercury Monitoring Systems Installed on Combustion Flue Gas Streams and Several Amendments to Related Mercury Monitoring Provisions" (FRL No. 8459-8) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2897. A communication from the Acting Deputy Director, Endangered Species Program, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Final Rule to Remove the Idaho Springsnail From the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife" (RIN1018-AU66) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2898. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for Catesbaea Melanocarpa" (RIN1018-AU76) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2899. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for Hine's Emerald Dragonfly" (RIN1018-AU74) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2900. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Connecticut; Establishment of Interim Progress for the Annual Fine Particle National Ambient Air Quality Standard" (FRL No. 8461-5) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2901. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Flusilazole; Pesticide Tolerances for Emergency Exemptions" (FRL No. 8138-6) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2902. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Flutriafol; Time-Limited Pesticide Tolerance" (FRL No. 8135-6) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2903. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Propylene Oxide; Pesticide Tolerance" (FRL No. 8143-9) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2904. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Spinosad; Pesticide Tolerance" (FRL No. 8142-1) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2905. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; State of Colorado; Revised Denver and Longmont Carbon Monoxide Maintenance Plans, and Approval of Related Revisions" (FRL No. 8453-5) received on August 16, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2906. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Arizona-Phoenix PM-10 Nonattainment Area; Salt River Area Plan for Attainment of the 24-hour PM-10 Standard" (FRL No. 8446-1) received on August 16, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2907. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Idaho and Washington; Interstate Transport of Pollution; Withdrawal of Direct Final Rule" (FRL No. 8456-3) received on August 16, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2908. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of State Plan for Designated Facilities and Pollutants: Louisiana; Clean Air Mercury Rule" (FRL No. 8455-3) received on August 16, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2909. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Arkansas: Final Authorization of State Hazardous Waste Management Program Revision" (FRL No. 8455-5) received on August 16, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2910. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Buprofezin; Pesticide Tolerance; Technical Correction" (FRL No. 8140-9) received on August 16, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2911. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Cis-isomer of 1-(3-chloroallyl)-3,5,7-triaza-1-azoniaadamantane chloride; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance" (FRL No. 8122-3) received on August 16, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2912. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fipronil; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 8142-6) received on August 16, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2913. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Lambda-Cyhalothrin; Pesticide Tolerance" (FRL No. 8143-1) received on August 16, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2914. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Louisiana: Final Authorization of State Hazardous Waste Management Program Revision" (FRL No. 8455-9) received on August 16, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2915. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "New Mexico: Final Authorization of State Hazardous Waste Management Program Revision" (FRL No. 8455-6) received on August 16, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2916. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office

of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Zucchini Yellow Mosaic Virus-Weak Strain; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance" (FRL No. 8137-9) received on August 16, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2917. A communication from the Chairman, U.S. International Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled, "The Year in Trade 2006"; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2918. A communication from the Chairman, Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled, "2007 Data Book: Healthcare Spending and the Medicare Program"; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2919. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Office of Financial Management, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Medicaid Program and State Children's Health Insurance Program; Payment Error Rate Measurement" ((RIN0938-AN77) (Docket No. CMS-6026-F)) received on August 31, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2920. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Medicare Program, Hospice Wage Index For Fiscal Year 2008" ((RIN0938-AO72) (Docket No. CMS-1539-F)) received on August 31, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2921. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Medicare Program; Physicians' Referrals to Health Care Entities With Which They Have Financial Relationships" ((RIN0938-AK67) (Docket No. CMS-1810-F)) received on August 31, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2922. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Section 1045 Application to Partnerships" ((RIN1545-BC67) (TD 9353)) received on August 17, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2923. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Expenses for Household and Dependent Care Services Necessary for Gainful Employment" ((RIN1545-BB86) (TD 9354)) received on August 17, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2924. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Disregarded Entities; Employment and Excise Taxes" ((RIN1545-BE43) (TD 9356)) received on August 17, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2925. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Transaction of Interest—Contribution of Successor Member Interest" (Notice 2007-72) received on August 17, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2926. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Regulations Under Section 6655 Regarding Estimated Tax Payments by Corporations" ((RIN1545-AY22) (TD 9347)) received on August 7, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2927. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Weighted Average Interest Rate Update" (Notice 2007-68) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2928. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Elimination of Country-by-Country Reporting to Shareholders of Foreign Taxes Paid by Regulated Investment Companies" (TD 9357) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2929. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Examination and Closing Procedures for Form 8697, Look-Back Interest" (LMSB-04-0207-048) received on August 16, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2930. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Modification of Notice 2003-81" (Notice 2007-71) received on August 16, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2931. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "2007 National Pool" (Rev. Proc. 2007-55) received on August 16, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2932. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Biotech Industry Overview Guide" (LMSB-04-0207-019) received on August 16, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2933. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Notice on Low Normal Retirement Age" (Notice 2007-69) received on August 16, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2934. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revenue Procedure: Examination of Returns and Claims for Refund, Credit, or Abatement; Determination of Tax Liability" (Rev. Proc. 2007-58) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2935. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Food Industry Overview Guide" (LMSB-04-0207-018) received on August 16, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2936. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Domestic Production Deduction Industry Director Directive" (LMSB-04-0707-049) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2937. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Clarification of Section 6411 Regulations" ((RIN1545-BF66) (TD 9355)) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2938. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Pharmaceutical Industry Overview Guide" (LMSB-04-0207-010) received on August 16, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2939. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Update to Notice 2006-89—Section 906 of the Pension Protection Act of 2006" (Notice 2007-67) received on August 16, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2940. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Update of Rev. Rul. 94-62" (Rev. Rul. 2007-58) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2941. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Applicable Federal Rates—September 2007" (Rev. Rul. 2007-57) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2942. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the certification of a proposed agreement for the transfer of hardware, technical data, and defense services to Canada for the NIMIQ 5/6/5R Satellites Program; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-2943. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, two agreements between the American Institute in Taiwan and American organizations; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-2944. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2007-161—2007-180); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-2945. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the certification of a proposed technical assistance agreement for the export of technical data, defense services and defense articles relating to the maintenance of the C-130 fleet of Saudi Arabia; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-2946. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the certification of a proposed license for the export of technical data, defense services and defense articles for the manufacture of 25MM Turrets for Kuwait; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–2947. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the certification of a proposed technical assistance agreement for the export of technical data, defense services and defense articles to support repair and modification of Singapore's AH–64D helicopters; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–2948. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the effectiveness of UN efforts to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse in its peacekeeping missions; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–2949. A communication from the Secretary of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Joint Strategic Plan of the Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development for fiscal years 2007 to 2012; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–2950. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendments to Civil Penalties under ERISA Section 502(c)(7)" (RIN1210–AB23) received on August 11, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2951. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination Obligations of Contractors and Subcontractors Regarding Disabled Veterans, Recently Separated Veterans, Other Protected Veterans, and Armed Forces Service Medal Veterans" (RIN1215–AB46) received on August 11, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2952. A communication from the Deputy Director, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Valuing and Paying Benefits" (29 CFR Parts 4022 and 4044) received on August 8, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2953. A communication from the Human Resources Specialist,. Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a nomination for the position of Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, received on August 3, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2954. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report of the Office of Civil Rights for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2955. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Department's inventory of inherently governmental and commercial activities for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2956. A communication from the Acting White House Liaison, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2957. A communication from the Acting White House Liaison, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of the designation of an acting officer for the position of Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2958. A communication from the White House Liaison, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a vacancy and nomination for the position of Assistant Secretary for Children and Families, received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2959. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, the District of Columbia's Budget Request Act for fiscal year 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–2960. A communication from the Director, Strategic Human Resources Policy Division, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "5 CFR Part 990" (RIN3206–AJ97) received on August 8, 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–2961. A communication from the Director, Strategic Human Resources Policy Division, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Extension of Eligibility for Presidential Rank Awards to Employees in Senior-Level and Scientific-Professional Positions" (RIN3206–AJ65) received on August 8, 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–2962. A communication from the District of Columbia Auditor, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled, "Letter Report: Audit of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3C for Fiscal Years 2005 through 2007, as of March 31, 2007"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–2963. A communication from the District of Columbia Auditor, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled, "Letter Report: Audit of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D for Fiscal Years 2005 Through 2007, as of March 31, 2007"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–2964. A communication from the District of Columbia Auditor, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled, "Letter Report: Audit of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6B for Fiscal Years 2005 Through 2007, as of March 31, 2007"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–2965. A communication from the District of Columbia Auditor, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled, "Letter Report: Audit of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4A for Fiscal Years 2005 through 2007, as of March 31, 2007"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–2966. A communication from the General Counsel, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, (2) reports relative to vacancy announcements within the Department, received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–2967. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Emergency Management Agency Touhy Regulations" ((RIN1660–AA54) (Docket No. FEMA–2007–0006)) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–2968. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a nomination for the position of Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs and Chief Medical Officer, received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–2969. A communication from the Attorney General, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2007 to 2012; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–2970. A communication from the Under Secretary of Commerce (Intellectual Property), transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Changes to Practice for Continued Examination Filings, Patent Applications Containing Patentably Indistinct Claims, and Examination of Claims in Patent Applications" ((RIN0651–AB93) (RIN0651–AB94)) received on August 8, 2007; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–2971. A communication from the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Bureau of Justice Assistance's annual report for fiscal year 2005; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–2972. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Diversion Control, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Elimination of Exemptions for Chemical Mixtures Containing the List I Chemicals Ephedrine and/or Pseudoephedrine" (RIN1117–AB11) received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–2973. A communication from the Deputy White House Liaison, U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Indiana, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a vacancy and the designation of an acting officer for the position of Acting U.S. Attorney, received on August 27, 2007; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. LEAHY, from the Committee on the Judiciary, without amendment:

S. 376. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to improve the provisions relating to the carrying of concealed weapons by law enforcement officers, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 110–150).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. MENENDEZ:

S. 2018. A bill to allow the Department of Housing and Urban Development to better serve persons with limited proficiency in the English language by providing technical assistance to recipients of Federal funds; to

the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mrs. HUTCHISON (for herself and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 2019. A bill to prohibit the imposition and collection of tolls on certain highways constructed using Federal funds; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. REID, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. BAYH, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. BOND, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. BURR, Mr. BYRD, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. COBURN, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. COLEMAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. CORKER, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DEMINT, Mr. DODD, Mrs. DOLE, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. ENZI, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. GREGG, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. HATCH, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KERRY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. KOHL, Mr. KYL, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. LOTT, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. MIKULSKI, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. REED, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. SMITH, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. SPECTER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. SUNUNU, Mr. TESTER, Mr. VITTER, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. WARNER, Mr. WEBB, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. Res. 306. A resolution concerning the return of Senator Tim Johnson; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. ISAKSON (for himself and Mr. SALAZAR):

S. Res. 307. A resolution supporting efforts to increase childhood cancer awareness, treatment, and research; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CHAMBLISS (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mrs. LINCOLN):

S. Res. 308. A resolution congratulating the Warner Robins American Little League team of Warner Robins, Georgia, for winning the championship game of the Little League World Series; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 156

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 156, a bill to make the moratorium on Internet access taxes and multiple and discriminatory taxes on electronic commerce permanent.

S. 367

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 367, a bill to amend the Tariff Act of 1930 to prohibit the import, export, and sale of goods made with sweatshop labor, and for other purposes.

S. 604

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) were added as cosponsors of S. 604, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to limit increases in the certain costs of health care services under the health care programs of the Department of Defense, and for other purposes.

S. 626

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mrs. HUTCHISON) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUYE) were added as cosponsors of S. 626, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for arthritis research and public health, and for other purposes.

S. 630

At the request of Mr. COLEMAN, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 630, a bill to amend part C of title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for a minimum payment rate by Medicare Advantage organizations for services furnished by a critical access hospital and a rural health clinic under the Medicare program.

S. 651

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 651, a bill to help promote the national recommendation of physical activity to kids, families, and communities across the United States.

S. 714

At the request of Mr. AKAKA, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 714, a bill to amend the Animal Welfare Act to ensure that all dogs and cats used by research facilities are obtained legally.

S. 725

At the request of Mr. LEVIN, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH) were added as cosponsors of S. 725, a bill to amend the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990 to reauthorize and improve that Act.

S. 772

At the request of Mr. KOHL, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 772, a bill to amend the Federal antitrust laws to provide expanded coverage and to eliminate exemptions from such laws that are contrary to the public interest with respect to railroads.

S. 790

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 790, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to permit the simplified summer food programs to be carried out in all States and by all service institutions.

S. 807

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 807, a bill to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act of 1980 to provide that manure shall not be considered to be a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

S. 911

At the request of Mr. COLEMAN, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 911, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to advance medical research and treatments into pediatric cancers, ensure patients and families have access to the current treatments and information regarding pediatric cancers, establish a population-based national childhood cancer database, and promote public awareness of pediatric cancers.

S. 935

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 935, a bill to repeal the requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan by veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation, and for other purposes.

S. 968

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 968, a bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to provide increased assistance for the prevention, treatment, and control of tuberculosis, and for other purposes.

S. 988

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 988, a bill to extend the termination date for the exemption of returning workers from the numerical limitations for temporary workers.

S. 1060

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WEBB) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1060, a bill to reauthorize the grant program for reentry of offenders into the community in the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, to improve reentry planning and implementation, and for other purposes.

S. 1107

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1107, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to reduce cost-sharing under part D of such

title for certain non-institutionalized full-benefit dual eligible individuals.

S. 1239

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1239, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the new markets tax credit through 2013, and for other purposes.

S. 1246

At the request of Mr. LIEBERMAN, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1246, a bill to establish and maintain a wildlife global animal information network for surveillance internationally to combat the growing threat of emerging diseases that involve wild animals, such as bird flu, and for other purposes.

S. 1251

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1251, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the tax treatment of horses, and for other purposes.

S. 1306

At the request of Mr. OBAMA, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1306, a bill to direct the Consumer Product Safety Commission to classify certain children's products containing lead to be banned hazardous substances.

S. 1310

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1310, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for an extension of increased payments for ground ambulance services under the Medicare program.

S. 1338

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1338, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for a two-year moratorium on certain Medicare physician payment reductions for imaging services.

S. 1374

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1374, a bill to assist States in making voluntary high quality full-day prekindergarten programs available and economically affordable for the families of all children for at least 1 year preceding kindergarten.

S. 1416

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1416, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the deduction for mortgage insurance premiums.

S. 1451

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1451, a bill to encourage the development of coordinated quality reforms to improve health care delivery and reduce the cost of care in the health care system.

S. 1459

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1459, a bill to strengthen the Nation's research efforts to identify the causes and cure of psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis, expand psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis data collection, study access to and quality of care for people with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis, and for other purposes.

S. 1484

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1484, a bill to amend part B of title XVIII of the Social Security Act to restore the Medicare treatment of ownership of oxygen equipment to that in effect before enactment of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005.

S. 1551

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1551, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to making progress toward the goal of eliminating tuberculosis, and for other purposes.

S. 1555

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1555, a bill to establish certain duties for pharmacies to ensure provision of Food and Drug Administration-approved contraception, and for other purposes.

S. 1627

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1627, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend and expand the benefits for businesses operating in empowerment zones, enterprise communities, or renewal communities, and for other purposes.

S. 1651

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1651, a bill to assist certain Iraqis who have worked directly with, or are threatened by their association with, the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 1661

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1661, a bill to communicate United States travel policies and improve marketing and other activities designed to increase travel in the United States from abroad.

S. 1738

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1738, a bill to establish a Special Counsel for Child Exploitation Prevention and Interdiction within the Office of the Deputy Attorney General, to improve the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, to increase resources for regional computer forensic labs, and to make other improvements to increase the ability of law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute predators.

S. 1744

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1744, a bill to prohibit the application of certain restrictive eligibility requirements to foreign nongovernmental organizations with respect to the provision of assistance under part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

S. 1760

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1760, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to the Healthy Start Initiative.

S. 1776

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1776, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to establish a user fee program to ensure food safety, and for other purposes.

S. 1792

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1792, a bill to amend the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act to improve such Act.

S. 1816

At the request of Mrs. CLINTON, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1816, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to establish a commemorative trail in connection with the Women's Rights National Historical Park to link properties that are historically and thematically associated with the struggle for women's suffrage, and for other purposes.

S. 1905

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1905, a bill to provide for

a rotating schedule for regional selection of delegates to a national Presidential nominating convention, and for other purposes.

S. 1924

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1924, a bill to amend chapter 81 of title 5, United States Code, to create a presumption that a disability or death of a Federal employee in fire protection activities caused by any of certain diseases is the result of the performance of such employee's duty.

S. 1942

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1942, a bill to amend part D of title V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to provide grants for the renovation of schools.

S. 1951

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. HAGEL), and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1951, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to ensure that individuals eligible for medical assistance under the Medicaid program continue to have access to prescription drugs, and for other purposes.

S. 1954

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1954, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to pharmacies under part D.

S. 1971

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1971, a bill to authorize a competitive grant program to assist members of the National Guard and Reserve and former and current members of the Armed Forces in securing employment in the private sector, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 31

At the request of Mr. FEINGOLD, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 31, a concurrent resolution expressing support for advancing vital United States interests through increased engagement in health programs that alleviate disease and reduce premature death in developing nations, especially through programs that combat high levels of infectious disease, improve children's and women's health, decrease malnutrition, reduce unintended pregnancies, fight the spread of HIV/AIDS, encourage healthy behaviors, and strengthen health care capacity.

S. RES. 178

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 178, a resolution expressing the sympathy of the Senate to the families of women and girls murdered in Guatemala, and encouraging the United States to work with Guatemala to bring an end to these crimes.

S. RES. 301

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the names of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 301, a resolution recognizing the 50th anniversary of the desegregation of Little Rock Central High School, one of the most significant events in the American civil rights movement.

AMENDMENT NO. 2000

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2000 intended to be proposed to H.R. 1585, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2008 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2661

At the request of Mr. FEINGOLD, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2661 proposed to H.R. 2642, a bill making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 306—CONCERNING THE RETURN OF SENATOR TIM JOHNSON

Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. REID, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. BAYH, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. BOND, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. BURR, Mr. BYRD, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. COBURN, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. COLEMAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. CORKER, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DEMINT, Mr. DODD, Mrs. DOLE, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. ENZI, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. GREGG, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. HATCH, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KERRY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. KOHL, Mr. KYL, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. LOTT, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. MIKULSKI, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. REED, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. SMITH, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. SPECTER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. SUNUNU, Mr. TESTER, Mr. VITTER, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. WARNER, Mr. WEBB, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 306

Whereas Tim Johnson is returning to the United States Senate after an absence to recuperate from an intracranial hemorrhage suffered on December 13, 2006: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That, as Senator Tim Johnson returns to the Senate, his fellow Members of the Senate extend their warmest welcome and express their personal happiness at his return, and offer their very best wishes for his continued good health.

SENATE RESOLUTION 307—SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO INCREASE CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS, TREATMENT, AND RESEARCH

Mr. ISAKSON (for himself and Mr. SALAZAR) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 307

Whereas an estimated 12,400 children are diagnosed with cancer each year;

Whereas cancer is the leading cause of death by disease in children under age 15;

Whereas an estimated 2,300 children die from cancer each year;

Whereas the incidence of cancer among children in the United States is rising by about 1 percent each year;

Whereas 1 in every 330 people in the United States develops cancer before age 20;

Whereas approximately 8 percent of deaths of individuals between 1 and 19 years old are caused by cancer;

Whereas, while some progress has been made, a number of opportunities for childhood cancer research still remain unfunded or underfunded;

Whereas limited resources for childhood cancer research can hinder the recruitment of investigators and physicians to field of pediatric oncology;

Whereas the results of peer-reviewed clinical trials have helped to raise the standard of care for pediatrics and have improved cancer survival rates among children;

Whereas the number of survivors of childhood cancers continues to increase, with about 1 in 640 adults between ages 20 to 39 having a history of cancer;

Whereas up to ⅔ of childhood cancer survivors are likely to experience at least 1 late effect from treatment, which may be life-threatening;

Whereas some late effects of cancer treatment are identified early in follow-up and are easily resolved, while others may become chronic problems in adulthood and have serious consequences; and

Whereas 89 percent of children with cancer experience substantial suffering in the last month of life: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of Senate that Congress should support—

(1) public and private sector efforts to promote awareness about—

(A) the incidence of cancer among children;

(B) the signs and symptoms of cancer in children;

(C) options for the treatment of, and long-term follow-up for, childhood cancers;

(2) increased public and private investment in childhood cancer research to improve prevention, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, post-treatment monitoring, and long-term survival;

(3) policies that provide incentives to encourage medical trainees and investigators to enter the field of pediatric oncology;

(4) policies that provide incentives to encourage the development of drugs and biologics designed to treat pediatric cancers;

(5) policies that encourage participation in clinical trials;

(6) medical education curricula designed to improve pain management for cancer patients; and

(7) policies that enhance education, services, and other resources related to late effects from treatment.

SENATE RESOLUTION 308—CONGRATULATING THE WARNER ROBINS AMERICAN LITTLE LEAGUE TEAM OF WARNER ROBINS, GEORGIA, FOR WINNING THE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME OF THE LITTLE LEAGUE WORLD SERIES

Mr. CHAMBLISS (for himself and Mr. ISAKSON, and Mrs. LINCOLN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 308

Whereas, on August 26, 2007, the Warner Robins American Little League team defeated the Tokyo Kitasuna Little League team of Tokyo, Japan, by 3 runs to 2 runs to win the 61st annual Little League Baseball World Series;

Whereas the Warner Robins American Little League team had an impressive record of 20 wins and only 1 loss;

Whereas the success of the Warner Robins American Little League team depended on the tremendous dedication and sportsmanship of the team, including—

(1) Keaton Allen, who played outfield and pitched for the team;

(2) Dalton Carriker, who played shortstop and pitched for the team;

(3) Zane Conlon, who played 2nd base, shortstop, outfield, and pitched for the team;

(4) Hunter Jackson, who played 3rd base;

(5) Taylor Lay, who played 2nd base and outfield;

(6) Nick Martens, who played 2nd base and outfield;

(7) Payton Purvis, who played outfield;

(8) Kendall Scott, who pitched and caught for the team;

(9) Hunt Smith, who played 1st base and outfield;

(10) David Umphreyville, who played outfield and caught for the team;

(11) Micah Wells, who played 1st base; and

(12) Clint Wynn, who played outfield and pitched for the team;

Whereas the Warner Robins American Little League team was managed by Mickey Lay and coached by Mike Conlon, Tommy Morris, and Mike Smith, each of whom demonstrated leadership, professionalism, and respect for the players they led and the game of baseball;

Whereas the fans of the Warner Robins American Little League team showed enthusiasm, support, and courtesy for the game of baseball and all of the players and coaches;

Whereas the performance of the Warner Robins American Little League team demonstrated to parents and communities throughout the United States that athletic participation builds character and leadership in children;

Whereas the Warner Robins American Little League team became the second consecutive team from the State of Georgia to win the Little League World Series, following the win by the Columbus Northern Little League team in 2006;

Whereas Georgia is only the 4th State to produce back-to-back champions in the 61-year history of the Little League World Series and the first State to win back-to-back titles since 1992-1993;

Whereas every team from the State of Georgia that has participated in the Little League World Series has won the Championship; and

Whereas the Warner Robins American Little League team brought pride and honor to the State of Georgia and the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates and honors the Warner Robins American Little League team and the loyal fans who supported the team on winning the 61st annual Little League Baseball World Series;

(2) recognizes and commends the hard work, dedication, determination, and commitment to excellence of the members, parents, coaches, and managers of the Warner Robins American Little League team;

(3) recognizes and commends the people of Warner Robins, Georgia, for the outstanding loyalty and support that they displayed for the Warner Robins American Little League team throughout the season;

(4) commends Little League Baseball for continuing the tradition of encouraging the development of sportsmanship and confidence in youth by sponsoring world-class baseball; and

(5) respectfully requests—

(A) that the American people recognize the achievements of the Warner Robins American Little League team; and

(B) that the Secretary of the Senate transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to—

(i) the City of Warner Robins; and

(ii) the Warner Robins American Little League Baseball team for appropriate display.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2662. Mr. SALAZAR submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2663. Mr. HAGEL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2664. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2665. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2666. Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself and Mr. BUNNING) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2667. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2668. Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. BYRD, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. SALAZAR, and Mr. JOHNSON) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2669. Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. BYRD, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. SALAZAR, and Mr. JOHNSON) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, supra.

SA 2670. Mr. SALAZAR (for himself and Mr. ALLARD) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2671. Ms. LANDRIEU submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2642, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2672. Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. TESTER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2673. Mr. BROWN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2674. Mrs. BOXER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2642, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2675. Mrs. BOXER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2642, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2676. Mrs. BOXER (for herself and Mr. LIEBERMAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2642, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2677. Mrs. MURRAY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2642, supra.

SA 2678. Ms. LANDRIEU submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2642, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2679. Ms. LANDRIEU submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2642, supra.

SA 2680. Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. LEVIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2642, supra.

SA 2681. Mrs. HUTCHISON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2642, supra.

SA 2682. Mr. STEVENS (for himself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. INOUYE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, supra.

SA 2683. Mrs. BOXER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2642, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2684. Mrs. BOXER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2642, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2685. Mr. SALAZAR (for himself and Mr. ALLARD) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1585, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2008 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2686. Mr. DEMINT proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes.

SA 2687. Mr. COLEMAN (for himself, Mr. ALLARD, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2688. Mr. ALLARD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, supra.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2662. Mr. SALAZAR submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 50, between lines 17 and 18, insert the following:

SEC. 408. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used for any action that is related to or promotes the expansion of the boundaries or size of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, Colorado.

SA 2663. Mr. HAGEL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. It is the sense of Congress that, in order to expedite construction projects of the Department of Veterans Affairs and any other real property improvements of the Department that are authorized, or for which funds are appropriated, by this Act, use of the design-build method of project delivery, in which one entity provides both design and construction services, is encouraged.

SA 2664. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used during fiscal year 2008 to round down dollar amounts to the next lower whole dollar for payments of the following:

(1) Disability compensation under section 1114 of 38, United States Code.

(2) Additional compensation for dependents under section 1115(1) of such title.

(3) Clothing allowance under section 1162 of such title.

(4) Dependency and indemnity compensation to surviving spouse under subsections (a) through (d) of section 1311 of such title.

(5) Dependency and indemnity compensation to children under sections 1313(a) and 1314 of such title.

SA 2665. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. Of the amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this title under the heading "MEDICAL SERVICES", $13,000,000 shall be available for the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

SA 2666. Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself and Mr. BUNNING) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 23, between lines 4 and 5, insert the following:

SEC. 127. (a) The amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this title for "CHEMICAL DEMILITARIZATION CONSTRUCTION, DEFENSE-WIDE" is hereby increased by $17,000,000.

(b) Of the amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this title for "CHEMICAL DEMILITARIZATION CONSTRUCTION, DEFENSE-WIDE", as increased by subsection (a), $17,000,000 shall be available for the construction of a munitions demilitarization facility at Blue Grass Army Depot, Kentucky.

(c) The amount of the increase under subsection (a) shall be derived from unobligated balances from the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available for military quality of life and veterans affairs from prior fiscal years.

SA 2667. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. **PROHIBITION ON REQUIRING ADOPTION OF CERTAIN "CROWD-OUT" STRATEGIES AND CERTAIN ASSURANCES AS A CONDITION OF APPROVAL FOR EXPANSION OF AN INCOME ELIGIBILITY LEVEL FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE STATE CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM (SCHIP).**

The requirements set forth in the August 17, 2007, letter to State Health Officials from the Director of the Center for Medicaid and State Operations in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services requiring States that expand the income eligibility level for children under the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) above 250 percent of the Federal poverty level to adopt the 5 crowd-out strategies described in such letter with the components identified therein, and to provide certain assurances described in such letter, are null and void and shall not be applied.

SA 2668. Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. BYRD, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. SALAZAR, and Mr. JOHNSON) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. (a) ADDITIONAL AMOUNT FOR MEDICAL SERVICES.—The amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this title under the heading "MEDICAL SERVICES" is hereby increased by $125,000,000.

(b) AVAILABILITY.—(1) Of the amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this title under the heading "MEDICAL SERVICES", as increased by subsection (a), $125,000,000 shall be available for the Veterans Beneficiary Travel Program to use the mileage reimbursement rate prescribed by the Administrator of General Services under section 5707(b) of title 5, United States Code, for the use of privately owned vehicles by Government employees on official business (when a Government vehicle is available), without adjusting the deductible established under section 111(c)(1) of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The amount available for the Veterans Beneficiary Travel Program under this subsection is in addition to any other amounts available for that program under this title.

(c) OFFSET.—The amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this title for the Veterans Health Administration under the heading "MEDICAL ADMINISTRATION" is hereby decreased by $125,000,000.

SA 2669. Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. BYRD, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. SALAZAR, and Mr. JOHNSON) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. (a) ADDITIONAL AMOUNT FOR MEDICAL SERVICES.—The amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this title under the heading "MEDICAL SERVICES" is hereby increased by $125,000,000.

(b) AVAILABILITY.—Of the amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this title under the heading "MEDICAL SERVICES", as increased by subsection (a), $125,000,000 shall be available for the Veterans Beneficiary Travel Program. The amount available for the Veterans Beneficiary Travel Program under this subsection is in addition to any other amounts available for that program under this title.

(c) OFFSET.—The amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this title for the Veterans Health Administration under the heading "MEDICAL ADMINISTRATION" is hereby decreased by $125,000,000.

SA 2670. Mr. SALAZAR (for himself and Mr. ALLARD) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 23, between lines 4 and 5, insert the following:

SEC. 127. (a) The amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this title for "CHEMICAL DEMILITARIZATION CONSTRUCTION, DEFENSE-WIDE" is hereby increased by $32,000,000.

(b) Of the amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this title for "CHEMICAL DEMILITARIZATION CONSTRUCTION, DEFENSE-WIDE", as increased by subsection (a), $32,000,000 shall be available for the construction of a munitions demilitarization facility at Pueblo Chemical Depot, Colorado.

(c) The amount of the increase under subsection (a) shall be derived from unobligated balances from the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available for military quality of life and veterans affairs from prior fiscal years.

SA 2671. Ms. LANDRIEU submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. (a) REPORTS ON RECONSTRUCTION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER IN NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA.—(1) Not later than October 1 and April 1 each year, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Subcommittees of Congress referred to in section 407 a report on the current status of the reconstruction of the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in New Orleans, Louisiana. Each report shall include the following:

(A) The current status of the reconstruction of the Medical Center, including the status of any ongoing environmental assessments, the status of any current construction, and an assessment of the adequacy of funding necessary to complete the reconstruction.

(B) If reconstruction of the Medical Center is subject to any major delay—

(i) a description of each such delay;

(ii) an explanation for each such delay; and

(iii) a description of the action being taken or planned to address the delay.

(C) A description of current and anticipated funding for the reconstruction of the Medical Center, including an estimate of any additional funding required for the reconstruction.

(2) The requirement in paragraph (1) shall cease on the day that the reconstruction of the Medical Center referred to in that paragraph is completed.

(b) REPORT ON DESIGNATION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER IN NEW ORLEANS AS POLYTRAUMA REHABILITATION CENTER OR POLYTRAUMA NETWORK SITE.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Subcommittees of Congress referred to in section 407 a report setting forth the recommendation of the Secretary as to whether or not the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center being reconstructed in new Orleans, Louisiana, should be designated as a tier I polytrauma rehabilitation center or a polytrauma network site.

SA 2672. Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. TESTER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 23, between lines 4 and 5, insert the following:

SEC. 127. (a) The amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this title for "MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, DEFENSE-WIDE" is hereby increased by $20,000,000.

(b) Of the amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this title for "MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, DEFENSE-WIDE", as increased by subsection (a), $20,000,000 shall be available for the modernizing and renovation of canine facilities of the Armed Forces.

SA 2673. Mr. BROWN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act or any other Act for the Department of Veterans Affairs may be used in a manner that is inconsistent with—

(1) section 842 of the Transportation, Treasury, Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 2006 (Public Law 109-115; 119 Stat. 2506); or

(2) section 8110(a)(5) of title 38, United States Code.

SA 2674. Mrs. BOXER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. Section 4332 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (2), (3), (4), (5), and (6) as paragraphs (3), (4), (5), (6), and (7) respectively;

(2) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following new paragraph (2):

"(2) The number of complaints received by the Department of Defense under this chapter during the fiscal year for which the report is made regarding violations of the employment and reemployment rights of Reserves under this chapter."; and

(3) in paragraph (5), as so redesignated, by striking "(2), or (3)" and inserting "(2), (3), or (4)".

SA 2675. Mrs. BOXER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. Section 3485(a)(4) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking "June 30, 2007" each place it appears and inserting "June 30, 2012".

SA 2676. Mrs. BOXER (for herself and Mr. LIEBERMAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. Section 1980A(b)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(I) The inability to carry out the activities of daily living due to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) that is acquired as a direct result of combat experience.".

SA 2677. Mrs. MURRAY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. (a) AUTHORITY FOR TRANSFER OF FUNDS TO SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO TRAIN PSYCHOLOGISTS.—Upon a determination by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs that such action is in the national interest, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may transfer not more than $5,000,000 to the Secretary of Health and Human Services for the Graduate Psychology Education Program to support increased training of psychologists skilled in the treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and related disorders.

(b) LIMITATION ON USE OF TRANSFERRED FUNDS.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services may only use funds transferred under this section for the purposes described in subsection (a).

(c) NOTIFICATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall notify Congress of any such transfer of funds under this section.

SA 2678. Ms. LANDRIEU submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. (a) REPORTS ON RECONSTRUCTION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER IN NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA.—(1) Not later than October 1 and April 1 each year, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs must submit to the Committees on Appropriations a report on the current status of the reconstruction of the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in New Orleans, Louisiana. Each report shall include the following:

(A) The current status of the reconstruction of the Medical Center, including the status of any ongoing environmental assessments, the status of any current construction, and an assessment of the adequacy of funding necessary to complete the reconstruction.

(B) If reconstruction of the Medical Center is subject to any major delay—

(i) a description of each such delay;

(ii) an explanation for each such delay; and

(iii) a description of the action being taken or planned to address the delay.

(C) A description of current and anticipated funding for the reconstruction of the Medical Center, including an estimate of any additional funding required for the reconstruction.

(2) The requirement in paragraph (1) shall cease on the day that the reconstruction of the Medical Center referred to in that paragraph is completed.

(b) REPORT ON DESIGNATION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER IN NEW ORLEANS AS POLYTRAUMA REHABILITATION CENTER OR POLYTRAUMA NETWORK SITE.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary must submit to the Committees on Appropriations a report setting forth the recommendation of the Secretary as to whether or not the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center being reconstructed in new Orleans, Louisiana, should be designated as a tier I polytrauma rehabilitation center or a polytrauma network site.

SA 2679. Ms. LANDRIEU submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. (a) REPORTS ON RECONSTRUCTION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER IN NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA.—(1) Not later than October 1 and April 1 each year, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations a report on the current status of the reconstruction of the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in New Orleans, Louisiana. Each report shall include the following:

(A) The current status of the reconstruction of the Medical Center, including the status of any ongoing environmental assessments, the status of any current construction, and an assessment of the adequacy of funding necessary to complete the reconstruction.

(B) If reconstruction of the Medical Center is subject to any major delay—

(i) a description of each such delay;

(ii) an explanation for each such delay; and

(iii) a description of the action being taken or planned to address the delay.

(C) A description of current and anticipated funding for the reconstruction of the Medical Center, including an estimate of any additional funding required for the reconstruction.

(2) The requirement in paragraph (1) shall cease on the day that the reconstruction of the Medical Center referred to in that paragraph is completed.

(b) REPORT ON DESIGNATION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER IN NEW ORLEANS AS POLYTRAUMA REHABILITATION CENTER OR POLYTRAUMA NETWORK SITE.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations a report setting forth the recommendation of the Secretary as to whether or not the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center being reconstructed in new Orleans, Louisiana, should be designated as a tier I polytrauma rehabilitation center or a polytrauma network site.

SA 2680. Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. LEVIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. LIEUTENANT COLONEL CLEMENT C. VAN WAGONER DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CLINIC.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The Department of Veterans Affairs clinic located in Alpena, Michigan, shall be known and designated as the "Lieutenant Colonel Clement C. Van Wagoner Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the Department of Veterans Affairs clinic referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Lieutenant Colonel Clement C. Van Wagoner Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic".

SA 2681. Mrs. HUTCHISON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; as follows:

At the appropriate place in the bill, insert:

SEC. . The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out a major medical facility lease in fiscal year 2008 in an amount not to exceed $12,000,000 to implement the recommendations outlined in the August, 2007 Study of South Texas Veterans' Inpatient and Specialty Outpatient Health Care Needs.

SA 2682. Mr. STEVENS (for himself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. INOUYE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. (a) REPORT ON ACCESS TO MEDICAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO VETERANS IN REMOTE RURAL AREAS.—Not later than six months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report setting forth the following:

(1) A description of the following:

(A) The unique challenges and costs faced by veterans in remote rural areas of contiguous and non-contiguous States when obtaining medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(B) The need to improve access to locally-administered care for veterans who reside in remote rural areas.

(C) The need to fund alternative sources of medical services—

(i) in areas where facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs are not accessible to veterans without leaving such areas; and

(ii) in cases in which receipt of medical services by a veteran in a facility of the Department requires transportation of such veteran by air due to geographic and infrastructural constraints.

(2) An assessment of the potential for increasing local access to medical services for veterans in remote rural areas of contiguous and non-contiguous States through strategic partnerships with other government and local private health care providers.

(b) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this section, the term "appropriate committees of Congress" means—

(1) the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Subcommittees referred to in section 407.

SA 2683. Mrs. BOXER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table, as follows:

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. (a) PROHIBITION ON INTERMENT OR MEMORIALIZATION IN NATIONAL CEMETERIES OR ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY OF PERSONS COMMITTING FEDERAL OR STATE SEX CRIMES.—None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available in this Act may be used to provide interments and memorializations in volation of section 2411 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by subsection (b).

(b) AMENDMENTS.—Section 2411 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (5);

(B) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following new paragraphs (3) and (4):

"(3) A person who has been convicted of a Federal sex crime.

"(4) A person who has been convicted of a State sex crime."; and

(C) in paragraph (5)(A), as redesignated by subparagraph (A), by striking "or a State capital crime" and inserting ", a State capital crime, a Federal sex crime, or a State sex crime";

(2) in subsection (c), by striking "under subsection (b)(3)" and inserting "under subsection (b)(5)"; and

(3) in subsection (d)—

(A) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (5); and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following new paragraphs (3) and (4):

"(3) The term 'Federal sex crime' means a criminal offense under Federal law that has an element involving a sexual act or sexual contact with another, including rape or sexual assault.

"(4) The term 'State sex crime' means a criminal offense that is a felony under State law and has an element involving a sexual act or sexual contact with another, including rape or sexual assault.".

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (b) shall apply to interments and memorializations in cemeteries of the National Cemetery Administration or Arlington National Cemetery that occur after the date of the enactment of this section.

SA 2684. Mrs. BOXER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table, as follows:

On page 46, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 227. (a) PROHIBITION ON INTERMENT OR MEMORIALIZATION IN NATIONAL CEMETERIES OR ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY OF PERSONS COMMITTING FEDERAL OR STATE SEX CRIMES.—Section 2411 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (5);

(B) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following new paragraphs (3) and (4):

"(3) A person who has been convicted of a Federal sex crime.

"(4) A person who has been convicted of a State sex crime."; and

(C) in paragraph (5)(A), as redesignated by subparagraph (A), by striking "or a State capital crime" and inserting ", a State capital crime, a Federal sex crime, or a State sex crime";

(2) in subsection (c), by striking "under subsection (b)(3)" and inserting "under subsection (b)(5)"; and

(3) in subsection (d)—

(A) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (5); and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following new paragraphs (3) and (4):

"(3) The term 'Federal sex crime' means a criminal offense under Federal law that has an element involving a sexual act or sexual contact with another, including rape or sexual assault.

"(4) The term 'State sex crime' means a criminal offense that is a felony under State law that has an element involving a sexual act or sexual contact with another, including rape or sexual assault.".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply to interments and memorializations in cemeteries of the National Cemetery Administration or Arlington National Cemetery that occur after the date of the enactment of this section.

SA 2685. Mr. SALAZAR (for himself and Mr. ALLARD) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1585, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2008 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for the defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table, as follows:

At the end of title XXVIII, add the following:

SEC. 2864. REPORT ON THE PINON CANYON MANEUVER SITE, COLORADO.

(a) REPORT ON THE PINON CANYON MANEUVER SITE.—

(1) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Army shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report on the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site (referred to in this section as "the Site").

(2) CONTENT.—The report required under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) An analysis of whether existing training facilities at Fort Carson, Colorado, and the Site are sufficient to support the training needs of units stationed or planned to be stationed at Fort Carson, including the following:

(i) A description of any new training requirements or significant developments affecting training requirements for units stationed or planned to be stationed at Fort Carson since the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission found that the base has "sufficient capacity" to support four brigade combat teams and associated support units at Fort Carson.

(ii) A study of alternatives for enhancing training facilities at Fort Carson and the Site within their current geographic footprint, including whether these additional investments or measures could support additional training activities.

(iii) A description of the current training calendar and training load at the Site, including—

(I) the number of brigade-sized and battalion-sized military exercises held at the Site since its establishment;

(II) an analysis of the maximum annual training load at the Site, without expanding the Site; and

(III) an analysis of the training load and projected training calendar at the Site when all brigades stationed or planned to be stationed at Fort Carson are at home station.

(B) A report of need for any proposed addition of training land to support units stationed or planned to be stationed at Fort Carson, including the following:

(i) A description of additional training activities, and their benefits to operational readiness, which would be conducted by units stationed at Fort Carson if, through leases or acquisition from consenting landowners, the Site were expanded to include—

(I) the parcel of land identified as "Area A" in the Potential PCMS Land expansion map;

(II) the parcel of land identified as "Area B" in the Potential PCMS Land expansion map; and

(III) the parcels of land identified as "Area A" and "Area B" in the Potential PCMS Land expansion map.

(ii) An analysis of alternatives for acquiring or utilizing training land at other installations in the United States to support training activities of units stationed at Fort Carson.

(iii) An analysis of alternatives for utilizing other federally owned land to support training activities of units stationed at Fort Carson.

(C) An analysis of alternatives for enhancing economic development opportunities in southeastern Colorado at the current Site or through any proposed expansion, including the consideration of the following alternatives:

(i) The leasing of land on the Site or any expansion of the Site to ranchers for grazing.

(ii) The leasing of land from private landowners for training.

(iii) The procurement of additional services and goods, including biofuels and beef, from local businesses.

(iv) The creation of an economic development fund to benefit communities, local governments, and businesses in southeastern Colorado.

(v) The establishment of an outreach office to provide technical assistance to local businesses that wish to bid on Department of Defense contracts.

(vi) The establishment of partnerships with local governments and organizations to expand regional tourism through expanded access to sites of historic, cultural, and environmental interest on the Site.

(vii) An acquisition policy that allows willing sellers to minimize the tax impact of a sale.

(viii) Additional investments in Army missions and personnel, such as stationing an active duty unit at the Site, including—

(I) an analysis of anticipated operational benefits; and

(II) an analysis of economic impacts to surrounding communities.

(3) POTENTIAL PCMS LAND EXPANSION MAP DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term "Potential PCMS Land expansion map" means the June 2007 map entitled "Potential PCMS Land expansion".

(b) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REVIEW OF REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the Secretary of Defense submits the report required under subsection (a), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a review of the report and of the justification of the Army for expansion at the Site.

(c) PUBLIC COMMENT.—After the report required under subsection (b) is submitted to Congress, the Army shall solicit public comment on the report for a period of not less than 90 days. Not later than 30 days after the public comment period has closed, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a written summary of comments received.

SA 2686. Mr. DEMINT proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; as follows:

Beginning on page 44, strike line 20 and all that follows through page 45, line 23.

SA 2687. Mr. COLEMAN (for himself, Mr. ALLARD, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table, as follows:

At the end of the bill, add the following:

SEC. ___. For an additional amount $100,000,000, with $50,000,000 each to the Cities of Denver, Colorado, and St. Paul, Minnesota, shall be available to the Department of Homeland Security for State and local law enforcement entities for security and related costs, including overtime, associated with the Democratic National Convention and Republican National Convention in 2008. The Department of Homeland Security shall provide for an audit of all amounts made available under this section, including expenditures by State and local law enforcement entities. Amounts provided by this section are designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 204 of S. Con. Res. 21 (110th Congress).

SA 2688. Mr. ALLARD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. (a) In this section:

(1) The term "City" means the City of Aurora, Colorado.

(2) The term "deed" means the quitclaim deed—

(A) conveyed by the Secretary to the City; and

(B) dated May 24, 1999.

(3) The term "non-Federal land" means—

(A) parcel I of the Fitzsimons Army Medical Center, Colorado; and

(B) the parcel of land described in the deed.

(4) The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(b)(1) In accordance with paragraph (2), and subject to each term and condition required under paragraph (3), to allow the City to convey to the United States the non-Federal land to be used by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the construction of a veterans medical facility, the Secretary may execute such instruments as determined by the Secretary to be necessary to modify or release any condition under which the non-Federal land would revert to the United States.

(2) In carrying out paragraph (1), with respect to the non-Federal land, the Secretary shall alter—

(A) each provision of the deed relating to a reversionary interest of the United States; and

(B) any other reversionary interest of the United States

to authorize the use of the property to include use as a veteran's facility in addition to use for recreational purposes.

(3) The Secretary shall carry out paragraph (1) subject to such terms and conditions as the Secretary determines to be necessary to protect the interests of the United States.

NOTICE OF HEARING

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information of the Senate and the public that a hearing has been scheduled before the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

The hearing will be held on Wednesday, September 12, 2007, at 9:30 a.m., in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Building.

The purpose of the hearing is to receive testimony on the status of energy efficient lighting technologies and on S. 2017, the Energy Efficient Lighting for a Brighter Tomorrow Act.

Because of the limited time available for the hearing, witnesses may testify by invitation only. However, those wishing to submit written testimony for the hearing record should send two copies of their testimony to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510–6150.

For further information, please contact Deborah Estes at (202) 224–4971 or Britni Rillera at (202) 224–1219.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, September 5, 2007, at 10 a.m. to hold a nomination hearing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet in order to conduct a hearing entitled "The 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1957 and its Continuing Importance" on Wednesday, September 5, 2007, at 10 a.m. in the Dirksen Senate Office Building, room 226.

Witness List:

Panel I: The Honorable John Lewis, United States Representative [D-GA-5th].

Panel II: Wade Henderson, President and CEO, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, Washington, DC; Theodore Shaw, Director-Counsel and President, NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc., Washington, DC; Peter Zamora, Washington, DC Regional Counsel, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund [MALDEF], Washington, DC; Gail Heriot, Commissioner, United States Commission on Civil Rights, Professor of Law, University of California at San Diego, San Diego, CA; Robert P. Moses, President The Algebra Project, Inc., Cambridge, MA; Robert H. Driscoll, Partner, Alston & Bird, Washington, DC.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Special Committee on Aging be authorized to meet today Wednesday, September 5, 2007, from 2 p.m.–4 p.m. in SD–628 for the purpose of conducting a hearing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Matt Guenther, a military fellow in my office, be accorded the privilege of the floor for the duration of the 110th Congress.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Jill Antonishak, a member of my staff, be given the privilege of the floor for the remainder of the day.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DISCHARGE AND REFERRAL—S.J. RES. 17

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be discharged from further consideration of S.J. Res. 17 and the joint resolution be referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR PRINTING—H.R. 1538

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that H.R. 1538, the Wounded Warriors legislation, be printed, as passed by the Senate on July 25, 2007.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AUTHORIZING THE USE OF THE ROTUNDA AND GROUNDS OF THE CAPITOL

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed

to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 196, just received from the House and at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 196) authorizing the use of the Rotunda and grounds of the Capitol for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, without intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 196) was agreed to.

CONGRATULATING THE WARNER ROBINS AMERICAN LITTLE LEAGUE TEAM OF WARNER ROBINS, GEORGIA, FOR WINNING THE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME OF THE LITTLE LEAGUE WORLD SERIES

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 308, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 308) congratulating the Warner Robins American Little League team of Warner Robins, Georgia, for winning the championship game of the Little League World Series.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise to encourage my colleagues to join Senator ISAKSON and myself in support of a resolution congratulating the 2007 Little League World Series champions, the Warner Robins American Little League team of Warner Robins, GA. Warner Robins and Houston County, where Warner Robins is located, have a very proud athletic tradition. Warner Robins High School and Houston County High School have been in the same region as my home high school over the last several years and I have seen my high school win and lose against teams coming out of Houston County. The tradition in Houston County goes way back.

There is also a town in Houston County called Perry, and Perry, GA is the home of a former all-State basketball player by the name of Sam Nunn who served in this great institution for a period of 24 years.

Success in Houston County and Warner Robins from an athletic standpoint is nothing new. But on August 26, 2007, the Warner Robins American Little League team defeated the Tokyo Kitasuna Little League team of Tokyo, Japan by a score of 3–2 after Dalton Carriker hit a solo walk-off home run in the bottom of the eighth inning. This victory concluded their impressive season with a record of 20 wins and only 1 loss. Considering the fact that more than 7,000 Little League All-Star teams took the field in July, this accomplishment is extremely impressive.

Their talent, hard work, and sportsmanship allowed them to become the third team from the State of Georgia to win the Little League World Series and, in doing so, they captured the hearts of people all across Georgia and in many parts of the Nation who love the game of baseball.

As a former Little League coach myself, during the years when my wife, Julianne, and I were raising our children in Moultrie, GA, I was proud to participate in the longstanding tradition of Little League baseball as a coach for my son's team, the Destiny Dawgs. I have seen firsthand the uncontested confidence, determination, and hard work that Little League baseball instills in our youth.

I wish to recognize the 12 young men of the Warner Robins American team individually for their great accomplishment: Keaton Allen, Dalton Carriker, Zane Conlon, Hunter Jackson, Taylor Lay, Nick Martens, Payton Purvis, Kendall Scott, Hunt Smith, David Umphreyville, Micah Wells, and Clint Wynn. Their manager Mickey Lay and coaches Mike Conlon, Tommy Morris, and Mike Smith each deserve strong recognition for guiding these young men to victory.

Moreover, I would be remiss if I did not recognize the teachers and students of these young men's schools, the fans who represented their community, and the State of Georgia, for their enthusiasm and their support for this team's efforts. It is with great pride that I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Warner Robins American Little League team and their families. I am extremely proud of each of them and their accomplishments. I wish them great success in the future and urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I thank Senator CHAMBLISS for this opportunity. I am pleased to join him in paying tribute to the Warner Robins Little League. I associate myself with all his remarks.

Dalton Carriker's walk-off home run in extra innings was a thrill. Kendall Scott's great relief pitching was a thrill. But what was the most thrilling thing of all, because I got home in time to watch the end of that game, were the actions of those kids in response to the despair of the Japanese kids. In fact, I want to quote from a news article. A reporter interviewed Kendall Scott, the winning pitcher, after the end of the game when he gazed across the field and saw the Japanese players all on their knees in tears, disappointed in their loss. Kendall Scott said the following:

They don't disrespect, they're very disciplined and they're some of the nicest kids you'll ever meet in your entire life. Just seeing them fall down and cry, you just couldn't let them do that—you gotta pick them up.

Having had two boys who went through Little League, having worked in baseball as a youngster myself, I know one of the goals of Little League is to instill good sportsmanship and teamwork on behalf of players. I commend manager Mickey Lay and coaches Mike Conlon, Tommy Morris, and Mike Smith for the discipline, the teamwork, and the respect they instilled in these young men, because at the height of their victory, zenith of their young careers, they stopped their celebration to console those they had defeated on the field. That shows that Little League and its goals of teaching teamwork and sportsmanship are alive and well, not just in Warner Robins, GA but throughout the United States. I am pleased to join my colleague and commend the Warner Robins Little League on their victory and remind everyone, that is back to back for Georgia. Columbus, GA won last year. Warner Robins won this year. We will try for a trifecta next year.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 308) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 308

Whereas, on August 26, 2007, the Warner Robins American Little League team defeated the Tokyo Kitasuna Little League team of Tokyo, Japan, by 3 runs to 2 runs to win the 61st annual Little League Baseball World Series;

Whereas the Warner Robins American Little League team had an impressive record of 20 wins and only 1 loss;

Whereas the success of the Warner Robins American Little League team depended on the tremendous dedication and sportsmanship of the team, including—

(1) Keaton Allen, who played outfield and pitched for the team;

(2) Dalton Carriker, who played shortstop and pitched for the team;

(3) Zane Conlon, who played 2nd base, shortstop, outfield, and pitched for the team;

(4) Hunter Jackson, who played 3rd base;

(5) Taylor Lay, who played 2nd base and outfield;

(6) Nick Martens, who played 2nd base and outfield;

(7) Payton Purvis, who played outfield;
(8) Kendall Scott, who pitched and caught for the team;
(9) Hunt Smith, who played 1st base and outfield;
(10) David Umphreyville, who played outfield and caught for the team;
(11) Micah Wells, who played 1st base; and
(12) Clint Wynn, who played outfield and pitched for the team;

Whereas the Warner Robins American Little League team was managed by Mickey Lay and coached by Mike Conlon, Tommy Morris, and Mike Smith, each of whom demonstrated leadership, professionalism, and respect for the players they led and the game of baseball;

Whereas the fans of the Warner Robins American Little League team showed enthusiasm, support, and courtesy for the game of baseball and all of the players and coaches;

Whereas the performance of the Warner Robins American Little League team demonstrated to parents and communities throughout the United States that athletic participation builds character and leadership in children;

Whereas the Warner Robins American Little League team became the second consecutive team from the State of Georgia to win the Little League World Series, following the win by the Columbus Northern Little League team in 2006;

Whereas Georgia is only the 4th State to produce back-to-back champions in the 61-year history of the Little League World Series and the first State to win back-to-back titles since 1992-1993;

Whereas every team from the State of Georgia that has participated in the Little League World Series has won the Championship; and

Whereas the Warner Robins American Little League team brought pride and honor to the State of Georgia and the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates and honors the Warner Robins American Little League team and the loyal fans who supported the team on winning the 61st annual Little League Baseball World Series;

(2) recognizes and commends the hard work, dedication, determination, and commitment to excellence of the members, parents, coaches, and managers of the Warner Robins American Little League team;

(3) recognizes and commends the people of Warner Robins, Georgia, for the outstanding loyalty and support that they displayed for the Warner Robins American Little League team throughout the season;

(4) commends Little League Baseball for continuing the tradition of encouraging the development of sportsmanship and confidence in youth by sponsoring world-class baseball; and

(5) respectfully requests—

(A) that the American people recognize the achievements of the Warner Robins American Little League team; and

(B) that the Secretary of the Senate transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to—

(i) the City of Warner Robins; and

(ii) the Warner Robins American Little League Baseball team for appropriate display.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2007

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, September 6; that on Thursday, following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, and the time of the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that there be a period of morning business for 60 minutes with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, and that the time be equally divided and controlled between the leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half; that at the close of morning business, the Senate resume consideration of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act; that when the Senate resumes consideration of the bill, Senator BUNNING be recognized to speak for up to 30 minutes; that at the conclusion of his remarks, there be 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote in relation to the Coleman amendment with the time equally divided between Senators COLEMAN and BUNNING or their designees; that there be 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote in relation to all remaining amendments, equally divided and controlled in the usual form; that upon disposition of the Coleman amendment, the amendment vote sequence be: SANDERS, SALAZAR, BROWN, MCCONNELL, and then final passage; that after the first vote of the sequence, vote time be limited to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. REED. Mr. President, if there is no further business today, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:59 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, September 6, 2007, at 9:30 a.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—*Wednesday, September 5, 2007*

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Guest Chaplain, the Reverend Dr. S.L. Roberson, Metropolitan Baptist Church, Ypsilanti, Michigan, offered the following prayer:

Almighty, all wise, ever-present, glorious, and merciful God, we come today prayerfully opening this session of the United States House of Representatives offering thanksgiving to You. We bless You, magnify You, exalt You, thank You, and praise You for Your world love and saving grace.

We pray that You will continue to bless America, building her up where we are torn down, strengthening us where we are weak, and drawing us closer together. We ask that You cover this deliberating body with abundant wisdom and understanding, and that You lead, guide, and renew a right spirit in each Member.

Direct these deliberations into meaningful, positive actions reflecting Your excellence in power, in judgment, in justice, in clarity, and unity for America and our global friends.

Finally, reveal and enlighten the best that is in each of us so that we may use our gifts to glorify You.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of Ohio led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

INTRODUCTION OF THE REVEREND DR. S.L. ROBERSON

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) is recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I have the great privilege today of welcoming and thanking a dear friend, a distinguished American, and a wonderful clergyman to the House for the prayer, and I want to thank you and my colleagues for your courtesy to him.

I am delighted to present to my colleagues the wonderful gentleman from Ypsilanti, the Reverend S.L. Roberson, and I want to thank him for taking time to be with us today to act as our guest chaplain.

He has dedicated his life to the service of his fellow man and is one of the most beloved and respected pastors and citizens of the State of Michigan. He has been pastor of the Metropolitan Memorial Baptist Church in Ypsilanti for 53 years. He has served his country with great distinction as a member of the United States Marine Corps, of which he is very proud.

He has undergraduate degrees from Eastern Michigan University, has studied at Detroit Bible College, and has a doctorate of divinity from Urban Bible College so that he may more fully and better serve his fellow man.

In addition to his civic and spiritual service, he has worked for Ford Motor Company for 33 years in their Labor Relations and Personnel Services of Industrial Relations Department. He has found time to serve as president of the Ypsilanti Housing Commission and is chaplain of the Ypsilanti Police Department.

He is a wonderful individual to provide the opening prayer for the Congress because of his great life experiences and his wonderful service to his country, including distinguished service in the military. He has given his fellow citizens over 50 years of spiritual guidance, and he has administered God's word to civil servants and citizens alike all across Michigan.

I ask my colleagues to welcome this distinguished American, our guest chaplain, Rev. S.L. Roberson, and to welcome his wife and friends who are in the gallery today.

I thank you, Madam Speaker. We have before us a man of great respect and a real cornerstone to his community.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for further 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

MAKING COLLEGE MORE AFFORDABLE

(Mr. WILSON of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Madam Speaker, Democrats are taking a new direction in America. We realize that restoring the American Dream begins with a great education. Unfortunately, over the last 6 years affording a 4-year college education has become increasingly difficult, especially for the middle class. That is why this Congress is providing the single largest investment in higher education since the creation of the GI Bill.

We make college more affordable for all Americans by reducing the cost of student loans and increasing the size of Pell Grants, and we do this all with no new cost to the taxpayers. Our investment in college students would be paid for by reducing the excessive Federal subsidies to the student loan industry.

Madam Speaker, this new Democratic Congress is working to help restore the American Dream by opening the doors of a college education to more Americans. We need to all work together to raise all boats.

LISTEN TO ALL THE FACTS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, Congress will soon hear from members of our military as well as civilian advisers about progress in Iraq. Yesterday, the General Accounting Office released its report. This one report tells only a partial account. We should base decision-making on complete information from our military leaders.

The GAO report does not assess progress being made on the ground, progress our military commanders have indicated is occurring. The benchmarks outlined in the report are laudable goals, assessed by dedicated officials. Developing democracy to protect American families takes time, as we learned in Germany and Japan. It took America 13 years to adopt our Constitution.

Next week, we will receive a report from our top commander in the field, GEN David Petraeus, and our top diplomat, Ambassador Ryan Crocker. We should remain open and receptive to what these professionals have to say. We must protect American families by making difficult but informed decisions.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th.

ESTABLISHING UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE FOR EVERY CITIZEN

(Mr. KAGEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KAGEN. Madam Speaker, how many ears must we have before we can hear people cry?

Last week, the Census Bureau informed us that more Americans than ever before in our Nation's history are going without access to health care; 46 million, 46 million citizens have no health care coverage. But this national nightmare is measured best not in numbers, but in human lives. Families across Wisconsin are going bankrupt because they can't afford their medical bills. Teenagers across the country will go blind because they do not have access to the care they need for their diabetes.

Congress doesn't need a census report to feel people's pain. And as Members of Congress, we must not wait for yet another census report before we act. It is our duty and our moral responsibility to act now.

People in Wisconsin and everywhere else in America demand we establish universal access to affordable care for every citizen, and working together, we will.

THANKING CONSTITUENTS FOR INPUT AT TOWN HALL MEETINGS

(Mr. MCHENRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCHENRY. Madam Speaker, the right of people to openly and freely question their leaders and discuss solutions to common problems is the reason our democracy works.

I hold town hall meetings every August all across my district. This August, I had nine town hall meetings. I had over 700 people come out to these meetings. It is a wonderful time. The overwhelming majority of my constituents had a clear message: It is high time to change the way Washington does business.

The people of western North Carolina are sick of wasteful spending and the broken Tax Code that funds it. They have had it with incompetence and waste in Federal bureaucracies. They are sick and tired of Washington not securing the border and stopping illegal immigration.

Again, I want to thank my constituents for coming out to these town hall meetings. It is a sincere pleasure to represent them and to try to fight for that change here in Washington, DC.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank them for coming out and making their voices heard. I have listened, and I am working to make that change.

BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE FOR THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

(Mrs. CAPPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, last week I was fortunate to visit Mexico City as a part of a bipartisan trip organized by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Our trip provided an excellent opportunity for my colleagues and me to meet with prominent Mexican leaders in business, journalism and government.

It also provided a forum to discuss ongoing political and economic changes in Mexico and ways in which we can improve the relationship between the United States and Mexico. We discussed civic and political life in both countries, how we can work more closely with Mexican partner institutions to help bring about a more open, competitive and equitable society. One example is the security issues we both face, one which we share.

Madam Speaker, our relationship with our friend and neighbor Mexico is critically important. It cries out for more cooperation and engagement.

I want to thank the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars and its Mexico institute for facilitating this important dialogue. I know I was better able to get a picture of the state of democracy in Mexico, the shared goals and challenges that confront both of our countries, how we can be better neighbors to one another.

So I hope we can continue this important conversation and build a better future for the United States and for Mexico.

□ 1015

IN MEMORY OF SPECIALIST TYLER ROSS SEIDEMAN

(Mr. BOOZMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a young man beloved by his family, friends and his community. I rise to remember Specialist Tyler Ross Seideman of the United States Army who was taken from us 2 weeks ago today in Multaka, Iraq.

Tyler and 13 of his Army brothers passed away when the Black Hawk he was in went down due to mechanical problems. Tyler, from the small town of Lincoln, Arkansas, was a sniper in the 2nd Battalion of the 35th Infantry Regiment based out of Hawaii. His closest friends described him with adjectives such as "brave," a "great soldier" and a "perfect gentleman."

I had the opportunity to attend Tyler's funeral this past Saturday. The outpouring of love and support from the people of Lincoln is something I will remember for the rest of my life.

My prayers and those of my family are with Tyler's parents, Bill and Lee Ann, and sisters Kiera and Kristen. I thank them for raising a man such as Tyler, and I thank Tyler for his service to a grateful Nation.

CHANGING COURSE IN IRAQ

(Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, for months now this Democratic Congress has tried to change course in Iraq, but a stubborn President, supported by a rubber-stamp Republican Congress in both the House and the Senate, has made that impossible.

In the spring, Republican leaders said by September, which is now, we should know if the President's troop escalation plan is working. And if it wasn't, then they would be ready to explore a different course.

Yesterday, the GAO released a report concluding that the Iraqi Government had fallen short of meeting 11 of the 18 benchmarks that President Bush said they would have to meet. The report also found that four other benchmarks had only partially been met. That means that the Iraqi Government has met only three of 18 benchmarks. Let's not forget that the main reason that the President gave for the troop escalation earlier this year was to better secure the Nation so that the Iraqi Government could meet these political objectives. The GAO report concludes that "violence remains high" and that the political promises have not been kept.

Madam Speaker, I would only hope that our Republican colleagues would take a serious look and join us, as they said they would, in demanding a change of course in Iraq.

COST OF WAR IN IRAQ

(Mr. SIRES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SIRES. Madam Speaker, the President's war has already cost the American people dearly in both lives and tax dollars. Congress has appropriated nearly $477 billion for the war since March 2003, and the U.S. is currently spending an estimated $10 billion a month on the war. This spending continues despite reports that 15 of 18 benchmarks for success have not been met and casualties in the war are 65 percent higher this year than last.

This Democratic Congress and the American people are ready for a new direction. We believe it is time to bring our troops home and begin investing here in the U.S.

If you took just some of the money we are spending in Iraq and invested it

here instead, we could take care of a lot of our seniors' prescription drug cost problems. And for the cost of just one week in Iraq, we could hire 51,000 more police officers to make our streets safer.

Madam Speaker, it is time for Republicans in this body to listen to the American people and join us in calling for an end to the financial drain of this war. It is time to invest in making our Nation safer here at home.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE

(Mr. SARBANES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SARBANES. Madam Speaker, 10 years ago the Children's Health Insurance Program was instituted. Since then, 6 million children have been given access to private health care insurance in this country. It was absolutely the right thing to do.

But new evidence from the Census Bureau released last week suggests that we are now slipping backwards. The number of children without health insurance coverage in this country increased from 8 million in 2005 to 8.7 million in 2006. That is why we passed 4 weeks ago the CHAMP Act which would increase insurance coverage for children to an additional 5 million children in this country. That's the direction we need to be going in.

Unfortunately, the President is threatening to veto the CHAMP Act. I hope the President will reconsider, stop posturing on this issue, and do the right thing by America's children.

THE KILLING OF JAMIE DEAN

(Mr. MCDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, as we enter this period when the President is going to come before us and ask us to extend the surge in Iraq, we ought to hear the story of Jamie Dean.

Jamie Dean was a 29-year-old who came from Hollywood, Maryland. He enlisted and served 4 years, including 1 year in Afghanistan where he cleaned out caves and did all of the tough things that went on there. He came home severely depressed, suffering from PTSD, was being treated at the Veterans Hospital after being honorably discharged from the United States Army.

And then he got the letter. On November 26, he received a letter that said pursuant to Executive Order of 14 September 2001, you are relieved from your present reserve component status and are ordered to report to duty. He was going to be sent within 2 months into Iraq, a man who is suffering from PTSD.

This man broke. He started to drink. He had weapons holed up in his home. The day after Christmas, he was surrounded by the police and was shot dead.

We are breaking the Army. We are breaking the Marines. These people should be thought about when we consider the extension.

GAO REPORT FINDS LITTLE PROGRESS IN IRAQ

(Mr. YARMUTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, President Bush continues to ignore reality in Iraq, instead glossing over the deteriorating situation while asking for more money from Congress and more personal sacrifice from our troops.

A report released by the White House in July claimed that progress had been made on eight of the 18 benchmarks mandated by the Congress. But a new, unbiased report from the GAO shows that the situation is even worse than the White House led us to believe.

According to the GAO report, Iraq has failed to meet all but three of the 18 benchmarks required for political and military progress in Iraq. Some of the report's most disconcerting findings include the fact that the capabilities of Iraqi security forces have not improved and that violence remains high.

Madam Speaker, with the release of this discouraging and objective report, Republicans in this body must decide whether to continue rubber-stamping the President's failed policy in Iraq or begin working with Democrats to bring our troops home.

DEVASTATING FIRES RAGE THROUGH GREECE

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, as cochair and cofounder of the Hellenic Caucus, I rise today in strong support of the Sarbanes resolution, H. Res. 629, expressing the condolences and sympathy of the House of Representatives to the Government and the people of Greece for the loss of 65 lives and destruction caused by the devastating fires raging through Greece, and which pledges our full support and solidarity to Greece.

This disaster has affected all parts of Greece. Thousands of people are homeless, many of whom have lost all of their possessions. Hundreds of thousands of acres of land have been ravaged. Our government has pledged $1.3 million to aid Greece during this difficult time. We have sent professional help and fire equipment.

Along with my colleagues in the Hellenic Caucus, we will be urging the State Department to remain in close contact with Greek authorities so that the United States can continue to assist in every way with this effort.

Greece has been a strong ally to our Nation, assisting us in times of need, including the terrible terrorist attacks on September 11 and Hurricane Katrina. We must now help Greece in its time of need. Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of Greece.

CHAMP ACT

(Mr. ARCURI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ARCURI. Madam Speaker, last week the Census Bureau came out with a new report that shows the number of children living without health insurance increased last year by 700,000. It is the second year in a row that the number of uninsured children has increased. Today, 8.7 million children in this country are going without the critical health care services they need to live a healthy and productive life.

Fortunately, this Democratic Congress has acted to reverse this disturbing trend. Last month, this House passed the Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act. The legislation provides an additional $50 billion in funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program which today provides 6 million children access to private health insurance.

Unfortunately, there are 6 million other children that are eligible for the program but are not currently enrolled. Our $50 billion investment would allow us to reach almost every child who is currently eligible which would significantly reduce the number of uninsured children in America.

Madam Speaker, this Congress has acted. It is time for the President to join with us in prioritizing the health care needs of our children.

THE "RE-SADDAMIZATION" OF IRAQ

(Mr. INSLEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. INSLEE. Madam Speaker, last week I talked to a father who lost his son in May in Iraq. He was, of course, devastated. He asked me a question: Why did my son die in Iraq?

That is a question that will be on all of our minds in the coming days when we receive the new report from Iraq. When we look at the report in a very calm, dispassionate manner, I hope we think about what is really going on in Iraq. What is really going on in Iraq, what the President has crowed about as a great success in these regions is

what you might call the "re-Saddamization" of Iraq.

The President is going to brag about the sense that he is now giving more power to tribes and tribal sheikhs who at some point when we eventually leave Iraq will be better equipped and better armed to fight the central government that the President used to crow about.

I think we need to have a calm, dispassionate review of what we're doing. We are creating the conditions that could result in a worse civil war. We have to have a calm review and make the right choices.

PRIORITIZE CHILDREN'S HEALTH

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, President Bush has threatened to veto a bill that would provide health care insurance to 5 million children who are currently uninsured. The President's reason: The bill is simply too expensive. But what he ignores is the fact that the CHAMP Act is fully paid for.

This Democratic House is concerned that too many children are growing up without health insurance, making it impossible for them to receive the regular checkups that they need to live long and healthy lives. The CHAMP Act would strengthen the CHIP program, a popular Federal-State health care partnership so we can reach nearly all of the children who are currently eligible for the program.

The price tag is an additional $50 billion over 5 years. Again, the President says it is simply too much money. Yet, he has no problem asking this Congress to rubber-stamp a new Iraq war emergency funding bill that press reports say could be as high as $50 billion and that would only last about 5 months.

Madam Speaker, it is time President Bush prioritize the health care needs of our Nation's children. He should simply support the CHAMP Act.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. LAHOOD. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert a personal explanation at this point with respect to H.R. 811. Although I am listed as a cosponsor of the bill, on further reflection, I do not support the bill and intend to vote against the bill. Were the bill not already on the Union Calendar, I would delete my name from the list of cosponsors.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. SOLIS). Without objection, the gentleman's statement will appear in the RECORD.

There was no objection.

□ 1030

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair must remind Members that, under clause 7 of rule XVII, it is not in order to bring to the attention of the House an occupant of the gallery.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO SELECT COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE THE VOTING IRREGULARITIES OF AUGUST 2, 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 611, 110th Congress, and the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Members to the Select Committee to Investigate the Voting Irregularities of August 2, 2007:

Mr. DELAHUNT, Massachusetts, Chairman

Mr. DAVIS, Alabama

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN, South Dakota

COMMUNICATION FROM HON. JOHN A. BOEHNER, REPUBLICAN LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable JOHN A. BOEHNER, Republican Leader:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, September 4, 2007.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, H-232, U.S. Capitol,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI: Pursuant to House Resolution 611, I am pleased to appoint the following Members to the Select Committee on Voting Irregularities.

Mr. Mike Pence of Indiana—Ranking Member, Mr. Steven LaTourette of Ohio, and Mr. Kenny Hulshof of Missouri.

These Members have expressed interest in serving in this capacity and I am pleased to fulfill their requests.

Sincerely,

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Republican Leader.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

EXTENDING CONDOLENCES AND SYMPATHY OF THE HOUSE TO THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF GREECE

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 629) extending the condolences and sympathy of the House of Representatives to the Government and the people of Greece for the grave loss of life and vast destruction caused by the devastating fires raging through Greece since June 2007.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 629

Whereas more than 3,000 forest fires have been recorded in Greece since June 2007;

Whereas over a 10-day period, an estimated 4,000 people saw their homes destroyed by the wildfires, which razed dozens of villages, destroyed livestock and charred an estimated 469,000 acres of mostly forest and farmland;

Whereas dozens of Greek families have lost their loved ones to the fires;

Whereas thousands of Greeks have been left homeless and hundreds of thousands of acres of pristine forest have been destroyed;

Whereas hundreds of thousands of mature olive trees, vineyards and thousands of animals perished in the flames;

Whereas damage to the Greek economy is estimated at between $1,600,000,000 and $5,400,000,000;

Whereas the United States and Greece have stood side by side in confronting world challenges throughout the 20th century, and will stand together in confronting this new challenge; and

Whereas the United States, through its government, its people and its Greek-American community, has already extended significant support to the people of Greece during this difficult time: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) extends its condolences and sympathy to the Government and the people of Greece for the grave loss of life and vast destruction caused by the devastating fires raging through Greece;

(2) vows its full support and solidarity to a close friend, a strategic partner, and a longstanding ally in this painful and difficult hour;

(3) fully supports the Administration's initiatives to provide assistance and relief to the people of Greece, including its pledge of $1,500,000 in aid as well as expert and technical assistance;

(4) encourages public institutions, specialized agencies, as well as private citizens, to offer their resources; and

(5) expresses confidence that Greece and its people will succeed in overcoming the hardships incurred through this tragedy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from American Samoa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from American Samoa?

There was no objection.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me first thank my honorable colleague and dear friend from the State of Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) for introducing this timely resolution that extends sympathy to our Greek friends, and I want to also add my name as a cosponsor of this proposed legislation.

Madam Speaker, while many people across Europe and the United States spent the month of August soaking up the summer sunshine and enjoying their vacations, thousands of Greeks were engaged in a desperate struggle to save their homes, livestock and beautiful countryside from the devastating effects of wildfires.

Americans watched in alarm as television footage showed flames ominously approaching the ruins of temples and stadiums in ancient Olympia, the birthplace of the Olympic Games.

They were saddened to see the worst fires in Greece's living memory sweep across well-known and picturesque tourist sites, including Corfu and Kefalonia in the west and the Peloponnese in the south of the country, Madam Speaker, and their hearts ached at the personal stories of individuals who lost their homes as well as family members to the all-consuming power of the fire.

The sobering statistics highlight the true extent of the loss. Over a 10-day period, an estimated 4,000 people lost their homes, while around 469,000 acres of forest and farmland were destroyed. Dozens of families are now without their loved ones while thousands have been left homeless. According to media reports, estimated costs for the destruction of homes and properties are well over $1 billion.

Here in the United States, we know all too well how devastating the effects of Mother Nature can be, as Americans in Utah and Montana launched their own battle against damaging wildfires this summer, and exactly 2 years ago New Orleans and other Southern cities suffered from the destructive effects of Hurricane Katrina.

Just as we valued the aid of foreign nations in our difficult hours, we stand ready to offer a helping hand to our Greek friends during their time of need. This House extends its deepest condolences to the Government and people of Greece following the vast destruction wrought by the wildfires. We welcome the administration's pledge of financial aid as well as technical assistance, and we express confidence in the ability of the Greek people, who have personified the strength of Zeus throughout their history, to overcome the hardships resulting from this tragedy.

I strongly support this measure and urge my colleagues to join me in expressing sympathy for and solidarity with our good people from Greece.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to be an original cosponsor of this important resolution, and I thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES), the author of the resolution, as well as the chairman of our Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. LANTOS, for their leadership in bringing this resolution quickly to the floor today.

This resolution allows the Members of this House the opportunity to extend our profound condolences to the people of Greece and to their government over the tragic losses endured during the recent fires in Greece which have claimed the lives of scores of people.

The human toll in casualties, injuries and loss of property is difficult to bear, with an estimated 4,000 people having lost loved ones, homes and, indeed, even communities.

Moreover, hundreds of thousands of acres of Greek forests and farmland have been obliterated. And all of this, Madam Speaker, has occurred as a result of the more than 3,000 forest fires that have broken out in Greece since June.

This massive tragedy has been bravely shouldered by the people of Greece. The heartfelt thoughts and prayers of the American people are with the families and friends of those who lost their lives in this tragedy and with all of the people of Greece.

United in friendship, the United States and Greece have stood together on the same side of many of the world challenges throughout the last century. It is appropriate, therefore, that we provide assistance and support to our friend and ally in this hour of need.

I, therefore, urge my colleagues to support this resolution and, in so doing, express their condolences and pledge their support for efforts to relieve the suffering endured by the people of Greece as a result of the tragic fires that have ravaged their nation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of our time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure that I yield whatever time that he needs, as the chief sponsor of this proposed legislation, to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES).

Mr. SARBANES. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding and for his support of this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues, Congresswoman MALONEY, Congressman BILIRAKIS, Congressman SPACE and many, many others in this body, in support of H. Res. 629, expressing the deepest of sympathy to the families who have incurred enormous loss and who continue to suffer the effects of the terrible fires that have raged across Greece since June.

I also want to thank Chairman LANTOS and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN and their staffs for their assistance in bringing this resolution to the floor.

Official reports of damage from the Greek Government will be forthcoming in the next few weeks, but on Monday, the New York Times reported that over a 10-day period an estimated 4,000 people saw their homes destroyed by the wildfires which razed dozens of villages, destroyed livestock and charred an estimated 469,000 acres of mostly forest and farmland.

As of Sunday, the official death toll had risen to 65. According to the Greek fire brigade, thousands have been rendered homeless, and hundreds of thousands of acres of pristine forest have been destroyed. The fire has also affected a substantial part of Greece's agricultural sector. According to Reuters, hundreds of thousands of mature olive trees, vineyards and thousands of animals perished in the flames. Overall damage to the economy is estimated at 1.2 billion to 4 billion Euros.

As the resolution reads, we take this moment to stand with the people of Greece and vow to come to their aid as they have done for us and others throughout the world time and time again. There is no doubt that the people of Greece will prevail in the face of this difficult time. There is no doubt that they will succeed in the recovery effort.

My colleagues and I have been working to identify areas where the United States Government can assist in the near term and as part of the longer commitment that will be needed in reversing the damage. We are grateful that the U.S. Government has already extended funding and other support in this regard, and we are very proud of the commitment already demonstrated by our friends and organizations in the Greek American community who are coordinating a substantial relief effort of their own.

I'd like to thank the Greek ambassador, Ambassador Mallias, for his leadership in reaching out and helping to coordinate assistance to his country. He's here with us today in the gallery.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to tell a story briefly. I had the opportunity to visit Greece in 1985, more than 20 years ago, with my grandmother who had not been there for almost 30 years. I remember her taking me by the hand as we walked through her village, which is in the southern Peloponnese, and the Peloponnese has been particularly hard hit by these fires.

And as we walked the paths of her childhood, I remember that she was looking for one particular olive tree

that she remembered not from 30 years prior but from 60 years before that she played under as a small child. It was a touchstone of her childhood and of her memories, and it made an incredible impression on me, the love, the connection that she had to this village and to that land.

Today, for many Greeks and for many Greek Americans, these touchstones, these sacred markers have gone up in flames. Beyond this, the loss of life is tragic. For these reasons, Americans all across this country are moved to reach out to the citizens of Greece.

Madam Speaker, the spirit of the Greek people is indomitable. It will triumph over this tragedy, and with this resolution, America signifies that it stands with Greece and its people in this hour of need.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to my colleague and good friend, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE), a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 629 and extend my condolences and sympathy to the people and the Government of Greece for the grave loss of life and vast destruction caused by the raging fires that destroyed the homes, villages, farms, livestock, but not the spirit, of the country.

Since June of this year, the people and the Government of Greece have been battling forest fires due to extensive heat and lack of rain. An estimated 495,000 acres of mostly forest and farmland have been destroyed, the worst damage since the 1950s.

Today I stand with my colleagues, Chairman FALEOMAVAEGA and the ranking member, to avow close support and solidarity to a close friend, a strategic partner and a longstanding ally in this painful and difficult hour.

I applaud the administration's initiative to provide assistance and relief to the people of Greece, including its pledge of $1.5 million in aid, as well as expert and technical assistance. I have confidence that Greece and its people will succeed in overcoming the hardship incurred through this tragedy.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I thank the gentleman for his remarks, and I thank the honored guests who are with us today. We grieve for the people today, and we stand with them in this time of sorrow ready to help.

With that, I yield back the balance of our time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I also want to commend and thank my good friend, the senior ranking member of our committee, for her support and her assistance in managing this legislation, and I want to thank my colleague from Maryland for his most eloquent and moving speech this morning to share with our colleagues in the House the tragedy facing the good people of Greece, and I sincerely hope that we will support this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 629.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1045

PACIFIC ISLAND ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2007

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3062) to authorize appropriations to provide for South Pacific exchanges, provide technical and other assistance to countries in the Pacific region through the United States Agency for International Development, and authorize appropriations to provide Fulbright Scholarships for Pacific Island students, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3062

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Pacific Island Economic and Educational Development Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRY EXCHANGES.

There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of State $1,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008 and 2009 for exchanges with Pacific Island countries carried out under the educational and cultural exchange programs of the Department of State.

SEC. 3. USAID IN PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES.

The Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is authorized, upon request by the government of a Pacific Island country, to provide to such government technical and other assistance.

SEC. 4. J. FULBRIGHT EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) From 1949 until 2003, the Department of State awarded 13,176 Fulbright Scholarships to students from East Asia and the Pacific, but only 31 Fulbright Scholarships went to students from Pacific Island countries.

(2) In the 2003-2004 academic year, the Department of State awarded 315 scholarships to students from East Asia and the Pacific, but none were awarded to students from Pacific Island countries.

(b) REVIEW AND REPORT.—The Secretary of State shall conduct a review and submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report regarding the marginalization of students from Pacific Island countries in the awarding of Fulbright Scholarships.

(c) PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS FROM PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES IN THE J. FULBRIGHT EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of State shall establish a program within the J. William Fulbright Educational Exchange Program (established under section 112(a)(1) of the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2460(a)(1)), commonly referred to as the Fulbright-Hays Act) to make awards to students from Pacific Island countries to permit such students to study in the United States pursuant to the terms and conditions of such Exchange Program.

(2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—In addition to amounts that are otherwise authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of State for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 to provide awards under the J. William Fulbright Educational Exchange Program, there is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary $500,000 for each of such fiscal years to provide such awards to students from Pacific Island countries.

SEC. 5. PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRY DEFINED.

In this Act, the terms "Pacific Island country" and "Pacific Island countries" mean any of the following countries:

(1) The Cook Islands.
(2) The Federated States of Micronesia.
(3) The Independent State of Samoa.
(4) The Kingdom of Tonga.
(5) Niue.
(6) Papua New Guinea.
(7) The Republic of Fiji.
(8) The Republic of Kiribati.
(9) The Republic of the Marshall Islands.
(10) The Republic of Nauru.
(11) The Republic of Palau.
(12) The Republic of Vanuatu.
(13) The Solomon Islands.
(14) Tuvalu.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from American Samoa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from American Samoa?

There was no objection.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this proposed resolution, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Again, I want to thank the distinguished chairman of our committee,

the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), and our senior ranking member of our committee, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for their support and their leadership in bringing this important legislation before the floor.

I am pleased to bring to the floor today a bill that will benefit the entire Pacific region. I am honored and proud to sponsor this legislation.

While they may be overlooked when listing our great allies, the United States has long and profound relationships with the Pacific Island nations that stretch back more than two centuries. With consideration of this legislation today, Congress will act to significantly strengthen this vitally important alliance.

The Pacific Island nations have long been integral to our strategic interests, from the vital role they played in the Pacific theatre of operations during World War II to their critical role that they played in the conduct of our nuclear testing and missile defense system that even today is critical to our overall military and strategic interests in this important region of the world.

We work closely with the nations of the Pacific to combat transnational threats, particularly the rapidly increasing peril posed by global warming. The people of the Pacific have also fought and sacrificed side-by-side with American soldiers in conflicts from World War II to the current war in Iraq.

But as we look towards the Pacific, we must step up both our multilateral and bilateral relationships to provide critically needed assistance to ensure that other countries do not fill the void. Foreign assistance and scholarship offerings from other countries to the Pacific Island nations has increased dramatically in recent years. Such aid comes with few requirements for good governance and few environmental or labor standards.

The bottom line, Madam Speaker, our public diplomacy program and educational and cultural exchanges with the Pacific Island nations is shameful and without excuse.

Left unchecked, such foreign assistance from other countries can cause further instability, leaving these island nations to believe the United States no longer is interested to assist them, and thereby leave them vulnerable to establish friendships with countries that do not necessarily support our interests in this vast region of the world.

We must act now to fill the void and exert our influence. The Pacific Island Economic and Educational Development Act of 2007 seeks to address the development needs of our allies in the Pacific Islands and to engage the United States in the region more deeply.

This legislation pushes for greater activity in the Pacific Islands by authorizing the administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development to listen to the needs of the leaders of the Pacific Islands and to provide assistance accordingly. This task would be significantly easier if USAID reestablished a serious presence in the Pacific Island region, something that has been long overdue.

The legislation also authorizes funds to increase the number of Fulbright scholars from the Pacific islands, making use of our most successful international educational program to increase the training of future leaders of the Pacific Islands. Fostering educational opportunities overseas is one of this government's strongest and most effective public diplomacy tools. Leveraging these grants would represent a tremendous way of reengaging with these critical allies in the Pacific region.

Under section 2 of this bill now entitled Pacific Island Country Exchanges, it is the intent of Congress to specifically increase funding for the U.S.-South Pacific Scholarship program, a program which has been in place since 1994, and has been administered by the East-West Center in Honolulu under the direction of the U.S. Department of State. The U.S.-South Pacific Scholarship program has successfully trained many Pacific Island leaders, and it is imperative to U.S. interests in the region that we continue this program.

In this new world where shipping is vulnerable to terrorism and climate change is a top priority, we need these Pacific Island nations as much as they need us. Let's commit to reengaging with them, to strengthening our alliances with them, and to aiding them in every way possible.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3062, the Pacific Island Economic and Educational Development Act. The island nations of the South Pacific, which include longstanding friends of the United States, face continuing challenges in development and education.

I want to commend the chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) for his leadership in introducing this legislation and for working with us in the committee to refine it during the committee process.

Because the amended text deals with authorizations, not mandates or appropriations, it signals congressional interest in deepening our cooperation with the people of the Pacific Islands, while also allowing executive branch agencies appropriate discretion in carrying out such programs.

The text before us will increase the amounts authorized for U.S. educational and cultural exchanges with South Pacific nations to $1 million in each of the next 2 fiscal years, establish a Fulbright exchange program for Pacific Island students, and underscore the interests of the United States Congress in making appropriate USAID technical assistance available to Pacific Island governments.

I thank the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) for accommodating some of our suggested changes. I am pleased to support the amended text.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3062, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

UNITED STATES-POLAND PARLIAMENTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM ACT OF 2007

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 377) to establish a United States-Poland parliamentary youth exchange program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 377

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "United States-Poland Parliamentary Youth Exchange Program Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The United States established diplomatic relations with the newly-formed Polish Republic in April 1919.

(2) The United States and Poland have enjoyed close bilateral relations since 1989.

(3) Poland became a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in March 1999.

(4) Poland became a member of the European Union (EU) in May 2004.

(5) Poland has been a strong supporter, both diplomatically and militarily, of efforts led by the United States to combat global terrorism and has contributed troops to the United States-led coalitions in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

(6) Poland cooperates closely with the United States on such issues as democratization, nuclear proliferation, human rights, regional cooperation in Eastern Europe, and reform of the United Nations.

(7) The United States and Poland seek to ensure enduring ties between both governments and societies.

(8) It is important to invest in the youth of the United States and Poland in order to help ensure long-lasting ties between both societies.

(9) It is in the interest of the United States to preserve a United States presence in Europe and to continue to contribute to the development of transatlantic relationships.

(10) Poland for many years received international and United States financial assistance and is now determined to invest its own resources toward attaining its shared desire with the United States to develop international cooperation.

SEC. 3. UNITED STATES-POLAND PARLIAMENTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM.

(a) AUTHORITY.—The Secretary of State, in cooperation with the Government of Poland, may establish and carry out a parliamentary exchange program for youth of the United States and Poland.

(b) DESIGNATION.—The youth exchange program carried out under this subsection shall be known as the "United States-Poland Parliamentary Youth Exchange Program".

(c) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the youth exchange program is to demonstrate to the youth of the United States and Poland the benefits of friendly cooperation between the United States and Poland based on common political and cultural values.

(d) ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS.—An individual is eligible for participation in the youth exchange program if the individual—

(1) is a citizen or national of the United States or of Poland;

(2) is under the age of 19 years;

(3) is a student who is enrolled and in good standing at a secondary school in the United States or Poland;

(4) has been accepted for up to one academic year of study in a program of study abroad approved for credit at such school; and

(5) meets any other qualifications that the Secretary of State may establish for purposes of the program.

(e) PROGRAM ELEMENTS.—Under the youth exchange program, eligible participants selected for participation in the program shall—

(1) live in and attend a public secondary school in the host country for a period of one academic year;

(2) while attending public school in the host country, undertake academic studies in the host country, with particular emphasis on the history, constitution, and political development of the host country;

(3) be eligible, either during or after the completion of such academic studies, for an internship in an appropriate position in the host country; and

(4) engage in such other activities as the President considers appropriate to achieve the purpose of the program.

SEC. 4. ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS.

The Secretary of State shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives an annual report on the United States-Poland Parliamentary Youth Exchange Program established under this Act. Each annual report shall include—

(1) information on the implementation of the Program during the preceding year:

(2) the number of participants in the Program during such year;

(3) the names and locations of the secondary schools in the United States and Poland attended by such participants;

(4) a description of the areas of study of such participants during their participation in the Program;

(5) a description of any internships taken by such participants during their participation in the Program; and

(6) a description of any other activities such participants carried out during their participation in the Program.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated for the Department of State for fiscal year 2008 such sums as may be necessary to carry out the youth exchange program authorized by this Act.

(b) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts authorized to be appropriated by subsection (a) shall remain available until expended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from American Samoa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from American Samoa?

There was no objection.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bill and yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me first thank our distinguished chairman of the committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), and our senior ranking member, the gentlelady from Florida, for their support and for their leadership in bringing this bill before the floor.

And let me thank our eminent colleague in the other Chamber, the distinguished Senator from Indiana (Senator LUGAR) for his leadership on this important issue. It is exemplary of his sage leadership on so many foreign affairs matters.

Madam Speaker, in 1777, while serving the American cause in Paris, Benjamin Franklin discovered a brilliant Polish military tactician. His name was Casimir Pulaski. A leader in Poland's bitter campaign to beat back Russia, the nobleman Pulaski sacrificed his status in Europe to join the American revolution in the New World. It did not take long for George Washington to recognize the great talent he had on his hands. He promoted Pulaski to brigadier general, placing him in charge of four horse brigades.

Pulaski's prowess and strategic skill during the Revolutionary War became renowned. So dedicated was he to our cause that when funding ran low among the colonials, he used some of his own money to purchase equipment for his men.

General Pulaski, who eventually went down in the history books as the father of the American cavalry, is just one of the many important Polish figures who have contributed greatly to the United States and to the world. The relationship between the people of our two countries has flourished in recent years since the fall of communism, but it actually dates back centuries to the founding of our Nation.

Today, this Congress aims to help the people of Poland rear the next generation of productive, inventive and standout individuals. This bill authorizes an educational exchange program between our two nations that promises to be mutually beneficial and strengthen the alliance between our two nations.

This program will be identical in its structure and operation to the successful Congress-Bundestag exchange that was launched in 1983. Over the last quarter century, thousands of young Americans and Germans have seized the opportunity to spend an academic year living and studying with their foreign peers.

As a result, these secondary school students have gained a better understanding of each other's way of life and have begun developing into citizens of the world. With the authorization and funding of the bilateral initiative before us today, we will extend the same opportunities to our young friends in Poland.

Cross-cultural exchange is the most powerful way of creating harmony among nations. And study abroad programs represent the most powerful type of exchange because they foster understanding and education about other nations at an early age. The country of Poland is one of our most important allies in Europe, has supported us in our fight against terrorism, and stood with us by contributing troops to Afghanistan and Iraq. The Polish people have made great strides since the fall of communism liberalizing their economy, joining NATO in 1999, and becoming a Member of the European Union in 2004.

It is high time that we recognize and advance Poland's place in the world, as well as our special relationship with that nation, by initiating a robust educational exchange program.

Madam Speaker, I wholeheartedly support this proposed bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of Senate bill 377, the United States-Poland Parliamentary Youth Exchange Program Act.

This bill, introduced by Senator LUGAR, and already passed by the Senate in March, would establish a formal parliamentary youth exchange program for American and Polish secondary students. The purpose of this

exchange program is to demonstrate to the youth of Poland and to the United States the benefits of friendly cooperation based on our shared political and cultural values.

The United States and Poland have enjoyed close bilateral relations since the end of the Cold War. Poland has supported U.S.-led efforts to fight global terrorism, has contributed troops to coalition forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, and has cooperated closely with the United States to promote democracy and human rights around the world and to reform the United Nations.

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By focusing on the source of our common future, our young people, this bill will further cement the friendship and the ideals that our two nations already share. Therefore, Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this worthwhile endeavor.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, it is with pleasure that I yield 3 minutes to my good friend, the distinguished gentleman from Connecticut and a member of the Financial Services and Government Reform Committees, Congressman MURPHY.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support today of S. 377, the United States and Poland Parliamentary Youth Exchange Program Act.

Poland, as has been said by both of our previous speakers, has demonstrated an amazing commitment both to democratic values and to their role as an ally of the United States. I remember, as a teenager, if I might date myself, watching in rapt attention as Lech Walesa and his solidarity movement defeated the Communist Party in Poland in parliamentary elections, and then watching Walesa go on to become president of Poland in 1990. That solidarity movement heralded the collapse of communism across Eastern Europe.

This United States and Poland Parliamentary Youth Exchange will allow American students to learn much more about this very important heritage of our neighbors in Eastern Europe. Eligible participants in the program will attend a public high school for one academic year and enroll in courses that place a particular emphasis on their host country's history, the establishment of its Constitution, the nation's birth and its political development.

Though my last name might not give a hint to this, I am a very proud Polish American. My mother's family emigrated from Poland to New Britain, Connecticut some generations ago. And if you have a chance to drive through the great State of Connecticut and you're looking for a great place to grab a bite to eat, stop off in New Britain, Connecticut. Go to Broad Street, where we still have Polish language storefronts selling some of the best Polish food that you'll find in eastern Connecticut.

And I appreciate the gentleman spending a little time remarking about General Pulaski. We take that legacy very seriously in New Britain. We still celebrate Pulaski Day with a Pulaski parade that runs not very far from Pulaski School and ends up at the Pulaski Club. So we are very serious students of Polish history in New Britain, Connecticut, and I can't think of a better program than one such as this that will allow children of a community such as ours in New Britain, whose forefathers came from that country, to be able to go there and strengthen their appreciation for that culture and that country's heritage.

I'd like to thank Representative VISCLOSKY, especially, and Representative EMANUEL for bringing this legislation before the House floor today and, of course, Senator LUGAR for being such a champion in the Senate. This will mean a great deal to our small community of New Britain and the entire Polish American community in the Fifth District of Connecticut.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of our time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from Connecticut and his support and statement. Nothing like having an Irish Polish American to be supportive of his proposed legislation.

Madam Speaker, I would love to yield 5 minutes now to my dear friend, distinguished member of the Appropriations Committee, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. VISCLOSKY). That's a good Polish name.

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of S. 377, the United States and Poland Parliamentary Youth Exchange Program Act of 2007. I am the sponsor of the House version of this legislation, and I would like to thank my 13 colleagues, including the gentleman from Connecticut, who are cosponsors of the measure.

I would especially like to thank the distinguished senior Senator from the State of Indiana, RICHARD LUGAR, for originating this legislation and introducing it in the other body. And I would be remiss if I did not thank the chairman of the subcommittee, the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA), as well as the ranking member of the full committee, the gentlelady from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), as well as Mr. LANTOS and the members of the committee for their consideration of the measure.

It is my sincere hope that this legislation will become the foundation for future youth exchange programs around the world. As technology and transportation makes the world more and more interconnected, it is essential that our youth and future leaders have firsthand experiences in other cultures when making decisions. A lot can be learned about a different culture from a book or a picture, but it is not nearly the same as living, studying and working in another culture for an entire year, which is what the U.S.-Poland Parliamentary Youth Exchange Program will enable youths from American and Polish high schools to do.

Senator LUGAR has been a guiding light in promoting cultural exchange programs between America and countless other countries throughout his tenure, and it has been my privilege to work with him on this legislation. The Senator's genuine interest in the cultures of the world is reflected in all his actions, and he understands the priceless value of cultural exchange programs as embodied in the U.S. and Poland Parliamentary Youth Exchange Program. This program will have a profound effect on the youth of our two countries, and it can only strengthen the unbreakable friendship between the United States and Poland.

I too am very proud of the Polish community in Indiana's First Congressional District. This proud community is an integral part of the greater northwest area community in Indiana, and enhances the culture of my district in countless ways. I am happy that the U.S. and Poland Youth Exchange Program will allow all facets of the Polish culture to be experienced firsthand by American youth.

Madam Speaker, we should not delay in this opportunity for our youth to be immersed in Poland's rich culture and in this opportunity to share our culture with Polish youth. And I would urge my colleagues to support the measure.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Indiana for his most eloquent speech.

At this time I would like to yield 2 minutes to my good friend from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE), a senior member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, let me commend Senator LUGAR for this fine legislation. Senator LUGAR is such an outstanding leader.

And I would also like to say that Count Casimir Pulaski was a person, as a historian, that did so much in the Revolutionary War. We actually defeated Cromwell at the major battle.

I had the opportunity also to teach at Pulaski School in New Jersey when I was a school teacher in Passaic, and the Polish community was very strong in that area. And so I learned a lot, from Yak Samas and Dobcha, from my students and their parents.

I think that parliamentary exchanges are outstanding. As we remember Lech Walesa and the solidarity

movement, we do see the challenge for the shipyards there in Poland, but hopefully they will be able to sustain themselves. I think that these various types of parliamentary exchanges do a great deal.

I visited Poland in 1967 and went back again in the late 1990s and early 2000 to see the tremendous difference of the 1967 Poland that was drab and going through many, many problems with pollution and the communist system. But with the breakdown of the Warsaw Pact and Poland being able to have democracy, it's really a tremendous country. And as a member of the House Democratic Assistance Corporation here in the House, we certainly strongly push for parliamentary exchanges, and so I certainly support this.

I thank Mr. ENI FALEOMAVAEGA for bringing this to the floor.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 377.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING THE 75TH BIRTHDAY OF DESMOND MPILO TUTU

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 34) recognizing the 75th birthday of Desmond Mpilo Tutu, South African Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, and Nobel Peace Prize recipient, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 34

Whereas Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu has been recognized as one of the 20th century's leaders for freedom, justice, and human rights for all;

Whereas Archbishop Tutu, as a religious leader and Secretary-General of the South African Council of Churches from 1976 until 1978, worked against apartheid in South Africa with the agreement of nearly all South African churches;

Whereas Archbishop Tutu consistently advocated reconciliation between all parties involved in apartheid and, though he was most firm in denouncing South Africa's white-ruled government, Archbishop Tutu was also harsh in his criticism of the violent tactics of some anti-apartheid groups and denounced terrorism;

Whereas Archbishop Tutu spoke strongly in support of non-violent change and economic sanctions against South Africa and as a result had his passport revoked by the South African Government;

Whereas Archbishop Tutu led a historical march to a whites-only beach, where he and supporters were chased off with whips;

Whereas, on October 16, 1984, Archbishop Tutu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of his outstanding leadership, courage, heroism, and use of nonviolence in the struggle against apartheid, and the Nobel Committee cited his "role as a unifying leader figure in the campaign to resolve the problem of apartheid in South Africa";

Whereas a month after winning the Nobel Peace Prize, Archbishop Tutu was elected as the first black Anglican bishop of Johannesburg;

Whereas, on September 7, 1986, Archbishop Tutu became the first black person to lead the Anglican Church in South Africa;

Whereas, in 1994, after the end of apartheid and the election of President Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Tutu was appointed as Chairman of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, to investigate apartheid-era crimes, where his policy of forgiveness and reconciliation has become an international example of conflict resolution, and a trusted method of post-conflict reconstruction;

Whereas, on October 7, 1931, Archbishop Tutu was born in Klerksdorp, Transvaal, to a school teacher and an uneducated mother and was educated at Johannesburg Bantu High School;

Whereas Archbishop Tutu trained as a high school teacher at Pretoria Bantu Normal College and graduated from the University of South Africa in 1954, and after teaching for three years was ordained as a priest in 1960;

Whereas Archbishop Tutu studied theology in England in 1962, received a Masters of Theology from University of London in 1966, was appointed as the first black South African to hold the position of Dean of St. Mary's Cathedral in Johannesburg in 1975, and became the first black General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches in 1978;

Whereas Archbishop Tutu is an international lecturer and philosopher and has received honorary doctorates from ten leading universities in the United States, Britain, and Germany;

Whereas Archbishop Tutu has been awarded a number of prestigious awards, including the Order for Meritorious Award (Gold), the Archbishop of Canterbury's Award for Outstanding Service to the Anglican Communion, the Prix d'Athene, and the Martin Luther King Jr. Humanitarian Award of Annual Black American Heroes and Heroines Day;

Whereas out of deep concern for the challenges facing all of the people of the world, in July 2007 Archbishop Tutu helped assemble The Elders, an historic group of world leaders seeking to contribute their wisdom, independent leadership, and integrity in tackling some of the world's toughest problems;

Whereas October 7, 2007, will mark the 76th birthday of Archbishop Demand Mpilo Tutu; and

Whereas Archbishop Tutu has fought for a democratic and just society without racial divisions, a common system of education, a world which promotes the rights and opportunities of the marginalized, disadvantaged, and disenfranchised, and continues to pursue an active international ministry of peace: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) honors the accomplishments of Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu;

(2) recognizes and congratulates his consistent efforts to promote dialogue to peacefully resolve conflicts between people in Africa and around the world; and

(3) extols the contributions of Archbishop Tutu to South Africa, the United States, and the international community.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from American Samoa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, again I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from American Samoa?

There was no objection.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and yield myself such time as I may consume.

First of all, I would like again to thank our distinguished chairman of the committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), and our senior ranking member of the committee, the gentlelady from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for their support in bringing this legislation to the floor.

I would particularly like to thank my distinguished colleague, the chief sponsor of this legislation, the gentlelady from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) for introducing this important resolution to honor Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa for his lifetime of human rights work.

Madam Speaker, Archbishop Tutu is unquestionably one of the most important and accomplished advocates of human rights and peace on the face of this planet. In the past few years, Bishop Tutu has worked tirelessly to promote religious freedom and self-sovereignty around the world, using his reputation and his work in South Africa as a launching pad to do good. For instance, he has worked to highlight the horrendous human rights situation in Burma and repeatedly called on the Burmese Government to free the champion of democracy there, Aung San Suu Kyi.

But of all his work for humankind, he is perhaps best known for chairing the South Africa Peace and Reconciliation Commission after the scourge of apartheid ended in that nation.

Under the rule of the Afrikaner Nationalist Party, black South Africans were subjected to unspeakable dehumanizing social policies and draconian laws. These terrible measures separated families, denied a decent education to millions of children, and

forced hundreds of thousands from their homes into segregated territories, or bantustans.

Given the nature of the oppression, South Africa could have been a country washed in blood by black Africans seeking revenge once white minority rule ended. But through his characteristic patience and wisdom, Bishop Tutu helped guide South Africans, black, brown and white, through a national process of reconciliation, a forum where the horrors of apartheid were told by both victims and perpetrators. And most importantly, there was no retribution, only truth and reconciliation.

Bishop Tutu and his colleagues traveled throughout South Africa, from village to village, and allowed apartheid's victims to speak as long as they needed to tell their stories. For days at a time he sat and listened to stories of the hellish nightmare innocent victims of apartheid had to endure.

The process of simply telling proved an enormous healing experience for individuals in the South African nation. And the stories have been archived so that South Africans in the future can know their past and can appreciate their present.

This effort, and his spiritual leadership throughout the trying times of his nation made Bishop Tutu an international hero. He is a human rights champion and has been the winner of numerous awards, including the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize in 1984.

Madam Speaker, as we celebrate Bishop Tutu's 76th birthday next month, we should be mindful of the lessons he has brought in his service to mankind, particularly in this troubling time when human rights violations are still so widespread around the world.

As he said famously in his Nobel Peace acceptance speech, "Oppression dehumanizes the oppressor as much as, if not more, the oppressed."

That axiom, to me, Madam Speaker, is a profound admonition to tyrants around the world.

And I cannot help, Madam Speaker, but to say that if you say something about Bishop Tutu, you have to add his colleague, Nelson Mandela. Now here was a man that was in prison for 29 years, almost 30 years. And you would think that there is nothing on his mind than to seek vengeance and retribution against what the apartheid government did to him for all those years, but instead, as far as I'm concerned, the most Christ-like person that has ever come out of that prison, Mr. Mandela, and for the leadership that he displayed in bringing all different factions, nationalities and ethnicities in South Africa together to build a good nation.

I remember years ago, Madam Speaker, the World Cup. I don't know if my colleagues are familiar with the sport of rugby, but the World Cup rugby tournament is on in France right now. Years ago, the all-black rugby national team representing New Zealand had a very difficult time playing against the Spring Boks from South Africa, especially if they had an Amari Polynesian or a Samoan Polynesian as a member of that all-blacks team. The Spring Boks of South Africa refused to play the all-blacks of New Zealand simply because there are two people of color that are members of the team representing New Zealand. They got the two countries pretty heated at times. There was no question about the bigotry and the racism that existed at that time as far as apartheid is concerned.

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Madam Speaker, today we honor Bishop Desmond Tutu and all that he represents, and I call on my colleagues to vote to support this important legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today also in support of House Resolution 34, which honors the Most Reverend Desmond Tutu, the Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, South Africa; and an outspoken advocate for peace, equality, and human rights around the globe.

While Archbishop Tutu is regarded by some as a controversial figure, he is universally recognized as a hero in the struggle against the apartheid regime in South Africa. There he served as a beacon of hope, committed to peace and unity in an era marked by violence and oppression. He passionately advocated for nonviolent opposition to the racist apartheid regime while campaigning internationally for the imposition of economic sanctions against South Africa.

And even in the face of the most egregious human rights abuses reinforced by draconian laws, including the Population Registration Act of 1950, the Group Areas Act of 1950, the Lands Act of 1954 and 1955, and the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act of 1970, he inspired disenfranchised South Africans to believe that one day justice would prevail and freedom would come.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I thank my colleague and dear friend from Florida for her statement in support of this resolution.

At this time, Madam Speaker, it is with pleasure that I yield 5 minutes to my good friend, the chief sponsor of this proposed bill, the gentlewoman from Texas, senior member of the Judiciary Committee and also a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, let me, first of all, thank my distinguished colleague, the manager of the bill and a distinguished member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Chairman FALEOMAVAEGA, for the very kind words that he has offered; and to the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, for her supporting words; and chiefly two very important persons who have assisted in this legislation, Chairman LANTOS for his support and the very excellent committee staff that have supported us, along with our dear subcommittee Chair, DONALD PAYNE, who is renowned for his commitment to Africa, and certainly we appreciate his friendship and support of this legislation.

Might I acknowledge the cosponsors who were eager to join to recognize this distinguished but bountiful with words and compassion in his small package of a man but yet his gigantic heart, mind, and spirit, Bishop Mpilo Tutu, who, as you can see, is a man that commands thousands for his vision.

We are proud to be able to, nearing the 76th birthday, acknowledge his 75th birthday and his 75th year. So might I also express appreciation for my staff, Yahannus Tsahani and Nina Besser, for their help in this legislation.

Let me say to you, Madam Speaker, that Archbishop Tutu was not lost with words or passion. He said, "I am not interested in picking up crumbs of compassion thrown from the table of someone who considers himself my master. I want the full menu of rights." He is a man of immense courage and vision. He has long served as the moral voice of the oppressed populations. No one who has ever met, spoken to, or worked with Archbishop Tutu is the same afterwards.

He is, of course, linked with Father Mandela, arm in arm as Father Mandela maintained his life and his integrity for 29 years. It was Bishop Tutu who had a voice, steering the religious and faith community away from its closed attitude to open to the Beatitudes, that, in fact, "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy." Bishop Tutu believed in that.

As a tireless advocate for ending discrimination, Desmond Tutu's career is truly extraordinary. In 1975 he became the first black African Dean of Mary's Cathedral in Johannesburg, South Africa. From 1976 to 1978, he served as the Secretary-General of the South African Council of Churches, once again being the first black African to do so. He went on to head South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission from 1996 to 1998, investigating prior apartheid-related crimes.

It would be interesting if we were at that point in Iraq, but we must set the picture of what it means to bring together a commission that addresses the pain and hurt, brutality and devastation of black Africans, South Africans,

at the hands of apartheid. It was not easy. It would have been better to sit in accusatory fashion, point fingers, and never resolve. But it was the calm demeanor, the spirit, the religious faith of Bishop Tutu that allowed this process to go forward and to allow it to go forward as others have now looked back and said, well done, well done.

Archbishop Tutu is perhaps best known for his courageous opposition to the internationally condemned apartheid regime that persisted in his homeland until democratic elections were finally held in 1994. It was for his nonviolent struggle in opposition to apartheid that he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 in recognition of his courage, heroism, and peaceful methods. The Nobel committee called him a "unifying leader-figure in the campaign to resolve the problem of apartheid in South Africa." The committee went on to state, "the means by which this campaign is conducted is of vital importance for the whole of the continent of Africa and for the cause of peace in the world." In a press release discussing the award, the Nobel committee wrote, "This year's award should be seen as a renewed recognition of the courage and heroism shown by black South Africans in their use of peaceful methods in the struggle against apartheid."

How wonderful it would be if the conflicts around the world and in the Middle East would follow this straight and narrow path of a peaceful opposition.

"This recognition is also directed to all who throughout the world use such methods to stand in the vanguard of the campaign for racial equality as a human right."

In recognition of his vast intellectual ability, Desmond Tutu has received numerous honorary doctorates from several universities, including Harvard, Kent, Columbia, Aberdeen, and Howard. Let me also indicate as well that he has won the Order of Meritorious Gold Award; the Martin Luther King, Jr. Nonviolent Peace Prize; and a number of others.

He has also been a survivor of cancer. He is someone who has never stopped teaching, working, and understanding.

And for those of us who are products of America's civil rights movement, I thought would be appropriate to bring to light and to attention the reflection of two giants: Rosa Parks and Archbishop Tutu, to bring together the trials and tribulations, the struggles of African Americans in the United States with someone who fully understood what struggle was all about.

I am delighted to join with my colleagues asking for your full support in honoring Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu, a man who stood between the schism of two oceans, bringing America and Africa together through the idea of unity, peace, generosity, justice, and opportunity for all.

Congratulations, Bishop Tutu. I ask my colleagues to support this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 34, which honors the life and accomplishments of Desmond Mpilo Tutu, South African Archbishop of Cape Town and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. I have been pleased to work with the Committee on Foreign Affairs on this important legislation, and I would like to thank Chairman LANTOS for his support for this legislation.

Madam Speaker, Archbishop Tutu once stated, "I am not interested in picking up crumbs of compassion thrown from the table of someone who considers himself my master. I want the full menu of rights." He is a man of immense courage and vision, and he has long served as the moral voice of oppressed populations. No one who has ever met, spoken to, or worked with Archbishop Tutu is the same afterwards.

As a tireless advocate of ending discrimination, Desmond Tutu's career is truly extraordinary. In 1975, he became the first black African Dean of Mary's Cathedral, in Johannesburg, South Africa. From 1976–1978, he served as the Secretary-General of the South African Council of Churches; once again, being the first black African to do so. He went on to head South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission from 1996–1998, investigating prior apartheid related crimes.

Archbishop Tutu is perhaps best known for his courageous opposition to the internationally-condemned apartheid regime that persisted in his homeland until democratic elections were finally held in 1994. It was for his non-violent struggle in opposition to apartheid that he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984, in recognition of his courage, heroism, and peaceful methods. The Nobel committee called him a "unifying leader-figure in the campaign to resolve the problem of apartheid in South Africa." The committee went on to state, "the means by which this campaign is conducted is of vital importance for the whole of the continent of Africa and for the cause of peace in the world." In a press release discussing the award, the Nobel committee wrote, "This year's award should be seen as a renewed recognition of the courage and heroism shown by black South Africans in their use of peaceful methods in the struggle against apartheid. This recognition is also directed to all who, throughout the world, use such methods to stand in the vanguard of the campaign for racial equality as a human right."

In recognition of his vast intellectual ability, Desmond Tutu has received numerous honorary doctorates from several universities including Harvard, Kent, Colombia, Aberdeen, and Howard. In addition to the Nobel Peace Prize, Archbishop Tutu has received numerous other prestigious awards, including the Order of Meritorious Gold Award, Martin Luther King, Jr. Non-Violent Peace Prize, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Award for Outstanding Service to the Anglican Communion, Prix d'Athene, Albert Schweitzer Prize for Humanitarianism, Maguebela Prize for Liberty, as well as the International Gandhi Peace Prize.

Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu will celebrate his 76th birthday on October 7, 2007. This legislation recognizes this important date, honors his accomplishments, and extols the contributions that he has made to South Africa, the United States, and to the international community.

I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the life and accomplishments of this truly extraordinary man. I conclude with another quote from Archbishop Tutu: "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality." Archbishop Tutu has spent his life in defense of the mouse, and his work has proven that, with proper pressure and leverage, the elephant can be forced to move.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In recognition of his efforts to peacefully protest an immoral and unjust system while leading some 20 million South Africans toward freedom, Desmond Tutu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984. In presenting the award, the chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee recognized that the repression of the apartheid regime was so brutal that "a violent rebellion would be an understandable reaction." However, he stated, that on a broad front a campaign that is being fought with the weapons of spirit and reason, a campaign for truth, freedom, and justice, the contribution that Desmond Tutu has made and is still making represents a hope for the future. He is an exponent of the only form of conflict solving which is worthy of civilized nations.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, it is my honor to yield 5 minutes to my good friend and senior member of our Foreign Affairs Committee, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE).

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, let me thank Mr. LANTOS and Ms. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN and the floor manager, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, for bringing this resolution forward, but certainly to the sponsor, Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON-LEE, for her outstanding work that she does on the Africa Subcommittee.

I rise to speak in support of H. Res. 34, a resolution recognizing the 75th birthday of Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Archbishop Tutu will celebrate his 76th birthday on October 7 of this year, and the legacy he has created during three-quarters of a century on this Earth is truly inspiring.

It is no exaggeration to say that without his courage, commitment, and leadership, the South Africa we know today may not exist. For over four decades, Bishop Tutu was a vocal advocate and activist for democracy and human rights in South Africa. He defended the rights of not only black South Africans but for brown and white South Africans as well. As I mentioned earlier, Senator LUGAR gave the deciding vote to

override the veto of President Reagan of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, which therefore put sanctions on South Africa, which helped to move towards a free, democratic South Africa, nonracial.

Archbishop Tutu's support for regime change through reconciliation between the different ethnic groups in South Africa is well known and I believe should serve as a model not only in Africa but in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

And I believe that his work as chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission helped prevent open violence and bloodshed in South Africa in the wake of apartheid following it. Truly Archbishop Tutu practiced what he preached.

What amazes me about Bishop Tutu is his tireless effort on behalf of those who are disadvantaged, disenfranchised, and disposed. Many men would have taken a rest after seeing a vision they worked so hard to achieve come to fruition. But not him. Not Bishop Tutu. He continues to advocate for people around the world from West Papua to Zimbabwe.

He has led efforts to bring attention to the spread of HIV/AIDS and the dangers of extremely drug-resistant tuberculosis, XDR. As a matter of fact, Bishop Tutu wrote me a letter in February bringing out the fact that 50 people of 53 in South Africa died from this disease, and I had a hearing long before the person of the United States traveled around the world with this XDR, drug-resistant, TB. So it was Bishop Tutu that brought it to my attention. As a matter of fact, we raised it with the Foreign Operations appropriations committee, and we were able to increase the funding for this disease by $50 million in this year's appropriations bill. The MDR- and the XDR-TB are things where it was Bishop Tutu who brought it to our attention.

His latest endeavor will be to serve as chairman of the Council of Elders, a group formed by the former South African President Nelson Mandela this past July. Bishop Tutu worked with Reverend Allan Boesak years ago and Mr. Oliver Tambo, who was chairman of the ANC.

Archbishop Tutu's tireless work on behalf of the people of South Africa and, indeed, the world is awe inspiring.

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He should serve as an example to all of us of what compassion and commitment can achieve. I congratulate him on his life work and salute him on the occasion of his birthday.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Following the dismantling of the apartheid regime and the conduct of South Africa's first democratically contested multi-party elections in 1994, Archbishop Tutu was appointed to share South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Tasked with investigating the gross human rights violations that had occurred over the preceding 34 years, it was feared that the TRC would reopen old wounds and once again plunge the country into crisis. However, Archbishop Tutu used this platform to urge forgiveness and reconciliation rather than revenge for past injustices. It, therefore, comes as no surprise that South Africa's TRC now serves as a model for post-conflict resolutions around the globe. And at nearly 76 years of age, Archbishop Tutu has not slowed down a bit. Given his continued advocacy for peace and human rights in Africa and beyond, it is appropriate that this body honor him again today.

I would like to thank the sponsor, Ms. JACKSON-LEE, for introducing this important resolution and for agreeing to changes so that it reflects a celebration of his upcoming 76th birthday, which will be celebrated by all of us on October 7.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for giving us the opportunity to bring House Resolution 34 to the floor today. And I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on its passage.

With that, Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my full support for H. Res. 34, a bill recognizing the 75th birthday of Desmond Tutu, South African Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, and Nobel Peace Prize recipient. I thank Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON-LEE for introducing this bill to give us all an opportunity to celebrate the life of this remarkable leader.

Words alone can't express my sincere admiration for Desmond Tutu and what he has contributed to the ending of apartheid and the founding of the new South Africa. He is one person who truly embodies and exemplifies in word and deeds justice, peace, courage, humility, dignity, strength, patience, understanding, leadership, and compassion.

I truly admire Desmond Tutu for committing his life to changing South Africa and the world. One of the most oppressive eras in world history for black South Africans was living under the apartheid system. This awful system, which began in 1948, legally classified Blacks, Indians, Whites, and Colored people and called for segregation. The apartheid rules created ethnic based territories, in which those for Colored people were not equal to those for Whites. Thus, creating a nation in which Colored people, although the majority, were formally and legally justified to be oppressed, marginalized, and disenfranchised. Despite such injustice, Desmond Tutu worked tirelessly to reverse apartheid utilizing a non-violent approach. I believe his heart and soul rejoiced when apartheid was finally dismantled in 1994. His spirit is truly admirable.

Desmond Tutu has been recognized with many prestigious awards for his contribution to mankind, all of which has made the world a better place. I'm so grateful to have witnessed his life and work. I urge my colleagues to honor him by supporting H. Res. 34. I also encourage people all over the world to learn about and become inspired by his life, work, and commitment to inspire world peace.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to support House Resolution 34 and to honor the life and works of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, an ardent advocate of civil rights for all.

Archbishop Tutu became the Dean of St. Mary's Cathedral in Johannesburg in 1975, becoming the first black African to hold that position. In 1978, he went on to become the General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC), an ecumenical organization working for social justice, where Archbishop Tutu was again the first black African to hold his position. In this capacity, Archbishop Tutu performed yeoman's work in crusading for racial justice and the end of apartheid. Indeed, under Archbishop Tutu's leadership, SACC's nonviolent leadership played a pivotal role in bringing about the disintegration of South Africa's apartheid government.

In 1984, in recognition of this work, Archbishop Tutu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, a well-deserved honor given all of his efforts. This award, though, did not signify the end of Archbishop Tutu's efforts to create a more just world. In 1986, he was elected the Archbishop of Cape Town, making him the head of the Anglican Church in South Africa and giving him an appropriately prominent platform for his message in support of equality.

After the downfall of South Africa's apartheid government, Archbishop Tutu continued to be an inspiration for us all. In 1996, President Nelson Mandela appointed him to chair South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a body designed to probe human rights violations under the apartheid government and to reconcile the country's black and white communities. This commission created a new model for countries looking to overcome violent, discriminatory histories in peaceful ways. Archbishop Tutu later became the founding trustee of the Desmond Tutu Peace Centre, an organization dedicated to spreading peace through South Africa and the world.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu's life provides a shining example of compassion, dedication and unyielding work for justice. I congratulate Archbishop Tutu for reaching his 75th birthday and for all of his good works over the course of his life, and I commend my friend and colleague from the great state of Texas, Ms. JACKSON-LEE, for introducing this resolution.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers on this proposed bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 34, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title was amended so as to read: "A resolution recognizing the life and accomplishments of Desmond

Mpilo Tutu, South African Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, and Nobel Peace Prize recipient.".

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING THE STRONG SECURITY ALLIANCE BETWEEN JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 508) recognizing the strong security alliance between the Government of Japan and the United States and expressing appreciation to Japan for its role in enhancing stability in the Asia-Pacific region and its efforts in the global war against terrorism, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 508

Whereas the United States-Japan alliance is the cornerstone of United States security interests in Asia and the Pacific and is fundamental to regional stability and prosperity;

Whereas the United States-Japan alliance continues to be based on shared vital interests and values in the Asia-Pacific region, despite the changes in the post-cold war strategic landscape, including the preservation and promotion of political and economic freedoms, support for human rights and democratic institutions, and securing of prosperity for the people of both countries and the international community;

Whereas on April 27, 2007, during Prime Minister Abe's visit to Washington, President Bush and the Prime Minister reconfirmed their commitment to these common strategic objectives;

Whereas Japan provides military bases and generous financial and material support to United States forward-deployed forces, which are essential for maintaining stability in the region;

Whereas under the United States-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, Japan hosts a carrier battle group, the III Marine Expeditionary Force, and the 5th Air Force;

Whereas the United States currently maintains approximately 50,000 troops in Japan, about half of whom are stationed in Okinawa;

Whereas over the past decade the alliance has been strengthened through revised Defense Guidelines (which expand Japan's noncombat role in a regional contingency) and the continued renewal of Japan's Host Nation Support of United States forces stationed in Japan;

Whereas in 2005, the two allies agreed on a redefinition of roles, missions, and capabilities of alliance forces, which further deepens interoperability and coordination between the Japanese Self Defense Forces (SDF) and United States Armed Forces;

Whereas the agreement also provided for reducing the number of troops stationed in Okinawa and broadening our cooperation in the area of ballistic missile defense (BMD);

Whereas in May 2007, the United States and Japan confirmed that, as both countries develop and deploy capabilities, every effort must be made to ensure tactical, operational, and strategic coordination, including ballistic missile threats against alliance interests;

Whereas after the tragic events of September 11, 2001, Japan has participated significantly in international efforts to combat terrorism by providing major logistical support for United States and coalition forces in the Indian Ocean in support of Operation Enduring Freedom; and

Whereas Japan has also provided troops, aircraft, and logistical support for Operation Iraqi Freedom, a commitment which the Japanese Government recently renewed: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes that Japan is one of the most reliable security partners of the United States;

(2) commends the Government of Japan for its role in enhancing stability in the Asia-Pacific Region; and

(3) expresses appreciation to the Government of Japan for its contributions to international efforts to combat terrorism.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from American Samoa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from American Samoa?

There was no objection.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this proposed bill and yield myself such time as I may consume.

Again, I want to express my appreciation to the leadership of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the distinguished chairman, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), and our distinguished ranking member, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN from Florida, for their support of this proposed bill.

And let me also thank our distinguished colleague from the great State of New Jersey, a senior member of the Armed Services Committee as well as the Natural Resources Committee, my good friend, Mr. SAXTON, for his sponsorship of this resolution.

When World War II came to a close, the relationship between the United States and Japan could not have been worse. Both sides sustained heavy human losses at the hands of the other's military, but together, starting in the late 1940s, the United States and the Japanese people rebuilt a war-torn Japanese nation brick by brick, industry by industry. The alliance between the United States and Japan has grown steadily since then, and now it could hardly be stronger.

Japan today is one of our closest allies in the Asia-Pacific region. The strong and enduring partnership we developed when that war thankfully came to an end bridges economic, military and political realms. Our military alliance helped prevent another world conflict during the Cold War, and our two nations jointly held fast to the ideas of democracy and freedom in the face of the menacing communist threat in this Asian region.

Today, the U.S. military security alliance with Japan is not only just the backbone of the relationship between our two great nations, but it is the bedrock of peace and security throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

Upon this foundation, we continue to work together to advance our shared values. We jointly promote open markets, open societies, and open and transparent governments in Asia and around the world. Japan's economic success is a beacon and an example to the entire planet, now being the second most powerful economy in the whole world. We also tackle some of the most difficult challenges of our time, working together in the crucial Six-Party Talks to denuclearize North Korea and stabilize Northeast Asia.

Japan is a reliable and generous friend, quick to assist the United States in our times of need. Japan has provided important logistical support for the current war in Iraq and is on the front lines of the international efforts to combat terrorism by providing support to operations in Afghanistan.

As strong as our relationship is now, we look forward to an even stronger partnership in the future. Our two countries are brought together by shared interests and shared values, and we are bound together by mutual respect and friendship.

This resolution celebrates this friendship by recognizing the strong security alliance between Japan and the United States, as well as Japan's critical role in enhancing stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

Today, the House reaffirms that we value highly our alliance with the great nation of Japan and believe this partnership will continue indefinitely into the future.

Madam Speaker, I strongly support this resolution, and urge my colleagues to support it as well.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to first rise in support of House Resolution 508, introduced by my good friend, Mr. SAXTON of New Jersey, and I would like to congratulate him for offering this resolution before us today because the United States security objectives in the Asia-Pacific region could not be achieved without the staunch support of our friends and allies in Tokyo. The United States-Japan alliance is, as this resolution recognizes, the cornerstone of regional stability and prosperity.

When Pyongyang tested a nuclear weapon last fall, we relied heavily on our good friend, Japan, which was then serving as president of the U.N. Security Council. Together, we achieved passage of Security Council Resolution 1718 condemning North Korea's reckless action and imposing a series of sanctions. We must continue to work with Tokyo to resolve the North Korean nuclear crisis in order to ensure regional peace and stability.

Japan has also been an irreplaceable partner in support of our efforts to fight global terrorism. Also, in the year 2002, Tokyo graciously offered to host the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan following the ouster of the Taliban regime.

We are also very grateful to Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Forces for continuing to provide logistical support in the Indian Ocean to coalition efforts waging the international war on terrorism.

Most recently, the Japanese Diet approved a 2-year extension of the Special Measures Law in Iraq which provides continued funding for the reconstruction of a peaceful and stable Iraq. It was also recently reported that three Japanese banks have stopped engaging in any new business with Iran, and that Japanese financial institutions are restricting loans and rejecting an Iranian request to pay for oil imports in currencies other than dollars.

We are proud of the U.S.-Japan alliance and deeply grateful for the friendship of the people of Japan. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this resolution, Madam Speaker, which is of vital importance to the security of both the United States and Japan.

Madam Speaker, I would like to yield such time as he may consume to the author of this resolution, Mr. SAXTON of New Jersey.

Mr. SAXTON. Let me thank the gentlelady for yielding. And let me begin by thanking my good friend and colleague, Chairman TOM LANTOS, for the great high level of cooperation that was exhibited on this resolution on a bipartisan basis with Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN and others. And also, let me acknowledge the great support of my friend, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, on the resolution.

I rise today in support of House Resolution 508, obviously, which recognizes the strong security alliance between Japan and the United States and expresses appreciation for Japan's role in enhancing stability in the Asia-Pacific region in combating terrorism, and specifically in Japan's very significant contribution toward global missile defense.

I am pleased to highlight our special relationship with Japan following World War II. Our alliance has served as a valuable conduit allowing the United States to achieve our security goals throughout East Asia. This dynamic nation is the world's second largest economy, one of our top trading partners, provides 600,000 U.S. jobs, and is actively engaged with many other democracies.

Our two countries have encountered similar challenges and fought shared threats while working to guarantee political and economic freedoms for our citizens and for many others. This goal of spreading democracy-based prosperity became particularly evident following the events of September 11. Following these deplorable acts, Japan readily provided support for U.S. and allied forces. Their effort included invaluable maritime operations in the Indian Ocean, aircraft to conduct support missions for our troops in Iraq, and logistical support that even continues to this very day. These actions reveal Japan's dedication to eradicating the destruction caused by sponsors of terrorism. Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Forces have provided roughly 30 percent of the fuel used by U.S. and coalition warships. They are the third largest donor in country for relief and reconstruction in Afghanistan, and they have provided billions of dollars for reconstruction in Iraq, and Japan continues to renew the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law that allows for these activities to take place.

I applaud them for recognizing that the international threats of terror will require the cooperation of the world's strongest democracies to effectively combat the growing capabilities and support systems of terrorist organizations.

Our strategic relationship extends beyond Japan's involvement in the Middle East. Japan offers financial and material resources to the U.S.-deployed forces, 50,000 of which are stationed in the country.

Several years ago, our two countries agreed to redefine and strengthen the missions of both of our military forces. My resolution mentions examples of this coordination by reducing the number of troops in Okinawa and expanding the cooperation of ballistic missile defense.

Once again, I want to reiterate my thanks to Chairman LANTOS and Ranking Member ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN for their assistance in bringing this to the floor today.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, with that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from American Samoa has 16½ minutes remaining.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I would like to have as much time as I may consume to again compliment and to commend my good friend, the gentleman from New Jersey, for his insight.

And certainly as a senior member of the Armed Services Committee, no one knows better the importance of our strategic and military influence in this important region of the world, and especially with an alliance and a partnership with the great country of Japan, that they have always stood beside us and always been there when we needed assistance.

So again, I want to commend my good friend from New Jersey for his comments and sponsorship of this legislation. And I thank my good friend, the gentlelady from Florida, the ranking member, for helping us manage this legislation and get it approved by our colleagues.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 508, which recognizes the strong security alliance between the Government of Japan and the United States and expresses our country's appreciation to Japan for its role in enhancing stability in the Asia-Pacific region and also for their efforts in the global war on terrorism. I commend Mr. SAXTON for authoring this resolution and for the support by the leadership to bring this resolution up for our consideration.

On October 29, 2005, the Government of the United States and the Government of Japan entered into a renewed Security Consultative Agreement that calls for a major realignment of U.S.-Japan strategic alliance. This agreement continues Japan's strategic role for the security of the region in cooperation with the United States. In addition, the agreement will realign our U.S. forces within Japan and throughout the Pacific so that the U.S. is better positioned to respond militarily to incidents in Asia and the Pacific.

Incidentally, under the agreement, the U.S. territory of Guam could become the new home to elements of the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force. It is projected that nearly 8,000 active duty Marines and their dependents will be relocated from Okinawa to Guam.

As you know, Madam Speaker, our U.S. territories fall under the jurisdiction of the House Natural Resources Committee, specifically under the Subcommittee on Insular Affairs. As chairman of the Subcommittee, I had the unique opportunity to travel to Japan and to the Pacific over the August recess to convene a field hearing on Guam on the proposed U.S. military buildup and the challenges the island's community will face due to the impact of relocating so many U.S. forces.

I was impressed by briefings we held with U.S. Navy ADM William French and U.S. Air Force BG Douglas Owens. Both were extremely forthright about the strategic value of Guam in defending our Nation and developing relationships and training opportunities with our allies, including Japan, so that our interests in the Asia-Pacific region are secured. In fact, while in Guam, our military was conducting "Operation Valiant Shield" which was a military exercise between our forces and those of our allies in the Pacific and Asia.

I was equally impressed with the patriotism of the people of Guam and the support they have shown for the relocation. This is not to say that there are no concerns throughout the community on what the impact of Marines will

mean to the services provided to the Government of Guam. Any community would have concerns on education, healthcare, law enforcement, infrastructure, etc. It is my hope that as the buildup continues, the Congress will consider these impacts on the island community and work to mitigate such problems for the benefit of the community "outside the gates."

On my return from Guam, I also had the opportunity to meet with officials from the Japanese Defense and Foreign Ministries to be briefed on their progress in the realignment of U.S. Forces in Japan. In addition to meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister Haneda, we were informed by the Senior Coordinator for Japan-U.S. Security Affairs, Keiichi Ono and the Deputy Director General for Realignment Initiatives Daikichi Momma and their team, that Japan is moving forward with the things they need to do to fully implement the realignment and that they would be mindful to take into account concerns raised about the impact of the realignment on the territory and people of Guam.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to express my appreciation and that of my constituents to the people of Japan for their continued strong alliance and for their role in enhancing stability in the Asia-Pacific region and their efforts in the global war on terrorism. I urge my colleagues to support adoption of H. Res. 508.

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the House Resolution 508, recognizing the strong security alliance between the Government of Japan and the United States and expressing appreciation to Japan for its role in enhancing stability in the Asia-Pacific Region and its efforts in the global war against terrorism.

The Government of Japan, crucial to stabilizing the Asia-Pacific Region, has for decades served as a cornerstone for U.S. national security posture worldwide. I expect our governments to remain strong allies long into the future. The Government of Japan's efforts in support of the global war against terrorism are commendable and serve as a superb model for other governments to emulate.

The people of Guam, who I represent in Congress, enjoy a robust relationship with the Japanese people. Many residents on Guam are of Japanese descent. Also, Guam hosts over a million Japanese tourists each year and we welcome more. Japanese companies make significant investments in Guam's telecommunications infrastructure and in our tourism and hospitality industry. Moreover, Guam's relationship with the Japanese people and their government will grow stronger in the years to come. The Government of Japan will, in large part, finance the planned re-location of elements of the III Marine Expeditionary Force from Okinawa to Guam. What is more, the future military training exercises on and in the waters around Guam will include greater numbers of Japanese Self-Defense Force personnel.

I welcome all efforts that strengthen the security relationship that exists between the United States and the Japan. I strongly support this resolution recognizing the valuable security alliance between the Government of Japan and the United States and expressing appreciation to Japan for its role in enhancing stability in the Asia-Pacific Region and its efforts in the global war against terrorism. I urge my colleagues' support.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 508, as amended.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

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COMMENDING THE PEOPLE AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN FOR THEIR CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO HOLDING ELECTIONS AND BROADENING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 575) commending the people and the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for their continued commitment to holding elections and broadening political participation, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 575

Whereas on June 17, 2003, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan held parliamentary elections, the fourth since 1989, and the first during the reign of His Majesty King Abdullah II;

Whereas His Majesty King Abdullah II has announced that the next parliamentary elections in Jordan will be held November 20, 2007;

Whereas municipal elections for the local councils were held on July 31, 2007, under a new reformed municipal elections law passed on February 4, 2007, under which the mayors and councils of all municipalities in Jordan were elected;

Whereas the new reformed municipal elections law includes a 20 percent quota for women in the council seats and reduces the age of eligible voters from 19 to 18 years of age in order to expand the voter base;

Whereas with the direct assistance of the United States Agency for International Development and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, Jordan has placed great emphasis in recent years on the rights of women to vote and run for public office, thereby serving as a model for other countries in the region;

Whereas the people and the Government of Jordan are committed to continuing this progress;

Whereas His Majesty King Abdullah II recently emphasized the importance of building a thriving civil society when he declared, "We in Jordan—and many others, throughout the Middle East—are working hard to create a civic environment in which our people will thrive. The basic requirement is an inclusive, democratic civil society—one that guarantees rights, delegates responsibilities, honors merit and rewards achievement. The foundation stones on which we build are peace and stability, basic civil and political rights, essential services, freedom of expression and the rule of law."; and

Whereas Jordan continues to invest in reforming its educational system to incorporate democratic values and principles: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) commends the people, the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan , and His Majesty King Abdullah II for their decision to conduct municipal and parliamentary elections in 2007;

(2) expresses its desire that Jordan's progress toward democratization continue and flourish as a model for other Arab countries;

(3) commends His Majesty King Abdullah II and the Jordanian people for striving to uphold women's rights and enhance women's participation in the political process;

(4) reaffirms the special relationship that exists between the people of the United States and the people of Jordan; and

(5) remains committed to assist Jordan , should it so desire, in promoting democratic reform.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from American Samoa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from American Samoa?

There was no objection.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this proposed resolution and yield myself such time as I may consume.

Again my appreciation and gratitude to the leadership of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the distinguished chairman from California (Mr. LANTOS) and my good friend, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), the senior ranking member of the committee, for their support and leadership in bringing this proposed legislation before the floor. I also would like to thank the chief sponsor of this proposed bill, my good friend from the State of Washington (Mr. BAIRD), for introducing this thoughtful and timely measure commending the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on its commitment to holding elections and to broadening

its sphere of political participation in its country.

The Kingdom of Jordan is an oasis of stability in the Middle Eastern desert full of difficulties and crises. Jordan is beset by most of the same threats that confront the whole Middle Eastern region, such as terrorism and extremism, but it also faces some distinct challenges. For example, a flood of Iraqi asylum-seekers numbering nearly 1 million. These refugees are now straining the infrastructure of a resource-poor nation of only 6 million citizens.

Despite these difficult challenges, and unlike other regional states that use Islamic extremism as an excuse to restrict democratic freedoms, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has courageously taken significant steps to broaden political participation. At the same time, it continues to hold the line against terrorism. This balance is exemplary.

Madam Speaker, Jordan has long been a leader in the Arab world in enhancing women's political involvement, and it is continuing along that path. Thanks to recent reform, 20 percent of the municipal council seats determined in Jordan's July elections were reserved for women. Jordan also lowered its voting age to 18 in order to involve more people in the election process.

As you know, Madam Speaker, there was some controversy surrounding these recent municipal elections. The Islamists withdrew their candidates 1 day before the vote, claiming that the system was unfairly stacked against them. However, based on the evidence I have been able to gather from the State Department and from other staffers who visited Jordan shortly after the elections, these elections were largely free and fair, marred only by minor irregularities that almost certainly had little or no impact on the final result. It now appears the Islamists were more concerned about an embarrassing, imminent defeat than they were about democratic procedures.

Last month, after the municipal elections, King Abdullah II announced that parliamentary elections will be held on November 20. Thus, Jordan continues to pursue its path toward greater democracy.

It is indeed impressive that Jordan keeps extremism at bay while expanding political participation. But it is no coincidence. By addressing reform, Jordan has encouraged moderation. That is a lesson that, unfortunately, too many Middle Eastern regimes have failed to understand.

We encourage Jordan in its efforts to implement political reform, and we look forward to the kingdom's further progress towards achieving the comprehensive and ambitious set of goals it put forth last year as part of Jordan's National Agenda.

Madam Speaker, King Abdullah's thoughtful and bold leadership has made him a welcome ally in difficult times in the Middle East, and the American and Jordanian peoples share a special friendship that this bill explicitly reaffirms.

I know that the Foreign Affairs Committee, of which I am a member, and its distinguished chairman, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), remain committed to this special relationship with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. I trust that my friends in the full House do as well.

Madam Speaker, I strongly support this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I strongly support House Resolution 575, which commends the people and the Government of Jordan for their commitment to democracy. Today, much of the Middle East is sadly pervaded by tyranny, radical and extremist Islam, terrorism and hatred of the United States and Israel. However, Jordan continues to stand out as a nation committed to moderation, to modernity, to democracy and to peace with the United States and Israel.

Madam Speaker, Jordan has taken the road less traveled in the Middle East, demonstrating to other nations the benefits of embracing democratic principles as the norm. Since 1989, Jordan has held four elections for its parliament, and King Abdullah has committed to holding the next set of elections by November of this year. Under a new election law passed in February, Jordanians went to the polls in late July, for the first time, to elect the mayors and the councils of every city and town in that country.

Jordan has also recognized that democracy is much more than just holding elections. The Jordanian Government is acting to establish the rule of law, to build a civil society, to build strong institutions and to broaden political participation to meaningfully engage citizens from all walks of life.

One example of this commitment, Madam Speaker, is the decision of the Government of Jordan to lower the voting age from 19 to 18 and to mandate that women fill at least 20 percent of council seats. This is a positive first step, and I hope that it will lead to further reforms and political participation.

King Abdullah himself has courageously spoken out and led the way for reform. King Abdullah recently stated, "We in Jordan, and many others throughout the Middle East, are working hard to create a civic environment in which our people will thrive. The basic requirement is an inclusive, democratic civil society, one that guarantees rights, delegates responsibilities, honors merit, and rewards achievement. The foundation stones on which we build are peace and stability, basic civil and political rights, essential services, freedom of expression and the rule of law."

Madam Speaker, a stable, peaceful and free Middle East is in the interests of the United States and indeed the entire world. And while much remains to be done, Jordan is serving as a model for other nations. It deserves our friendship and encouragement.

House Resolution 575 is particularly important. It expresses the House's desire that Jordan's progress toward democracy continues and flourishes as a model for other Arab countries. It also commends King Abdullah and the Jordanian people for upholding women's rights and enhancing the participation of women in the political process.

Finally, Madam Speaker, it reaffirms the special relationship that exists between the citizens of our two nations, as well as our ongoing commitment to helping Jordan, should it so desire, in promoting democratic reform.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of this measure, Madam Speaker, and I urge my colleagues to render their full support for its adoption.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, it is with pleasure that I yield 6 minutes to my good friend and the chief sponsor of this proposed bill, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD).

Mr. BAIRD. Madam Speaker, it is indeed an honor for me to be here along with such distinguished colleagues giving just praise and recognition to a nation which is a leader in a very, very difficult environment. I want to thank Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN and the distinguished gentleman from American Samoa, and I particularly want to thank the chairman of the committee, Mr. LANTOS, for supporting and introducing this resolution.

We all know the Middle East is a region which is fraught with difficulties. If ever there is a region that needs and deserves models of courage, integrity and vision that is such a region, and if ever there were such models of integrity, vision and courage, Jordan and King Abdullah II are precisely those models.

In the most recent municipal elections, we saw not only a commitment to democratic reforms, but a commitment to moving forward with women's rights, and as many of us who have had the privilege traveling to Jordan know, the kingdom has been a real leader in this region, not only in promoting democratic reforms, but seeing that women are promoted to high positions of office within the cabinet and within the Parliament. It is a lesson that not

only nations within the Middle East but within the world at large could benefit from.

In addition, the Kingdom of Jordan and King Abdullah II have led efforts to try to bring Islamic scholars from around the world to craft new visions for modern, pluralistic, tolerant and progressive visions of Islam, and the Oman declaration, which does not get nearly the attention it deserves, has been, I think, a visionary statement guiding and inspiring many people throughout the region.

In addition, I think it is worth saying that the Kingdom of Jordan has stepped up to try to help in the region. As we deal with the conflict in Iraq, they have provided valuable training to the Iraqi police and others. One of the challenges Jordan faces right now is the influx of nearly 1 million refugees, as was mentioned. This is a country that faces challenges in terms of energy costs, water availability, et cetera, and still, with all the challenges they face, they have reached out to try to assist others.

We have talked a lot in this body and elsewhere about the need for models in the Middle East in the hope that Iraq could one day become a model of democracy. I certainly share that hope. But I would say to my colleagues, we already have some very, very good models in that region, and it is deserved that we would commend them and recognize them today. Jordan is precisely such a model. King Abdullah is precisely such a leader.

I am grateful that my colleagues today would take the time and the effort to recognize such achievements by such a courageous leader in such a wonderful country.

I would urge my colleagues to visit Jordan, to meet with their King, with the members of their Parliament and their cabinet officials, and I am sure they will share my sense of deep admiration and respect for what has been happening there.

So I urge passage of this legislation. I hope it marks a positive step, not only in recognition of Jordan, but a step in which this body finds ways to acknowledge the many positive achievements that are taking place in a region which we all know has many difficulties. But if we only focus on the difficulties or the bad news and we neglect the good news and the accomplishments, particularly when they are achieved by nations and individuals of such prestige and courage as Jordan, we would be missing a golden opportunity.

Thankfully, today, this House of Representatives will not miss that opportunity. We will acknowledge and recognize the recent elections and reforms by the Kingdom of Jordan and extend a hand of friendship and admiration to all the people of Jordan and to King Abdullah II himself.

With that, I thank all of those who cosponsored this legislation on both sides of the aisle. It truly has been a bipartisan effort.

Madam Speaker, I urge passage of this fine resolution.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I commend my good friend, the chief sponsor of this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 575, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1200

PERCY SUTTON POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the bill (H.R. 954) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 365 West 125th Street in New York, New York, as the "Percy Sutton Post Office Building".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 954

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PERCY SUTTON POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 365 West 125th Street in New York, New York, shall be known and designated as the "Percy Sutton Post Office Building".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Percy Sutton Post Office Building".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Vermont.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 954.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Vermont?

There was no objection.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, as a member of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I rise in support of H.R. 954, which designates the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 365 West 125th Street in New York City as the Percy Sutton Post Office Building. This measure, which has the support of the New York delegation, was unanimously reported from our committee on July 19, 2007.

Madam Speaker, I have many remarks that I can make about Mr. Sutton, somebody that I don't know but read about as a young man growing up in, of all places, Massachusetts and then Vermont. But whatever I say is not worth listening to when we have another member of the New York delegation, remarkable in his own right, who actually knows Mr. Sutton and I expect is going to share some of his good qualities and be somewhat silent on anything else that may not be appropriate stories about the interactions of these two terrific men.

So I am going to reserve my time, and when the appropriate moment comes, allow the distinguished Member from New York to speak on behalf of the merits of Mr. Sutton, where he will be forever commemorated by having his name on a post office in the great city of New York.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Thank you, Madam Speaker. I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Percy Sutton, a noted civil rights activist, lawyer and entrepreneur, has had numerous achievements in his lifetime. Today we honor Percy Sutton with the naming of a post office in his hometown neighborhood of Harlem, New York.

Born in 1920 in San Antonio, Texas, he was the youngest of 15 children raised in a family with strong values in education. He found his niche at a young age with the Boy Scouts and rose to the rank of Eagle Scout. He attended Prairie View A&M University, Tuskegee Institute and Hampton Institute, and he earned his law degree from Brooklyn Law School.

As a teenager, he learned to fly small planes and worked as a stunt pilot at county fairs. Upon the U.S. involvement in World War II, he enlisted with the Army Air Corps but was rejected because of his race. Shortly after, he moved to New York where he was accepted into the Corps and flew with the legendary Tuskegee Airmen. His military service awarded him Combat Stars as an intelligence officer with the 332nd Fighter Group's Black 99th Pursuit Squadron.

Percy Sutton gained national recognition during the 1950s and 1960s as a close friend and lawyer to civil rights leader Malcolm X. Sutton had moved to the Harlem area of Manhattan and formed his own law firm with the help of his brother and a close friend. The area, as well as his firm, quickly became associated with the civil rights

movement and current politics of the era.

Sutton ran unsuccessfully for public office, so he formed his own Democratic organization with other notable Harlem community leaders called the Harlem Clubhouse. He tried many cases during the 1960s defending the rights of many fellow African Americans in the Southern States. Still heavily interested in public service, he ran for and won an election to serve in the New York State Assembly in 1964.

His political career continued through the years and ended in the late 1970s. Over time and while still practicing law, he expanded his business by buying a radio station, the famous Apollo Theater, a local newspaper, and a cable television franchise.

Beyond his success in business, he has earned numerous awards for his charitable, civil rights and business achievements. Therefore, it is highly appropriate that we honor him with the naming of this post office.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL).

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to support the naming of this post office on 125th Street after Percy Ellis Sutton.

Madam Speaker, 125th Street is the economic corridor of the village of Harlem. It is the exciting comeback of a community that is enjoying the creation of jobs through the Empowerment Zone. But it is also where our former President, Bill Clinton, has his offices and also one of the institutions that is driving it, the Apollo Theater. It is there because Percy Sutton brought it back from the ashes. So when tourists come and they see this wonderful new community that has come back, they will be able to look at our post office and maybe ask the question, but who was Percy Sutton?

Not too long ago, the President of the United States, George Bush, right here in the Capitol, gave the President's Congressional Gold Medal to the Tuskegee Airmen. My brothers and sisters, every day that we are fortunate enough to live in this great country, we fail to realize that we are making history, especially those of us who are honored to be elected.

As the House and Senate head toward getting the bill approved, with the help of Senator LEVIN on the other side, the President spoke to these people that sometime in 1941, black and as African American as they were, were denied the opportunity to join the United States Army Air Force in order to fight the enemies of the United States of America.

Under great protest, they were allowed to try a pilot project in Tuskegee in order to see whether the outrageous charges that they were cowardly, that they couldn't learn, and they never would be able to manipulate these fighter pilots were true. And while they shattered all of the myths and turned out to be one of the most decorated outfits that survived World War II, the President, as he looked at them right here in Statuary Hall, reminded them that he knew that even though they became officers, that many of the enlisted men refused to return the salutes to them because of prejudice, racism and discrimination.

But the President said that, on behalf of the people of the United States of America, allow him to salute them. It was so moving. There wasn't a dry eye in the whole group as these warriors, these courageous fighter pilots that have done so much for this country, were able to hear the present Commander in Chief and President of the United States thank them.

So, in a way we are privileged by naming this post office not to be able to thank each and every one of the Tuskegee Airmen, but to thank at least one of them that comes from the village of Harlem, that you would say that our "thank you" may not be a salute from the Commander in Chief, but we are saying thank you for having confidence in this country and having confidence in this democracy and giving us a chance to honor Percy Sutton.

He came back home, got involved in the NAACP, got involved in politics, became an assemblyman, became a borough president and became a well-known business person. But no matter what part of the United States you come from, we have to take time out to thank those of us who made the sacrifice, and Percy Sutton is one of them.

So I am glad that this committee has come together to pay tribute to him, because by doing this, we pay tribute to ourselves and for those people who we don't know their names but have made sacrifices, so that we could have the honor to serve this great country.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers at this time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for a closing remark.

Percy Sutton was the embodiment of the American Dream, and he did it as a man who grew up with the kind of prejudice that the chairman just alluded to. It is just an honor, I think, for all of us to have the kind of inspiration that a person like Percy Sutton has provided to our country, service in the military, and really the most decorated service unit in the whole war and accomplishing that against enormous obstacles. People didn't want them to serve, yet they did, and they had confidence in us and our country despite the fact many in our country did not have confidence or even respect for them.

Then his array of accomplishments in politics, as a civic leader, a commitment to this community. Harlem, which the chairman called a village, at many other times had really tough times, and this man had confidence that this community and the people in it had as much a future as any other American. He then acted with the skills that he possessed, the energy that he had, and made Harlem into what is now, a very vital community in the City of New York.

So the Committee on Government Operations, with support from both sides of the aisle, is very proud to be bringing to the House for its full consideration the naming of this post office in honor of a great American.

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 954, a bill I introduced to designate the post office located at 365 West 125th Street in Harlem as the Percy Sutton Post Office Building. I express sincere thanks to Chairman HENRY WAXMAN and Ranking Member and Member TOM DAVIS of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform as well as Chairman DANNY DAVIS and Ranking Member KENNY MERCHANT of the Subcommittee on Federal Workforce Postal Service, and District of Columbia for their support of this bill. It is appropriate to designate the post office in Mr. Sutton's honor because he worked at a New York post office as a clerk while attending law school.

Percy Sutton, my very dear friend, was born the youngest of fifteen children on November 24, 1920 in San Antonio, Texas. His family owned land, a farm, and a funeral home. His entrepreneurial spirit was developed while working for the family businesses as a youngster. He was educated at Prairie View A & M University, Tuskegee Institute, Hampton University, and Brooklyn College Law School.

His career as a public servant began in 1941, when he was selected to work in Army Intelligence during World War II as a member of the Tuskegee Airmen. Just prior to that selection, he was not allowed to fly fighter planes for the Army Air Corps because of racial discrimination. Despite being subjected to racial discrimination, he was committed to serve his country.

After an honorable discharge from the Army, he decided to study law. To support himself while attending law school, he worked for the United States Post Office in New York as a clerk during the evening shift and later as a conductor in the New York City subway system. He maintained this schedule for 3 years. His dedication to finish law school still inspires me today.

Motivated to fight racial discrimination, he represented the controversial revolutionary Malcolm X and other activists during the civil rights era. He also served as president of the New York chapter of the NAACP. His commitment to fight for justice and equality for African Americans was bold and admirable.

A strong interest in politics led him to campaign for the New York State Assembly several times. Finally, in 1964, he was elected

and served for two years. Immediately thereafter he became the president for the Borough of Manhattan and remained in that role until 1977.

As an entrepreneur, his love of business and his Harlem community led him to purchase and totally revitalize the legendary Apollo Theatre in 1980. As the Harlem business district has flourished, the Apollo Theatre remains a community landmark and symbol. Another successful business venture he created is the Inner City Broadcasting Company, which housed the first African American owned radio station in New York. Today, there are nineteen radio stations in the Inner City network.

On March 29, 2007, I had the honor and privilege to see Percy Sutton honored with the Congressional Gold Medal along with over 300 other Tuskegee Airmen. It was a great day to see him and other African American veterans finally get the recognition that was so long overdue.

Percy Sutton is a great American and living legend. I'm certain America is a better place because of his contributions. Designating the post office building in Harlem is a great way to keep his legend alive for years to come. Since he is 86 years old and his health is fragile, I urge my colleagues to support this bill. I thank my New York delegation colleagues for cosponsoring this bill.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise to express my support for the resolution to name the post office at 365 West 125th Street in New York City as the "Percy Sutton Post Office Building."

A civil rights leader and businessman, Percy Sutton was a pre-eminent fixture of New York politics, serving as a member of the New York State Assembly and from 1966 through 1977 as Manhattan Borough President. Most of all, Percy Sutton was one of the architects of the effort to revive Upper Manhattan.

Percy Sutton once said, "If you pray for only one thing, let it be for an idea." He was a man of innumerable ideas—many of them profoundly important for New York City and for the community he represented. He lived an astonishingly full life that included stints as a stunt pilot, military intelligence officer, lawyer, civil rights activist, politician, media baron and technology executive.

Most of all, Percy Sutton dared to dream the impossible. At a time when Harlem was crumbling, he believed that it could become a tourist attraction. When the famous Apollo Theatre closed, it threatened to become another vacant shell on a street of shuttered stores. He acquired the theater, in a move that is widely considered the first step to the renewal of 125th Street.

Percy Sutton had an important and lasting impact on the community surrounding the post office, and it is fitting to have a federal building named in his honor. I am proud to support H.R. 954.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 954.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIONAL PASSPORT MONTH

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 554) supporting the goals and ideals of National Passport Month.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 554

Whereas through international travel, Americans can individually play a major role towards improving foreign relations by building bridges and making connections with citizens of other countries;

Whereas interacting with the global community inspires Americans to reflect on the diverse multi-cultural background that has defined the United States as a great country of cooperation and progress;

Whereas having a passport and traveling abroad creates connections with the global community, supporting goodwill throughout the world;

Whereas having a passport and traveling abroad promotes understanding and goodwill throughout the world, opening the doors to increased peace, tolerance, and acceptance;

Whereas having a passport and traveling abroad opens up a preponderance of educational opportunities and experiences for Americans of all ages;

Whereas having a passport and traveling abroad enables Americans to see first-hand the effect of the United States on the world, including the tremendous amount of humanitarian aid given by the United States through both public and private sectors;

Whereas having a passport and traveling abroad reminds Americans that they are members of a global family and gives them opportunities to mend rifts around the world;

Whereas fewer than 23 percent of Americans have passports, thereby limiting their ability to travel outside the United States;

Whereas the more Americans travel outside the United States, the more they will experience opportunities to increase their understanding of the world and the place of the United States in it;

Whereas the creation and support of a National Passport Month signals to Americans the important role they can play as ambassadors for the United States by serving as agents of understanding, tolerance, and mutual respect; and

Whereas travel publishers along with travel editors from the most prestigious media outlets in the United States, student travel organizations, and book sellers have designated September as "National Passport Month" to educate the public about the importance of having a passport and the positive impact international travel has on individuals: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Passport Month; and

(2) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling on the Federal Government, States, localities, schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses, other entities, and the people of the United States to observe National Passport Month with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Vermont.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore: Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Vermont?

There was no objection.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleague in the consideration of H. Res. 554. This supports the goals and ideals of National Passport Month. H. Res. 554, with 55 co-sponsors, was introduced by Representative BARBARA LEE on July 27, 2007. It was reported from the Oversight Committee on August 1, 2007, by a voice vote.

Madam Speaker, the creation and support of a National Passport Month signals to Americans the important role they can play as ambassadors for the United States by serving as agents of understanding, tolerance and mutual respect to citizens of other countries. The use of a passport and the desire to travel to other nations will bring personal enjoyment, enrichment and interest for both traveler and host, yet less than 25 percent of Americans have passports, thereby eliminating their ability to travel outside the United States. The passport and traveling abroad will create a connection with the global community and support goodwill throughout the world.

Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague, Representative BARBARA LEE from California, for supporting the goals and ideals of National Passport Month, and I support and urge the swift passage of this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1215

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

September has been recognized by the tourism industry as National Passport Month in an effort to educate the public and increase awareness of the importance of having passports.

The tourism industry brings in more than $80 billion annually to the U.S. economy. In helping our economy thrive, it also strengthens public diplomacy through each visitor. Similarly,

Americans can improve foreign relations by traveling internationally and meeting with citizens of other countries.

The opportunities to learn different cultures, view history and exchange ideas are endless for those having passports. Interacting with the global community enables travelers to promote understanding and good will.

National Passport Month educates the public on the value and positive impact international travel has on individuals. Without passports, these opportunities could not be achieved. So, therefore, Madam Speaker, I encourage everyone to support H. Res. 554.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I yield 5½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, first let me thank the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) for your leadership and for managing the bill, and also for your clarity of why we are offering this resolution today and for your support. I also thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) for your leadership and your support. To the chairman of the committee, Chairman WAXMAN, and our ranking member, Mr. DAVIS, I commend them and thank them for working together to bring this bill to the floor, as well as to our leadership.

Madam Speaker, I want to also express my appreciation to the over 60 cosponsors of this bipartisan resolution for their support.

This resolution is extremely straightforward. What it does is detail and recognize the value of international travel, and request the President to issue a proclamation calling on the Federal Government, States, localities, schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses and other entities and the people of the United States to observe National Passport Month with appropriate ceremonies, programs and activities.

The purpose of National Passport Month is to create a time to educate the public about the incredible opportunities available to those who obtain passports as well as the positive impact that international travel has on individuals and on our country.

Today, and this is quite a revealing statistic, only about 25 percent of Americans have a passport. Twenty-five percent. That means 75 percent of Americans are limited in their ability to travel abroad because they don't have a passport. As a result, they are unable to take advantage of the enriching opportunities presented by international travel.

As a member of the State-Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, I understand and appreciate the value and importance of international travel and the impact of our foreign aid and the positive value that our foreign aid brings to those throughout the world.

Many years ago I had the opportunity to live in Great Britain for a couple of years, and can say with certainty that there is no substitute for the experience you get from visiting other countries, from meeting with people, from tasting the food, from interacting with the culture. It changes the way we see the world. It broadens our horizons, it deepens our appreciation for different countries and cultures and our shared humanity. It also helps us to learn, to understand, and to tolerate and to mutually respect other cultures. Not only does travel provide enriching opportunities for the individual, it can also have profound benefits for our Nation as a whole through people-to-people contact.

In addition, having a passport and traveling abroad enables others to see our contributions firsthand, including the tremendous amount of humanitarian aid given by Americans through the public and private sectors.

Americans of all ages are our best ambassadors, and we should promote policies that encourage them to travel, to forge connections with people from other countries, to foster mutual understanding and tolerance, and to help open new doors for peaceful coexistence.

The timing of our efforts could not be more critical. I think we all recognize that America needs a boost in foreign public opinion, and I am confident that connections made with American travelers can and will make a huge difference in improving our image abroad. For all of these reasons, when Lonely Planet, which I am pleased to say is located in Oakland in my district, first raised the idea of a National Passport Month, I immediately got it. I embraced it.

I am proud to have introduced H. Res. 554 and to be a part of this campaign to recognize the importance of international travel, and I am excited by the support we have received.

Last year, Lonely Planet presented me with over 5,000 petition signatures from people all over our country who support these efforts, and this campaign has the support of a broad coalition of over 70 supporting travel organizations and associations to corporations like American Express and Yahoo.

Moreover, the Department of State is on record in supporting September as National Passport Month. Let me just read a quote from their letter: "Since September is a time of the year when schools are reopening and many students are considering travel or study abroad, it is a highly appropriate month to promote public awareness of the value of the United States passport. The Department shares your appreciation of the U.S. passport and supports your resolution."

Given the recent problems with passport backlogs, this resolution is even more timely. The administration must make passports a priority and ensure that we have the resources available to process them in a timely manner. I thank all of the supporters of this resolution.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers on my side, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. HARMAN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 554.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SYMPATHY AND PLEDGING SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF SEVERE FLOODING IN EASTERN KANSAS

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 544) expressing the sympathy and pledging the support of the House of Representatives and the people of the United States for the victims of the devastating thunderstorms that caused severe flooding in 20 counties in eastern Kansas beginning on June 26, 2007.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 544

Whereas, on June 26, 2007, a storm system lasting several days was responsible for bringing heavy and torrential rainfall to eastern Kansas;

Whereas communities in eastern Kansas received up to 21 inches of rain within a four-day period, resulting in devastating floods throughout the region;

Whereas the flooding led to one person's death and more than 3,100 homes and businesses destroyed or sustaining major damage;

Whereas communities in at least 20 counties were evacuated;

Whereas flood waters caused a petroleum refinery tank system to overflow into the Verdigris River, releasing an estimated 71,000 gallons of crude oil into the Coffeyville community and surrounding area;

Whereas, on June 30, 2007, Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius declared a state of disaster for Allen, Anderson, Bourbon, Butler, Chautauqua, Cherokee, Coffey, Cowley, Elk, Franklin, Linn, Miami, Montgomery, Neosho, Osage, Wilson, and Woodson counties;

Whereas, on July 2, 2007, President George W. Bush declared a major Federal disaster for the State of Kansas that included Allen, Anderson, Bourbon, Butler, Chautauqua, Cherokee, Coffey, Cowley, Elk, Franklin,

Linn, Miami, Montgomery, Neosho, Osage, Wilson, and Woodson counties;

Whereas other surrounding counties in Kansas also suffered damage from heavy flooding; and

Whereas areas in Oklahoma and Texas experienced devastating floods that resulted in loss of human life and millions of dollars in damage to homes and businesses: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its heartfelt sympathy for the victims of the devastating thunderstorms that caused severe flooding in 20 counties in eastern Kansas beginning on June 26, 2007;

(2) conveys its gratitude to the local, State, and Federal officials and emergency personnel who responded swiftly to the crisis, including members of the Kansas National Guard and Kansas Highway Patrol;

(3) recognizes the generous support of volunteers, private and corporate donors, religious groups, and charitable organizations that have given generously toward the relief efforts following the destructive flooding; and

(4) commends the spirit of the people of Kansas, who consistently demonstrate an outpouring of compassionate care for neighbors facing adversity and hardship.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Vermont.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Vermont?

There was no objection.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. On June 26, 2007, a storm system lasting several days was responsible for bringing heavy and torrential rainfall to eastern Kansas. The affected communities received up to 21 inches of rain within a 4-day period, resulting in devastating floods throughout the region.

The flooding forced at least 20 counties to evacuate and led to the destruction of more than 3,100 homes and businesses. It caused a petroleum refinery tank system to overflow into the Verdigris River, releasing an estimated 71,000 gallons of crude oil into the Coffeyville community and surrounding area.

This resolution expresses heartfelt sympathy for the victims of the devastating thunderstorms that caused flooding in eastern Kansas.

Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague, Representative TODD TIAHRT, for introducing this legislation and urge the swift passage of this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The massive floods that devastated 20 counties in eastern Kansas this past June left thousands of residents out of their homes. Torrential thunderstorms pounded the area beginning on June 26 and continued for 4 days. In the end, the area was hit with 21 inches of rain, causing rivers to flood, forcing countywide evacuations, schools and businesses to close, as well as causing a local oil refinery to overflow and release 71,000 gallons of crude oil into an already-flooded area.

The floods left one person dead and more than 3,100 homes and businesses destroyed or damaged. On June 30, Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius declared a state of disaster for 17 counties, which President Bush later declared as Federal disasters.

Through the help of local, State and Federal officials and emergency personnel, evacuations were carried out quickly and safely. Order was maintained in the area with the help of the Kansas National Guard and the Kansas Highway Patrol.

It is important that we recognize the general support of the many volunteers, private and corporate donors, religious groups and other charitable organizations who assisted the communities in their time of need. The actions of many public servants, neighbors and community leaders helped thousands through this hardship.

This resolution expresses our sincere sympathy for the victims of this devastating storm.

Madam Speaker, I would give the gentleman from Kansas as much time as he may consume, my good friend (Mr. TIAHRT).

Mr. TIAHRT. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) for his contributions and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) in helping me through this process of getting recognition to the people of Kansas who have suffered under this flood.

Madam Speaker, we have had a lot of trouble in Kansas this year. Out of our 105 counties, 102 have been declared a disaster at one time or another. It started in January with a 100-year event, an ice storm. We lost a lot of cattle. Power was down in half of the State. It was a very difficult time.

Later on in the year we had a series of tornadoes that were considered another 100-year event. It included a level 5 or T-5 tornado that hit Greensburg, Kansas, and the small community of 1,500 was completely wiped out by that tornado.

This was the third wave of natural disaster that has hit Kansas this year. It actually encompassed about 21 counties when it was all said and done. As you heard earlier, we lost 3,100 homes.

I have been in this flood area about five times since the flooding has occurred. I have been through the refinery that is now back up and running. The small community of Coffeyville seemed to be the worst hit. We have had quite a bit of difficulty getting through the problem, complicated by the oil that was spilled into many homes in that area.

Coffeyville resources is in the process of trying to rectify that situation; but I am very pleased that the jobs have never ceased at that refinery. They started the cleanup process right away, and they will continue to remain in that community. It is 1 of 3 refineries that we have in Kansas, and it does bring a lot of jobs to the area. It is also unique in that it is 1 of 2 refineries in the world that takes the by-product of making petroleum or gasoline from petroleum and it turns it into fertilizer for farmers in the area. So it is a very progressive refinery, and it has been a good source of jobs in that area.

I would like to acknowledge a few people who were very instrumental in bringing that community and other communities, like Independence, Kansas, back to their feet: Independence Mayor Rick Mott; Independence City Manager Paul Sasse; Independence Police Chief Ken Parker; Independence Fire Chief Dale Rail; Coffeyville Mayor Virgil Horn; Coffeyville City Manager Jeff Morris; Coffeyville Police Chief Joe Humble; Coffeyville Fire Chief Greg Allen; State Senators Derek Schmidt and Dwayne Umbarger; Kansas Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Tod M. Bunting; Governor Kathleen Sebelius; State Representatives Jeff King, Virgil Peck and Kasha Kelly; and Montgomery County Commissioners Billy Lewark-Wood, Tony Fowler and Gene Tucker.

There are other people that were involved like Jim Miller with Emergency Management and the Kansas National Guard and the Kansas Highway Patrol that did a great deal of work during that time to make sure we had minimal casualties.

The one story I remember is the gentleman who was notified to get out of the area because the floodwaters were rising.

□ 1230

He chose to go back to his home to save his coin collection. I don't know what he was carrying his coins in, but he was later rescued by the Coffeyville Fire Department, and he lost all his coins.

So I think there was a good time for people to respond to the need, the disaster, and get out, but those that chose to stay behind did so at their own peril. I think it's a good lesson for all of America when emergency situations arise and our first responders are telling you to please leave the area, don't go back for your coin collection or anything else. Your personal safety is first.

Coins can be replaced, possessions can be replaced, but our human lives are one thing that cannot be replaced. So I'm very pleased that we had minimal casualties and only one fatality in that situation. Incidentally, that one fatality was a gentleman who chose not to respond to the warnings and stayed in his dwelling against the will of the people who were trying to rescue him.

There's another piece of legislation that I would like to mention that is the first step of reaching out to other areas, other Members of Congress who have had similar flooding since July. Now, they have been in States like Indiana, in their counties. It's been in Illinois, been in Texas, Nebraska. I have a bill that will help Kansas get back on its feet, but I would like to reach out to the other Members of Congress who have experienced flooding and ask them to join with me to help Kansas, as well as their areas.

I think we should have one bill that would address all the needs because they're very similar. The communities need to have the cleanup. They need to have some rehabilitation of historic buildings. They need to have infrastructure rebuilt. They need to have businesses supporting the cleanup.

So the bill that I have is H.R. 3444, and if we can work with those Members of Congress, Madam Speaker, that have had similar flooding problems and have one bill, I think it would be easier for the House to schedule. Plus, we would meet the needs of all our communities.

Again, I want to thank the gentleman from Georgia. There was one thing that I failed to mention, and that is that Coffeyville Resources, which is the refinery, has made plans to make things right. They've responded to the community. Those homes that were damaged by the spilt oil, they have asked to purchase those homes. They're going to turn that land back over to the city. They're going to make a park in that area.

So I think it's significant to note that when some corporation is a good public citizen, a good corporate citizen, that we ought to acknowledge that publicly because we need more of that.

I thank you for the time.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to another gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for yielding me the time, and I am here to lend my support for the gentleman from Kansas' efforts in regard to once again disaster striking our State.

We come from a State, Mr. TIAHRT and I and the rest of the Members of the Kansas congressional delegation, that really has known tough times over a long history. But especially within the last few months, really within the last year, Kansas has had winter storms that involved hail and freezing rain, ice, snow, as well as tornados. Greensburg, Kansas, became a national location, known by people around the world for a tornado that destroyed an entire town, and now most recently a large portion of our State has been struck by tremendous rainfall resulting in flooding.

I appreciate the gentleman from Kansas' (Mr. TIAHRT) leadership in bringing attention to this plight that we face in our State.

In fact, there are 69 counties in the First Congressional District. All but four of them have been declared natural disaster areas this year, since January 1 by the President, and FEMA and other emergency responders are at work.

The encouraging thing about our State is that local folks respond, and we've seen tremendous efforts by individual citizens from across the State arriving to help their neighbors, and we've seen the collection plates passed on Sunday morning, money being raised, response being had, and we've had tremendous support from our law enforcement community, from our emergency preparedness officials, as well as State and Federal officials. In many instances, I would report that FEMA has responded in a very noble and adequate way, and we're very grateful for that help.

Again, all the disaster has caused many Members of Congress to stop and talk to us from Kansas and wish us well. We've had encouragement and support from leaders around the world, in fact, due to the tremendous natural disasters that have occurred.

And so I'm here to express my support for Mr. TIAHRT's efforts and let him know that we all care about the portion of the State that has now been affected by these floods and will work closely with him, following his leadership to see that the response is appropriate from the Federal Government and that Kansans once again rebound from this significant natural disaster.

I, too, would like to commend Coffeyville Resources for their response. It's caused significant losses within the community of Coffeyville. It's also had a consequence upon all Kansans. It's one of our three refineries, and so gas and diesel prices have been affected as a result of the closing, at least temporarily, of a refinery in our State. But their responses, both in getting back into business and their response to being a good corporate citizen within the community of Coffeyville, should be recognized.

And finally, I thank the support we have had from my colleagues here in the United States House of Representatives. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and so I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. TIAHRT) and the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) and my colleague Mr. WESTMORELAND and urge the passage of this resolution.

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 544, recognizing the victims of floods in Kansas.

On June 26, a storm brought several days of torrential rainfall to Kansas, leading to major damage, including the destruction of 3,100 homes and businesses, and even more tragically, one person's death.

Within a 4 day period, some communities received 21 inches of rain. Communities in 20 counties were evacuated.

This resolution simply expresses heartfelt sympathy for the victims of these devastating thunderstorms, in addition to conveying gratitude to the local, State, and Federal officials and emergency personnel who responded swiftly to the crisis, including the Kansas National Guard and Kansas Highway Patrol and recognizing the generous support of volunteers, private and corporate donors, religious groups, and charitable organizations that have given generously toward the relief efforts following the destructive flooding.

Most importantly, this resolution commends the spirit of the people of Kansas, who consistently demonstrate their strength, not only in rebuilding their own lives in the face of adversity and hardship, but also through their outpouring of compassionate care for neighbors.

"Ad astra per aspera," is our Kansas motto—"to the stars through difficulties."

I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 544, acknowledging the destruction left behind by recent severe weather in Kansas, yet celebrating the resilience of the Kansans rebuilding homes, businesses, lives, and dreams.

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Madam Speaker, on June 26th, rains began to fall in eastern Kansas, and they barely paused for the next 3 days. Storms dumped as much as 21 inches of rain in some places, triggering floods that washed over dozens of counties.

When the rains finally stopped, I joined Mr. MOORE, Mr. TIAHRT, Mr. MORAN, and our governor, Kathleen Sebelius, to tour the flood-damaged regions. We saw heartbreaking sights: homes covered in water, streets rendered inaccessible by floods, and the populations of whole towns camping in middle schools. We also saw countless acts of kindness, from the very large to the very small. Friends and neighbors gave generously of their time, their shelter, their food, and their hearts. As devastating as the floods were, they brought out the very best in Kansans.

I'm pleased that the House is pausing today to reflect upon what we've lost and to honor the hard work of rebuilding Kansas. Votes such as this are sometimes called "symbolic," but that is not the same thing as "meaningless." To the Americans who have heard little news from Kansas since the flood waters receded, this vote serves as notice that we're

rebuilding, stronger than ever before. And to the thousands of Kansans who lost everything, it is a show of support from their community and their country.

Today, 2 months after the rain stopped, eastern Kansas is well on its way to recovery. For that, we owe our deepest thanks to our friends and neighbors, to the emergency personnel who worked so tirelessly for so long, and to FEMA for its helping hand. You've shown us how to meet a disaster with courage and compassion, and you've shown America the very best of Kansas.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 544.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL TEEN DRIVER SAFETY WEEK

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 165) supporting the goals and ideals of National Teen Driver Safety Week.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 165

Whereas motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for adolescents and young adults in the United States, and many of these deaths are preventable;

Whereas almost 7,500 drivers between the ages of 15 and 20 years were involved in fatal crashes in 2005 throughout the United States;

Whereas the fatality rate in the United States for drivers between the ages of 16 and 19 years, based on miles driven, is 4 times the fatality rate for drivers between the ages of 25 and 69 years;

Whereas the majority of teen driver crashes in the United States are due to driver error and speeding, and 15 percent of the crashes are due to drunk driving;

Whereas roughly two-thirds of the teenagers killed in motor vehicle accidents in the United States each year do not use seatbelts;

Whereas approximately 63 percent of teen passenger deaths in the United States occur while other teenagers are driving;

Whereas it is necessary to explore effective ways to reduce the crash risk for young drivers by focusing research and outreach efforts on areas of teen driving that show the most promise for improving safety;

Whereas the National Teen Driver Survey, developed with input from teenagers and administered by The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, demonstrates a national need to increase overall awareness about the safe use of electronic handheld devices, the risk of nighttime and fatigued driving, the importance of consistent seatbelt use, and the practice of gradually increasing driver privileges over time as a young driver gains more experience under supervised conditions;

Whereas in 2005, 1,553 crash fatalities involving a teen driver occurred in the fall, when teenagers are in the first months of the school year and faced with many decisions involving driving, including whether to drive with peer passengers and other distractions; and

Whereas designating the third week of October as National Teen Driver Safety Week is expected to increase awareness of these important issues among teenagers and adults in communities throughout the United States, as additional research is conducted to develop and test effective interventions that will help teenagers become safer drivers; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Teen Driver Safety Week; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to observe the week with appropriate activities that promote the practice of safe driving among the Nation's licensed teenage drivers.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Vermont.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Vermont?

There was no objection.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I'm pleased to join my colleagues in the consideration of H. Con. Res. 165, which supports the goals and ideals of National Teen Driver Safety Week.

This resolution, which has 55 cosponsors, was introduced by Representative CHARLES DENT on June 6, 2007. The resolution was reported from the Oversight Committee on July 19, 2007, by a voice vote.

Madam Speaker, road crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers. These crashes are more common among young drivers than among any other age group, with one in four crash fatalities in the United States involving young people from the ages of 16 to 24.

The first 6 months after a teenager receives his or her license, he or she is especially at high risk of being in a car accident. Unfortunately, this risk stays relatively high until the young driver reaches 25.

In an effort to improve road safety and reduce crashes among young people, the Center for Injury Research and Prevention at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and the State Farm Insurance Company codeveloped a multiyear teen center research initiative to help young drivers develop safe, smart driving behaviors and skills.

Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague Mr. DENT from Pennsylvania for seeking to support the goals and ideals of National Teen Driver Safety Week, and I urge the swift passage of this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Tragedy strikes every day as teen drivers, just on the cusp of adulthood, are killed at an alarming rate each year, causing grief and profound sadness for their families and communities.

Motor vehicle crashes continue to be the leading cause of death among adolescents and young adults in the United States.

In 2005, almost 7,500 drivers between the age of 15 and 20 were involved in fatal crashes across the United States. Many of these deaths are preventable, and it is imperative that we do all we can to improve the safety of our roads and highways for all drivers.

H. Con. Res. 165 supports the ideals and goals of National Teen Driver Safety Week, an important event that will go a long way towards educating our young people and their families about safe driving practices.

The statistics of teen driving are simply staggering. This age group makes up only 7 percent of licensed drivers but suffers 14 percent of fatalities and 20 percent of all reported accidents.

Based on miles driven, drivers between the ages of 16 and 19 have four times the mortality rate than drivers older than 25 and up.

Most important of all, the number of teen drivers on the road is expected to grow to over 32 million by 2010, meaning that, unless we take action, this tragic problem will only get worse.

National Teen Driver Safety Week seeks to reverse these alarming trends by concentrating national attention on the development and communication of effective interventions to help reduce crashes involving teen drivers. Teens will be taught about safe driver practices that will prevent many of these accidents from occurring. Efforts will be made to encourage teens to wear seatbelts, as nearly two-thirds of all teenagers killed in motor vehicle accidents have been reportedly not wearing seatbelts.

Finally, National Teen Driver Safety Week will echo other groups in warning about the dangers of drunk driving, nighttime fatigue and other use of electronic, handheld devices. By educating teens, along with their families, we can possibly make a lasting change in teen driving behavior that will lead to safer roads for all of us.

Therefore, I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting H. Con. Res. 165, supporting the goals of the National Teen Driver Safety Week.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I reserve my time.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize my friend from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) for as much time as he may consume.

Mr. DENT. Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to rise this afternoon in support of this legislation which designates the third week of October as National Teen Driver Safety Week.

As has already been stated, we witness this issue on far too many occasions, but roughly 7,500 teenage drivers were involved in fatal car crashes in 2005. Today, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among American teenagers.

The time has come for Congress to recognize this terrible problem and consider effective interventions that will help reduce the number of accidents involving teens on American roads.

On Monday, January 22, 2007, following a tragic accident that claimed the lives of two young high school students in my district, The Morning Call newspaper compiled a report: Fatal crashes involving teens that had occurred in the Lehigh Valley region since 2001. This report indicated that there were a total of 13 fatalities between 2001 and 2006, with alcohol involved in two of the seven accidents reported. Other contributing factors included racing and reckless behavior.

Sadly, it appears that these events, which are happening in every corner of the United States, could have been prevented, enabling these young adults to reach their destinations safely.

To address this troubling issue, the Children's Hospital of Pennsylvania, or CHOP as it's commonly referred to, is currently conducting research that will help develop the best interventions to reduce the risk of crash injury for teen drivers and travelers sharing the road with them.

The alliance of Children's Hospital of Pennsylvania and State Farm Insurance Company, CHOP's partner in this initiative, is nationally recognized for its research and outreach involving child passenger safety. However, this year they've expanded their agenda from the car seat to the driver's seat in an effort to address the cause of motor vehicle crashes, the leading cause of death among American teenagers.

Together, CHOP and State Farm have conducted research indicating that teens often drive while distracted and fatigued.

□ 1245

I believe this alliance brings together a wide range of expertise and research and outreach, translating scientific evidence into actions that will help save lives. It's important that Congress support efforts to effectively educate these teens and families about ways to address these problems.

This resolution will endorse the goals and ideals of a week in which intensive programming will be used to encourage these teens to drive more safely. By delaying exposure to risky driving conditions until they have had enough supervised driving experience, managing peer-to-peer interactions while in the vehicle, and reinforcing the need to protect and react to hazards more appropriately, teens will be better prepared to drive responsibly. Throughout our great Nation, teens are dying in crashes at a rate of four times that of adult drivers.

Congress must work to prevent these tragedies, and I certainly encourage my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from the great State of Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN).

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for giving me this time. I actually came to the floor to speak on other legislation, but when I realized that this bill was up, I wanted to at least make a couple of comments about it.

I have the privilege of serving as the ranking member on the Highways and Transit Subcommittee. Prior to that, or a few years ago, I served for 6 years as chairman of the Aviation Subcommittee. The statistics, or the comparison between aviation and safety on our highways, is just staggering.

Unfortunately, we have more people killed in 3½ months on our Nation's highways than we have had killed in all U.S. aviation accidents combined since the Wright brothers' flight in 1903. But more importantly I want to commend the authors of this legislation, because we need to do everything we can to call attention to the record of teen drivers and raise the awareness of teenagers as to how dangerous our Nation's highways can be.

According to the most recent statistics by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, our safest drivers, contrary to what a lot of people believe, are those 75 and over. The second safest group of drivers are those 65 to 74.

The 75 and over age group has 2.5 accidents per 10,000 drivers. That compares to the 16-to-20 group which has 13.3 percent per 10,000 drivers. It's an amazing statistic as to how dangerous teenage driving is and how safe our older drivers are.

I just wanted to say that I rise in strong support of this resolution on Teen Driver Safety Week.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the work of my colleague, Mr. WESTMORELAND, the remarks of my colleagues, Mr. DUNCAN from Tennessee and Mr. DENT from Pennsylvania, and urge passage.

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I am proud to join my colleague from Pennsylvania, Mr. DENT, in supporting the goals and ideals of National Teen Driver Safety Week. I signed on as an original co-sponsor of this important initiative because I believe that teen driver safety—especially in Pennsylvania—deserves our support and our attention. This is an important piece of legislation and I urge my fellow Members of Congress to support it today.

I am also proud of the research and prevention efforts of the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, which includes a campus in my district. We should all applaud their commitment to keeping our teens and roads safer and I hope that the establishment of Teen Driver Safety Week will bring attention to this important issue in communities like mine across the United States.

Madam Speaker, the figures are daunting: Almost 7,500 drivers between the ages of 15 and 20 were involved in fatal crashes in 2005 and the fatality rate for teens is four times the rate for drivers between 25 and 69. The good news is that we can do something about it. The majority of teen driver crashes in our country are due to avoidable mistakes like speeding or cell phone use. The research shows that involvement from parents, educators and peers can make the difference in saving young lives.

In my own district, an organization called Central Bucks Cares is leading the charge to engage teen drivers in safe driving practices. After the tragic deaths of Laura Lauterbach and James Ogden, both students at Central Bucks East High School, the nonprofit community coalition assembled a roundtable discussion on teen driving. Following the roundtable, student intern Sarah Canavan of Buckingham helped Central Bucks Cares to draft a contract that teen drivers and their parents could agree to.

Teens agree to responsible driving practices, including courteous behavior towards other drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians, as well as adherence to traffic laws and road signs. Parents agree to serve as good role models in their own driving and to encourage safe driving practices by enforcing the terms of the contract.

Sarah's younger sister Amy and her mother were the first teen/parent pair to sign and fully

support the agreement. I hope that many more families in Pennsylvania and nationwide will follow their example in making a commitment to safer teen driving.

Madam Speaker, I see the difference that Central Bucks Cares is making in my district and I hope that this legislation will help other communities to do the same.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 165.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

JOHN HERSCHEL GLENN, JR. POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3052) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 954 Wheeling Avenue in Cambridge, Ohio, as the "John Herschel Glenn, Jr. Post Office Building".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3052

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. JOHN HERSCHEL GLENN, JR. POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 954 Wheeling Avenue in Cambridge, Ohio, shall be known and designated as the "John Herschel Glenn, Jr. Post Office Building".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "John Herschel Glenn, Jr. Post Office Building".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Vermont.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Vermont?

There was no objection.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleague in the consideration of H.R. 3052, which names a postal facility in Cambridge, Ohio, after John Herschel Glenn, Jr.

H.R. 3052 was introduced by Representative ZACH SPACE on July 16, 2007, and reported from the Oversight Committee on July 19, 2007, by voice vote. This measure has the support of the entire Ohio congressional delegation.

As America knows, Mr. Glenn, Senator Glenn, is a pioneering astronaut, pilot, former United States Senator, and a true hero with a distinguished and impressive career in service to our Nation. He was born on July 18, 1921, in Cambridge, Ohio. He entered the Naval Aviation Cadet Program in March 1942 and commissioned in the Marines Corps in 1943.

After completing advanced training, he joined the Marine Fighter Squadron 155 and spent a year flying F–4U fighters in the Marshall Islands.

During World War II, he flew 59 combat missions. After the war, he was a member of the Marine Fighter Squadron 218 on the North China patrol and served in Guam. From June 1948 to December 1950, Mr. Glenn taught advanced flight training in Texas. He volunteered for the Korean War, flying 63 missions and shooting down three enemy aircraft. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross 6 times and several other medals.

He has many other accomplishments that I believe we will hear about from Representative SPACE when he has an opportunity to speak, but he is a person widely known to Americans, Republicans, Democrats, independents, people who are active politically, those who aren't, people who revere public service in the military and in politics as one of the most extraordinary Americans of our time.

Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague, Representative SPACE, for introducing this legislation and urge the swift passage of this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

(By unanimous consent, Mr. BOEHNER was allowed to speak out of order.)

ANNOUNCING THE PASSING OF CONGRESSMAN PAUL E. GILLMOR

Mr. BOEHNER. Madam Speaker, it is with profound sadness that I come to the floor today and inform all of my colleagues that our colleague from Ohio, PAUL GILLMOR, passed away suddenly overnight.

PAUL was a good friend to all of us, a colleague of mine who served in this House for nearly two decades after a long, distinguished career in the Ohio Senate. He was from Ohio, born there, raised there, went to school there. He is going to be missed by all of us.

I want to make sure that we keep Karen and his children in our thoughts in this very difficult time.

We will notify Members of the arrangements when they are made, but I would expect that later this afternoon the Members of the Ohio delegation from both sides of the aisle will be on the floor for a tribute to our friend.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I would just like to offer my condolences to the GILLMOR family at this tragic time in their life.

Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am honored today to speak about a highly esteemed former Senator, distinguished war veteran, astronaut, businessman and educator, John Herschel Glenn, Jr. He is well-known throughout the history of this country through both his career in Congress and his legendary work with NASA. John Glenn has served his country profoundly for decades and remains an active leader in his community.

A lifelong resident of Ohio, he attended Muskingum College to study chemistry. Shortly after the attacks on Pearl Harbor, he enrolled in the Naval Aviation Cadet Program and earned a commission in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1943. He served his country in World War II as a fighter pilot, flying 59 combat missions.

After returning to the U.S., he was transferred to the Naval Air Station, Maryland, where he has soon earned the rank of captain. His military service continued, and he saw battle in North China and Guam. He fought in the Korean War, participating in 63 air combat missions. His experience in combat fighting furthered as he attended additional flight training in Maryland. It was there that he tested flying planes at altitudes very high.

In 1957 he completed the first supersonic transcontinental flight, code named Project Bullet. This historic flight was one of many great achievements for John Glenn's career in aviation.

While still serving with the Marines Corps, Glenn was assigned to NASA as one of the legendary group of astronauts involved with Project Mercury.

As a member of this elite group of astronauts, Glenn piloted the first American manned orbital mission in 1962, which I remember very well. It was the third mission.

His mission brought him national fame and recognition as he was seen as an American hero. He resigned the NASA program in 1964 and one year later from the Marine Corps at the rank of colonel.

John Glenn entered the private sector working for Royal Crown Cola. But his passion for public service soon got the better of him and he decided to run for public office in 1964. He was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1974 after years of campaign-related setbacks. He served in the Senate for 25 years. During his last term of office, he was invited by NASA to rejoin the space program that he had helped to create, therefore becoming the oldest person to travel into space at age 77.

Upon retiring from the Senate, he moved back to Ohio permanently, where he and his wife founded the John Glenn Institute for Public Service and Public Policy at Ohio State University.

The institute, which later became the John Glenn School of Public Affairs, educates and prepares students for careers in public and nonprivate sectors. Throughout his military career, his history with NASA, and upon retiring from the Senate, John Glenn has earned numerous prestigious awards, some of which include earning the Distinguished Flying Cross, the NASA Distinguished Service Medal and the Congressional Space Medal of Honor.

In 1990, he was inducted into the U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame. It is with great pride that we continue to honor his service to this country, and to his community through the naming of this post office in his hometown.

Madam Speaker, with that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to my colleague from Ohio (Mr. SPACE).

Mr. SPACE. I thank the gentleman from Vermont for yielding this time.

I would like to preface my remarks with my condolences to the family of PAUL GILLMOR as well, an Ohioan and a good man who will be missed.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3052, legislation to rename the post office in Cambridge, Ohio, after John Glenn.

I appreciate the bipartisan support the Ohio delegation has shown for passage of this legislation, and am excited to see this bill honoring a true American hero.

John Glenn was born in Cambridge, Ohio, a very small town in the beautiful rolling hills of Guernsey County. At a very young age, he moved to nearby New Concord, where he attended both high school and college.

After graduating from Muskingum College, John Glenn answered the call to military service. As a naval pilot, he served in both World War II and the Korean conflict, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross on six occasions and the Air Medal with 18 Clusters.

After leaving the military, John Glenn became a test pilot for the Naval Air Test Center. In 1957, he set a speed record by flying from Los Angeles to New York in 3 hours and 23 minutes.

It was his experience as a pilot that led to his most celebrated accomplishments in aeronautics. In 1959, John Glenn volunteered to become one of the original seven Mercury astronauts, the first manned space flight program in the United States.

Several years later, John Glenn embarked on his famous mission. In February of 1962, he became first man to orbit the Earth, completing that feat 3 times over.

John Glenn's marvels were not merely limited to aeronautical achievements. Following the end of his career in aeronautics, Ohio was the fortunate benefactor of John Glenn's public service. He served as a United States Senator with dignity and honor for 28 years before retiring.

As a freshman Member of Congress, I often look to examples to follow. I have had the good fortune of getting to know Senator Glenn in these last few months.

As an example of his courage and character, he tells a story of what he was feeling when he was about to be blasted into space 45 years ago.

□ 1300

I asked him, were you afraid? And he very candidly offered his response of yes, he was, but he did it because it was the right thing to do. He and his lovely wife, Annie, discussed the fact that there was a very good chance that he would not come back, and they did it anyway. He did it with courage and honor. He did it because it was right for this country. And at this time, in our history, I think it would serve all of us very well, Madam Speaker, to follow the example that John Glenn presented for us, the trails that he blazed. He is, in fact, the best that this country has to offer. He has shown courage in the face of adversity. He has shown selflessness for the sake of making our country a better place.

The Cambridge post office is one that has stood the test of time. For the better part of a century it has stood as a landmark in one of the central towns in my district. Moreover, the Cambridge post office serves the folks in the small town where John Glenn was born, and it's the same building in which John Glenn's distinguished military career began so many years ago when he registered for enlistment and service to his country. From this point onward it will bear a name of one that has brought much inspiration to the daily lives of Ohioans.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Spaker, I am pleased to rise in support of H.R. 3052, which designates the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 954 Wheeling Avenue in Cambridge, Ohio as the "John Herschel Glenn, Jr. Post Office Building." I agree with Congressmen SPACE and TIBERI that it is long overdue for us to finally pay fitting tribute to an American hero who answered the call of service so many times, while asking nothing in return.

John Glenn's life is truly an American story. Born in Cambridge, Ohio in 1921 and raised in New Concord, John Glenn spent his early years in Ohio. After graduating with a baccalaureate degree in engineering from Muskingum College, John Glenn began his distinguished military career as a Marine and fighter pilot. He flew 149 combat missions, in both World War II and the Korean War, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross six times.

But more than his impressive record of military service, John Glenn will always be best known for his contributions to our nation's space exploration program. Glenn's experience and skill made him a logical candidate for the astronaut corps being formed during 1958. On February 20, 1962, Glenn piloted the Mercury-Atlas 6 "Friendship 7" spacecraft on the first manned orbital mission of the United States. This endeavor was a critical political and scientific milestone. It revolutionized the perspective of the American people and instilled public faith in the fledgling space program, which at that time was lagging behind the Soviets in the "Space Race." As a Member of Congress from the Houston area, the home of the Johnson Space Center, I personally want to think John Glenn for this great achievement. John Glenn always had the "Right Stuff," as the writer Tom Wolfe so aptly put it.

After his famous flight, John Glenn returned to his home state of Ohio and went on to serve the state with distinction and honor in United States Senate. In his four terms in the Senate, John Glenn took a leading role in the effort to reduce nuclear weapons and government affairs. He was chief author of the 1978 Nuclear Nonproliferation Act, served as chairman of the Senate Government Affairs Committee from 1978 until 1995, and was a leading member of the Foreign Relations and Armed Services committees and the Special Committee on Aging. Always willing to serve his country, John Glenn waged a spirited contest for his party's presidential nomination in 1984.

In February 1997, John Glenn announced that he would retire from the Senate. A year later, NASA requested him to rejoin the space program he had helped to create as a member of the Space Shuttle Discovery Crew. John Glenn accepted the invitation and on October 29, 1998, at age 77, became the oldest human ever to venture into space. This voyage to outer space was no mere publicity stunt, however, thanks to John Glenn; NASA scientists gained much valuable information. Senator Glenn conducted the Canadian Space Agency's OSTEO (Osteoarthritis) experiment on board the Space Shuttle Discovery during the mission which contributed to our understanding of the aging process. The OSTEO experiment studied the underlying processes of bone loss and evaluated treatments. The research, supervised by John Glenn, was ideally suited for the space environment, as bone loss in space is four to ten times faster than during osteoporosis on Earth. The experiment demonstrated how bone mineralization decreases during space flight and also showed that a specific therapeutic agent, called recombinant human parathyroid hormone (PTH), is able to reverse this loss. The experiments were such a success, that the Canadian Space Agency is developing follow-up experiments on future space missions.

Madam Speaker, I would again like to voice my support for H.R. 3052, and finally give back something to a man that has already given so much to his country. "God Speed, John Glenn."

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and so I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I yield back my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3052.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

STAFF SERGEANT DAVID L. NORD POST OFFICE

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3106) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 805 Main Street in Ferdinand, Indiana, as the "Staff Sergeant David L. Nord Post Office".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3106

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. STAFF SERGEANT DAVID L. NORD POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 805 Main Street in Ferdinand, Indiana, shall be known and designated as the "Staff Sergeant David L. Nord Post Office".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Staff Sergeant David L. Nord Post Office".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Vermont.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Vermont?

There was no objection.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I'm pleased to join my colleagues in the consideration of H.R. 3106. This names a postal facility in Ferdinand, Indiana after David L. Nord.

H.R. 3106, introduced by Representative BARON HILL on July 19, 2007, was reported from the Oversight Committee on August 1, 2007, by voice vote. This measure, cosponsored by eight Members, has the support of the entire Indiana congressional delegation.

Madam Speaker, Staff Sergeant David Nord was killed on June 23, 1969, in Bing Long, South Vietnam. He was assigned to 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment at Camp Blackhorse, Vietnam as a scout section leader.

Staff Sergeant Nord was awarded the Bronze Star, along with several other awards for his bravery and sacrifice to his country.

Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague, Representative BARON HILL, for introducing this legislation, and urge the swift passage of this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise this afternoon, again, to pay tribute to another remarkable soldier and another true American hero. At the age of only 21, Staff Sergeant David Nord from Ferdinand, Indiana became a genuine war hero. On June 23, 1969, he was killed in Vietnam War action while serving with the U.S. Army.

Staff Sergeant Nord was born and raised in Ferdinand, Indiana, sharing his younger years with his one brother and three sisters. After graduating in 1967 from St. Ferdinand High School, he worked in the Ferdinand furniture factory.

Staff Sergeant Nord was drafted into the Army where he was assigned to the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment at Camp Blackhorse, Vietnam. With his positive attitude and hard work he rose quickly through the ranks and served as a scout section leader. After serving several months, Staff Sergeant Nord was granted a 21-day home leave, and it was during that time that he married Louann, his long-time girlfriend. Sadly, only three weeks after returning to the battlefield, he and most of his crew were killed when a grenade hit the tank that he was commanding. He left behind his family, his new wife and a baby, David Lee II, who he never got to meet. Staff Sergeant Nord was also the first member of the Ferdinand Post 124 of the American Legion to be killed in action. He showed outstanding bravery, courageous leadership and heroism which earned him nine medals that were awarded to his family, his wife and his son after his death. The awarded medals were the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, the Vietnamese Campaign Ribbon, the Good Conduct Ribbon, the Combat Infantry Badge, National Defense Service Ribbon, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Expert Badge with Rifle Bar and the Sharp Shooter Badge with Rifle Bar.

It is for those reasons that we name this post office for Staff Sergeant David Nord in his hometown of Ferdinand, Indiana. And, Madam Speaker, I hope that all of our colleagues will vote for this unanimously.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I yield to my colleague from Indiana, Representative BARON HILL, such time as he may consume.

Mr. HILL. Madam Speaker, H.R. 3106 would rename the post office in Ferdinand, Indiana after David Nord, the only Vietnam veteran from Ferdinand who was killed in action in the Vietnam War. This idea first came to my attention because of the hard work of David's family and his friends. They called me. This bill represents what we, as Members of our Congress, are here for, and that is to represent our constituents back home. I'd like to thank and recognize a few people who have been influential in getting this accomplished. First I would like to recognize David Nord's brother Dan and the rest of the family David left behind, including his son, David Nord II. Dan has been very active in making sure his brother's life is remembered and honored.

Like Dan, Frank Begle, a fellow soldier of David Nord's in Vietnam, has been a driving force in getting the Ferdinand post office renamed to honor David Nord.

Also Kathy Tretter, the editor and co-publisher of the local paper in Ferdinand, population of about 800 or 900 people. The Ferdinand News contacted my staff about this effort after working on stories about David's life.

I would also like to thank my colleagues in the Indiana delegation for all cosponsoring this bill.

Let me take a moment to touch on why the post office in downtown Ferdinand should be renamed to honor David Nord. David Nord is the only Ferdinand native who was killed in Vietnam. He was drafted into the Army, and in talking to his younger brother Dan, David was not very excited about having to go to Vietnam. But he did his duty to his country, and for that we give him thanks.

David rose quickly through the Army ranks because of his hard work and skill. And when he returned home briefly in 1969, he came home to marry his long-time girlfriend. Unfortunately, and tragically, shortly thereafter, David returned to Vietnam and was killed on Monday, June 23, 1969, when a tank he was commanding had to stop because the rubber tracker which propelled the vehicle forward slipped from its drive wheels and David was hit by a grenade. He died instantly, as well as most of his crew.

David's son was born just a few months after his death, and David, I know right now, is trying to get to a television screen to see his father being honored here this afternoon.

A friend from Ferdinand who was stationed in the same unit as David tells stories about how David used to give starving Vietnamese women and children his Army rations. That was the kind of guy that he was.

David left behind his parents, his wife, his younger brother and a son he never met.

Staff Sergeant David Nord was honored with the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, the Vietnamese Campaign Good Conduct Ribbon, Combat Infantry Badge, National Defense Service Ribbon, Vietnam Service Medal, Expert Badge with Rifle Bar, and Sharpshooter Badge with Rifle Bar.

His family still lives in Ferdinand, Indiana, as well as his son David Nord, Jr. Clearly, David deserves this recognition, and it's an honor for me to introduce this resolution. And I urge all of my colleagues to support this very important bill for David Nord and his family and for the city and town of Ferdinand, Indiana.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Indiana, and yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3106.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DESIGNATING A PORTION OF INTERSTATE ROUTE 395 LOCATED IN BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, AS "CAL RIPKEN WAY"

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3218) to designate a portion of Interstate Route 395 located in Baltimore, Maryland, as "Cal Ripken Way".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3218

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DESIGNATION.

The portion of Interstate Route 395 located in Baltimore, Maryland, beginning at the junction of Interstate Routes 395 and 95 and ending at Conway Street shall be known and designated as "Cal Ripken Way".

SEC. 2. REFERENCES.

Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the portion of Interstate Route 395 referred to in section 1 shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Cal Ripken Way".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 3218.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, it is my honor to rise in support of H.R. 3218, which was authored by my colleague from Maryland, Congressman JOHN SARBANES, to designate a portion of I–395 in Baltimore as "Cal Ripken Way."

Cal Ripken, Jr. played for 21 seasons with my hometown team, the Baltimore Orioles. Known as the Iron Man, he is perhaps most famous for playing in 2,632 consecutive games, breaking the record for consecutive appearances that was set by another legend of baseball, Lou Gehrig.

However, his career was not only about his resilience but about the dedication and the hard work he brought, both to the field and to our community. He finished his career with more than 3,000 hits, an incredible achievement that is one of the most difficult to accomplish in baseball. These hits included 431 home runs, and they produced 1,695 RBIs.

He began his career by earning the Rookie of the Year award. He went on to receive two Golden Glove awards, and was twice named the American League's Most Valuable Player. He was also twice named as the Most Valuable Player at the Major League All Star Game.

In recognition of his achievements and of his importance to the game of baseball, he was elected to baseball's Hall of Fame this year, the first year in which he was eligible to be so honored. Cal Ripken represents the very best that we have ever seen in the game of baseball.

Since leaving baseball, he has come to represent the very best of our community and, indeed, of our Nation by finding new ways to help build the same dedication to excellence in our young people that he brought to his incredible career. He established and manages the Cal Ripken Baseball Division, in which literally hundreds of thousands of youngsters have participated, learning not only the skills of baseball, but the work ethic that will help them succeed in whatever they choose to do in life.

□ 1315

With his brother, he also established the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation in honor of their father to give underprivileged youth the opportunity to participate in baseball and softball.

In recognition of his ability to motivate and inspire, he was recently selected to serve our Nation as a Special Sports Envoy for the United States Department of State. At the time of his appointment, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice noted that Cal Ripken brought "integrity to the game of baseball," and I think his personal integrity is truly his greatest legacy.

Cal Ripken is not only a sports hero who has achieved extraordinary accomplishments through hard work and sheer perseverance, he is a popular figure who has cultivated, in a way that increasingly few sports figures do, his ability to be a positive role model.

Cal has synchronized his personal character with his physical abilities and has consistently used his extraordinary gifts to make a difference in the lives of others.

As a Baltimorean, I thank my colleague Congressman SARBANES for his work on this legislation. I join all of my colleagues from Maryland in recognizing the incredible legacy that Cal Ripken has given not only to our city but to our Nation of excellence on the field and service off the field. I can think of no more fitting way to honor Cal Ripken than by naming the interstate that passes by Camden Yards, which is only a few blocks from my house, where he played his entire career in his honor, and I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 3218.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I would like to voice my very strong support for H.R. 3218. H.R. 3218 designates Interstate Route 395 in Baltimore, Maryland, as "Cal Ripken Way."

Cal Ripken, Jr. is a native son of Havre de Grace, Maryland, in Harford County, about 35 miles northeast of Baltimore. Cal Ripken, also known as "Iron Man," is best known for his record-shattering streak of playing 2,632 straight games for the American League's Baltimore Orioles over 17 years, from May 1982, through September 1998. An unbelievable record. He retired from Major League Baseball in October 2001, after playing 21 straight years for the Orioles, between 1981 and 2001.

On September 6, 1995, Cal Ripken, Jr. broke Lou Gehrig's record of 2,130 consecutive games played, a record that had stood for 57 years. On that historic night at Camden Yards, Ripken not only broke the record but also hit a home run in the fourth inning of that game.

His father, Cal Ripken, Sr., was a former baseball player, coach, and scout for the Orioles. In 1987 and 1988, Cal Ripken, Sr. managed the Orioles, and both Cal Ripken, Jr. and his brother Billy played for the team that year, a first in baseball history.

Since leaving the game in 2001, Cal Ripken has dedicated his life and his work to youth. He established the Cal

Ripken, Sr. Foundation, which uses baseball- and softball-themed programs to help instill leadership qualities, a strong work ethic, sportsmanship, and healthy habits. He also built the Ripken Youth Baseball Academy, the largest baseball academy in the United States, where thousands of young people learn the finer points of baseball and deepen their love for playing it.

He served as the first commissioner of the White House T-Ball initiative for President George Bush from 2001 to 2004. And on July 29, 2007, Cal Ripken was fittingly inducted into the baseball Hall of Fame.

When I was growing up, Madam Speaker, I served 5½ years as a batboy for the Knoxville Smokies baseball team. I served other seasons as ball chaser, scoreboard operator, clubhouse boy. In my freshman year at the University of Tennessee, I served as a public address announcer. I grew up in minor league baseball. My father gave Earl Weaver his first managerial job in Knoxville, managing the Knoxville Smokies in 1956, and we became a farm club of the Baltimore Orioles. People who later played with Cal Ripken or who he knew through the Orioles like Milt Pappas, Jerry Walker, Ron Hansen, Willie Tasby, Mike Cuellar, Dave Nicholson, and many other players who later played for the Orioles played in Knoxville.

Baseball has meant a lot to me and my family through the years, and it is a real honor and privilege for me to stand here before you today and announce my support for this very appropriate legislation to honor a truly great American, Cal Ripken, Jr.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Maryland, sponsor of the legislation (Mr. SARBANES).

Mr. SARBANES. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding his time and for his support. I thank Congressman DUNCAN for his support of H.R. 3218, which it was my privilege to introduce in the House.

This legislation honors Cal Ripken, Jr. on his induction into the pro baseball Hall of Fame by renaming Interstate 395 in Baltimore, which runs into the city and ends near Oriole Park at Camden Yards, as "Cal Ripken Way." It is fitting that we would pass this measure today on the eve of the 12th anniversary of Cal's setting the consecutive games record. I would like to thank Chairman OBERSTAR for his assistance in bringing this measure to the floor.

Cal's stellar career no doubt made him worthy of induction into the Hall of Fame. In fact, he was elected to the Hall with the highest vote total ever, the highest vote percentage for any position player, and the third highest vote percentage in history.

But the numbers don't even begin to explain what he means to our national pastime. Too often, our sports stars are famous for all the wrong reasons. But time and again Cal Ripken, Jr. has been a source of pride for baseball.

Cal was a spectacular player but not a flashy one. He played fundamental baseball, always doing the little things and setting the example for how a professional should perfect his trade. And he showed up every day.

From the heights of the World Series championship in 1983 to the depths of the 21-game losing streak that began the 1988 season, Cal was there every day. After the cancellation of the 1994 World Series, many fans mark September 6, 1995, the night Ripken played in his 2,131st game, as the night that America came back to baseball.

Ripken's commitment to working hard and playing by the rules became known as "The Ripken Way." He inspired the people of Baltimore every season with his quiet and unassuming dedication to his work and continues to do so in retirement through numerous charitable works and his youth baseball foundation.

In fact, I believe that Cal has inspired Americans all over the country. I think Tony Kornheiser captured this well in a column that appeared in the Washington Post on September 7, 1995. He wrote: "When I look at this record, I think I hear the rhythms of America. This celebration of Cal is the fanfare for the common man. Going to work every day . . . building a career, providing for our family like our fathers did before us is something we can all relate to."

Madam Speaker, if we pass this legislation, when travelers come to visit Baltimore or pass by on their way to another destination, they will not only be reminded of a terrific ballplayer whose name has become synonymous with the Orioles but also a model American and the promise of doing things the "Ripken Way." I hope my colleagues agree that this is a fitting tribute to one of the best loved and most enduring figures in the history of baseball.

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, I will just close by saying that Cal Ripken is certainly a throwback to the old days in which little boys could look up to major league baseball players as real heroes and role models in their lives, and I can't adequately express my great admiration for Cal Ripken.

I urge support for this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

First of all, I want to thank again Mr. SARBANES for sponsorship. I want to thank you, Mr. DUNCAN. I didn't know you had that kind of relationship to baseball and to the Baltimore Orioles.

As I listened to Mr. DUNCAN and Mr. SARBANES, Madam Speaker, I was just reminded that, sitting on the Government Reform Committee, in that committee we dealt with the whole issue of steroids. We saw players come before our committee, many of them having to put their heads down when asked certain critical questions about character. And it is so good to know that there is somebody like Cal Ripken around, somebody who does not mind accepting the role as a role model and being just that.

So many young people look up to sports figures, and they try to emulate them. All you have to do is go to a baseball game and you will see them with the jerseys on with names of players on the back. And if you go to Memorial Stadium, now called Oriole Park, you will see a lot of jerseys with little kids, trying to dream the Cal Ripken dream, with his name on their backs.

So it is with great honor that I ask all of our Members to support this resolution.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3218, to designate a portion of Interstate 395 located in Baltimore, MD, as "Cal Ripken Way."

Cal Ripken, Jr. was not only a remarkable baseball player, he was an outstanding role model for the youth of America. He exhibited the utmost in professionalism and sportsmanship in every aspect of his life.

Cal Ripken, Jr. was known to many as the "Iron Man" for tirelessly overcoming many minor injuries to always be in the lineup for his team and for the fans. He took the field for the Baltimore Orioles on May 30, 1982 and did not miss a game until September 19, 1998. On September 6, 1995, millions of fans worldwide tuned in to watch Cal Ripken, Jr. surpass Lou Gehrig for the most consecutive games played, at 2,131 games. He ended his streak having played in 2,632 consecutive games.

By the time he retired from professional baseball, in October 2001, Cal Ripken had played 21 seasons with the Baltimore Orioles. During that time, Mr. Ripken had broken the team's record for career games played, at bats, runs, hits, doubles, homeruns, RBIs, total bases, and walks. He is a member of Major League Baseball's exclusive 3,000 hit club.

Cal Ripken stuck with his team through the good years and the bad years with a level of professionalism rare in sports today. He was a favorite among fans and holds the record for most All-Star votes received by any single player. He was voted to play in the All-Star game 19 times, and won the game's Most Valuable Player, MVP, honor twice. On Thursday, July 26, 2007, Cal Ripken, Jr. was inducted into the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY, with the third highest percentage of votes ever received.

After his storied baseball career, Cal Ripken, Jr. continues to make a difference in his community an across the country. Along with his brother Billy, he formed the Cal

Ripken, Sr. Foundation to give underprivileged children the opportunity to attend baseball camps around the country and to learn his beloved game.

Between 2001 and 2004, Ripken served as commissioner of the White House Tee Ball Initiative, in which he worked to promote the value of teamwork and volunteerism amongst young players. On April 9, 2007, Ripken announced a partnership with the recently formed "Reviving Baseball in the Inner City" program, with the donation of $1 million in cash and equipment from the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3218, to dedicate a portion of our Nation's highway system to commemorate the tremendous career and outstanding leadership of Cal Ripken, Jr.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3218.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING THE CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS, FIRST RESPONDERS, AND THE CITIZENS OF MINNESOTA FOR THEIR VALIANT EFFORTS IN RESPONDING TO THE COLLAPSE OF THE INTERSTATE ROUTE 35W MISSISSIPPI RIVER BRIDGE

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 606) honoring the city of Minneapolis, first responders, and the citizens of the State of Minnesota for their valiant efforts in responding to the horrific collapse of the Interstate Route 35W Mississippi River Bridge.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 606

Whereas the Interstate Route 35W Mississippi River Bridge located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, collapsed on August 1, 2007, during the evening rush hour;

Whereas Minneapolis police and fire officials have reported a rising number of fatalities and injuries resulting from the tragedy;

Whereas because rescue and recovery efforts are ongoing, the effect of the tragedy on the community and on Minnesota families is still unfolding;

Whereas the first emergency personnel on the scene responded to the tragedy without hesitation, risking their health and safety to rescue victims and to provide emergency care to the injured;

Whereas as there are questions that remain unanswered about the tragedy, it is clear that the commitment and heroism exhibited by first responders in the minutes and hours following the tragedy saved countless lives;

Whereas the people of Minnesota and the Nation recognize that the dedication of first responders will remain steadfast throughout the ongoing recovery, repair, and rebuilding efforts;

Whereas scores of ordinary people became extraordinary citizens following the tragedy by rushing to the aid of their fellow Minnesotans;

Whereas the residents of Minneapolis should be commended for their bravery and tireless efforts following the tragedy on behalf of their neighbors and their city;

Whereas there was an immediate outpouring of support and assistance from surrounding communities following the tragedy, including over 50 organizations and local units of government; and

Whereas the heartbreaking images coming out of Minneapolis have captured the attention and sympathy of the Nation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) honors the city of Minneapolis, first responders, and the citizens of the State of Minnesota for their valiant efforts in responding to the horrific collapse of the Interstate Route 35W Mississippi River Bridge;

(2) praises the people of Minneapolis and Minnesota for their great courage in this time of crisis;

(3) recognizes the leadership and passionate commitment of the elected officials representing the people of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, and the State of Minnesota;

(4) honors the emergency responders, within and beyond Minneapolis, for their bravery and sacrifice following the tragedy;

(5) extends its heartfelt sympathies to the families of all those lost in the tragedy; and

(6) reaffirms its support and commitment to all of the Nation's law enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency medical technicians as they selflessly serve their communities, regardless of the peril or hazard to themselves.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 606.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I strongly support House Resolution 606, introduced by my colleague Congressman ELLISON, my friend and fellow Minnesotan. Congressman ELLISON represents the Fifth Congressional District of Minnesota, which includes the city of Minneapolis. I am grateful to Congressman ELLISON for his work in introducing this resolution and getting it to the floor in a quick manner.

On August 1, the Interstate 35W bridge collapsed over the Mississippi River. The images of that disaster are now etched in our collective memories in this country. We can all recall the strange and surreal sight of a bridge lying crumpled and broken, laying in that great river. And we can all recall the images of vehicles that were crushed by the debris as well as those like the school bus that was full of children that sat amongst all that disaster and carnage and its occupants, and thankfully, escaped unharmed.

Unfortunately, not everyone on the I-35 bridge that Wednesday made it home safely. Thirteen of our fellow Minnesotans, husbands, wives, sons, daughters, grandchildren, grandparents, were killed in the tragedy. That those numbers were not higher was due in no small part to the hundreds of firefighters, police, emergency personnel, and ordinary citizens who rushed to the aid of their fellow citizens. The direct action of these civil servants and citizens immediately following this tragedy undoubtedly saved countless lives and eased suffering. Ordinary residents of the city of Minneapolis displayed extraordinary courage and compassion on August 1.

This resolution recognizes the outstanding work and effort of the first responders, the city officials, and the residents of Minnesota for their quick and compassionate response. I am pleased to join Congressman ELLISON and all of the Minnesota delegation in this effort, and I extend my gratitude to those whose dedication and duty was so evident on August 1.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1330

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 606 introduced by Mr. ELLISON of Minnesota. This resolution recognizes the city of Minneapolis, first responders, and the citizens of the State of Minnesota for their selfless actions in responding to the collapse of the Interstate Route 35W Mississippi River bridge.

The first responders to the scene acted without hesitation, risking their safety in the dangerous conditions, to rescue the victims of this tragedy. This resolution honors their sacrifice in the immediate aftermath of the bridge collapse and their commitment to save lives, regardless of the peril or hazard to themselves. Additionally, this resolution is a fitting commendation to the people of Minneapolis for their heroism and compassion for their fellow citizens. I extend my heartfelt sympathies to those affected by this tragedy and to their families.

I support the resolution and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from

Missouri for the kind words and compassionate response. The overwhelming response from the Members of this body was truly heartfelt and truly put action into words in getting Minnesota and Minneapolis moving forward.

At this time, Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the main sponsor of this bill, the distinguished gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) in responding to this disaster that occurred in his district.

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise on the floor today to speak on behalf of H. Res. 606, a resolution that honors the city of Minneapolis and the first responders and citizens of Minnesota for their valiant efforts in responding to the horrific collapse of Interstate 35W Mississippi River bridge.

Madam Speaker, while we honor the city of Minneapolis, there are also numerous cities in the area of Minneapolis, such as New Hope, Golden Valley, and many, many others, all that sent their first responders to the aid of the victims. And each and all of these cities deserve honor and respect. Thank you.

At 6:05 p.m. on August 1, 2007, Interstate 35W bridge in Minneapolis, Minnesota collapsed into the Mississippi River, killing 13 people and injuring nearly 100 people. The 13 victims were mothers, fathers, children, workers, good people, each and all.

I'm honored today to stand with my colleagues from Minnesota to honor the work of the first responders and the entire community of Minnesota and the Nation for stepping up to the plate to assist our community on August 1 in responding to the horrific bridge collapse.

Without any hesitation or any regard or consideration for their own safety, Minnesota first responders, firefighters, police, emergency medical personnel all rushed to the bridge collapse scene, and it is clear that the commitment and heroism in the minutes and hours that followed the tragedy saved countless lives.

Additionally, scores of ordinary Minnesotans became good Samaritans. For example, Madam Speaker, Jeremy Hernandez, a 20-year-old employee of a Minneapolis nonprofit organization, was riding on a school bus with over 50 children when the bus dropped towards the Mississippi River gorge as the bridge collapsed. Jeremy immediately took charge and evacuated the bus, ensuring that all staff and children got off the bus safely. This is America and Minnesota at its best when ordinary citizens become extraordinary citizens.

But let me conclude, Madam Speaker, by respectfully asking this Congress to regard this tragedy as a national call to action, to focus our public energy on the reconstruction of our public infrastructure.

On August 1, we as a Nation were united in grief for the victims, and we were united in the recovery and healing efforts. Now let us all stand united in rebuilding our country's ailing public infrastructure. For if the Nation is a body, our infrastructure is the skeleton that holds it up.

I look forward to working with Members of Congress. I thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank you, Mr. WALZ, for your excellent energy. I also would be remiss if I did not commend your community, our community, and southern Minnesota for its own tragedy that we suffered collectively. And we stand with the people of southern Minnesota in solidarity and in brother- and sisterhood. Thank you very much.

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Mrs. BACHMANN).

Mrs. BACHMANN. Madam Speaker, I thank my dear colleague for allowing me this moment to address the body.

I, too, offer my condolences and sympathy to the Members and families of our Minnesota community who endured one of the most horrific losses that anyone can imagine. When it's a beautiful, wonderful evening in Minnesota in August, August 1, when people are on their way to the Twins game and home from work, their minds are on the BBQ and what they're going to do when they go home, what they're going to say to their husband, what they're going to say to their wife, going to their child's T-ball game or their soccer game, those were the kind of things that were on the minds of Minnesotans when all of a sudden, inexplicably, this bridge that is the most traveled bridge in the State of Minnesota went down. Something no one would ever imagine could happen happened.

The Saturday after the bridge collapse occurred, I had the opportunity to go back and meet with some of the first responders, as my colleagues did as well. And I think to a person we can say what we saw that day was nothing short of just the joy and the grief, all of the emotions mixed together on the faces of the firemen, faces of the policemen, faces of the health care professionals as well who were there, who saw that horror firsthand and did what we expect that they would do, be first responders. Seems like an ordinary thing that they should do their job, but it's never an ordinary thing to lay down your life for your fellow man. That's what a police officer does every day when they put on that uniform. That's what a fireman does every day when they put on that uniform. And that day they were called upon to do that duty, make that sacrifice. They did it. And I'll tell you what, I could not be more proud of those first responders.

And it was wonderful, too, Madam Speaker, to see how in this body this wasn't a Republican or Democrat issue, this was about being human, this was about loving our fellow man. And I can't say enough about the effort of the two parties to come together and unanimously making the right decision, and that is, authorizing the money for this bridge to get it up and built again, and then hopefully now appropriate that money to get it up again.

I commend Congressman ELLISON, Congressman WALZ, I commend Congresswoman MCCOLLUM and everyone in our delegation who came together to get behind this bridge. But more importantly, it's the first responders who came together and laid down their lives.

One of the people who did that was a constituent of mine. I just want to mention him a little bit. His name is Gary Babineau, 24 years old, lives up in Blaine. He is a construction worker. Gary was coming home from work that night, like most Minnesotans, thinking about what he was going to do. His wife is due with their first baby 2 weeks later. And that's what he was thinking about, that new little baby that was about to come 2 weeks from now, when all of a sudden he was right across from that yellow school bus that we all saw on the news. And Gary's truck was on the bridge, and he felt the bridge go down. And in a moment of time, his black pickup truck fell 30 feet down to the bottom. He never thought he would wake up again. He never thought he would open his eyes again, but he did. And he couldn't believe it, he could move. His back was severely hurt, but he could move. He got out of that truck and he went and he helped person after person get out of their vehicle, carried people to safety. And then Gary remarkably, here in the midst of having a severely injured back, he jumped off the bridge, got onto the ground, got back on the bridge, not knowing that the bridge would be stable, got on that bridge and went immediately to that yellow school bus. And he then assisted those 50 children getting off that bus. And as a matter of fact, it was reported in the paper it said, Gary Babineau said, "I could see the whole bridge going down, and I was going down, too," he said. "I have a baby coming in 2 weeks and that's all I could think about. We hit bottom, and I couldn't believe that I could open my eyes, I couldn't believe that I could move."

Gary Babineau was an ordinary man, but he became a first responder and he helped save lives. At the moment that he was needed he did it. We kind of expect that that's what Americans would do. We're just good people, we help each other in time of need. And here in this tragedy, as we have seen other tragedies that have befallen our Nation, when things didn't go exactly right in the recovery effort, here in Minnesota we saw that things were right. It happened right. And the reason why it happened right was because

of first responders, official first responders, nonofficial first responders. But they did what was right because they acted out of love, out of a heart of love for their fellow man.

So I thank those first responders, the firemen, the policemen, the average Joes, the Gary Babineaus in their truck. And I thank the Federal officials, our President, our Members of Congress. I thank the county officials, the city officials, the State officials. Everybody did what was right.

But thank you, Congressman ELLISON. This was the right resolution to bring forward today to honor these selfless individuals who none of us could live without. Thank you, first responders. I encourage my colleagues to give us a unanimous vote to this wonderful resolution.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, we in Minnesota rarely refer to Minneapolis without mentioning our sister city of St. Paul, our Twin Cities, and we are fortunate that these two cities have excellent representation in their two Representatives.

It's a real pleasure for me to yield as much time as she may consume, her dedication and leadership in this matter has been outstanding, and I give as much time as needed to Congresswoman MCCOLLUM.

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Congressman WALZ, it would go without saying that the Twin Cities, my district, is doing whatever we can in support both with volunteers, with thoughts, with prayers, and with anything that would come forward in a special session to support the tragedy that has taken place in southern Minnesota. And much of what we can say about our first responders we can also say about the first responders in your district.

Madam Speaker, it has been just over a month since we saw the unthinkable happen in Minneapolis; the collapse of the I-35W bridge into the Mississippi River shocked our Nation. For Minnesotans, it was only the beginning of an ordeal that we will never forget.

In the hours and days that followed, we waited quietly for the word of missing loved ones. We watched anxiously as skilled Navy and FBI divers searched the treacherous wreckage and felt our hearts grow heavy again when we heard the news of each recovered victim. A month later, we continue to grieve for the 13 who lost their lives that evening, six of them my constituents.

Our prayers are with the survivors, whose deep physical and emotional injuries have yet to heal. But along with the twisted metal and sunken concrete, the aftermath of the bridge collapse also brought us the unforgettable images of courage and hope. The off-duty firefighter, without any diving gear, going under the water again and again to search cars for trapped victims; the bus driver, counselors, and others on the bridge who threw open the emergency exit of a yellow school bus and made sure that all 61 of the children got to safety.

The bridge's collapse may have shocked the Nation, but the response of Minnesota's emergency personnel, public servants and ordinary citizens awed and inspired the Nation. Again and again my colleagues in Congress have approached me to express their amazement at the compassion and strength of our community.

Madam Speaker, this resolution honors the courage and selflessness of all Minnesotans involved in this disaster. It honors the first responders who rushed to the scene evacuating scores of victims and saving countless lives. It honors the medical personnel who worked and still work tirelessly to heal the injured. It honors the local and national recovery teams who carried out the excruciating and difficult search of the wreckage and bringing closure to the family and friends of the victims. It honors ordinary Minnesotans who were at every step of the way, from those who dove into the water to save lives immediately after the collapse to those who continue to offer time, material support, emotional comfort for grieving families today.

Our recovery effort is not over yet. The Twin Cities community will feel the consequences of the bridge's collapse for years to come. As we turn to the task of adjusting our daily commutes and planning to rebuild the bridge, we must also begin to repair and rebuild the other bridges and infrastructure in Minnesota that are in danger. We also must work to rebuild the infrastructure across this Nation.

This resolution honors the strength, the sympathy, the steadfastness of the people of Minnesota that we saw so clearly in the wake of this tragedy. And I have faith that these same courageous qualities will see us through the challenges ahead.

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota, Congressman KLINE.

□ 1345

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today in support of H. Res. 606 to honor all of those who so bravely risked their lives in the face of this catastrophe. I had the privilege of meeting with many of the first responders, volunteer organizations, local and State officials in my tours of the site of the collapse.

The first emergency personnel on the scene responded to the tragedy without hesitation, as has been discussed by my colleagues here today. They risked their health and safety to rescue victims and to provide emergency care to the injured. Scores of ordinary people did, indeed, become extraordinary citizens following the tragedy by rushing to the aid of their fellow Minnesotans. The outpouring of support and assistance from surrounding communities, including more than 50 volunteer organizations, was tremendous. Throughout the rescue and recovery mission, there have been countless stories of the generosity by the citizens of Minnesota. From organizing blood drives to caring for the needs of the bridge recovery workers, Minnesotans continue to go above and beyond the call of duty. In a time of sadness and sorrow for so many, we remain thankful for the true kindness and compassion of Minnesotans.

Madam Speaker, I would like to take just a minute here to discuss, as some of my colleagues have alluded to, another catastrophe which struck the State of Minnesota in Mr. WALZ's district. My family has a farm down in Houston, Minnesota, in the very southeastern tip, and I spent 3 days there at the end of the August break. It is distressing. It is an awesome power that we saw when those creeks and rivers flooded and the destruction is immense. Again, it is not just the first responders in Minneapolis and the surrounding communities, but I am sure that my friend and colleague from the First District, Mr. WALZ, can attest to the fact that first responders throughout the State came to the aid of those in southeast Minnesota.

So, Madam Speaker, as always, we are mindful of the lives that were lost in both tragedies and our thoughts and prayers continue to be with the victims and their families and with all Minnesotans as we recover and rebuild.

I want to thank the gentleman, my colleague, Mr. ELLISON, for offering this legislation and bringing it forward and Mr. WALZ for his leadership.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this very fitting resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, first of all, to my colleague from Missouri, I thank him so much for helping manage on this. The poignant comments made by my fellow Minnesotans was heartfelt and I think put best maybe by Representative BACHMANN that this issue truly brought us together. I want to send a special thank-you to this entire body for the response that was given to the people of Minnesota in light of this tragedy.

As we speak, the dean of our delegation, Chairman OBERSTAR, is holding hearings on this very issue of bridges across America to make sure we don't have a repeat of this incident and understand everything that we can do to hopefully prevent this type of tragedy.

He is meeting with Secretary of Transportation Peters and the mayor of Minneapolis, Mayor Rybak, is in town talking on this very issue.

So it is appropriate that we honor those that sacrificed and gave so much in light of this tragedy and it is appropriate that we move forward to prevent it in the future.

I also thank my colleague and friend from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) for his kind words. He is very familiar with my district. His family has roots there. He has a farm there. He knows firsthand the devastation that was wrought on those counties. We lost seven of our fellow Minnesotans. We had seven counties that are national disasters. The response has been fantastic from both State, local and Federal officials. When you get 17 inches of rain in 24 hours, it brings great tragedy.

President Bush was kind enough and showed leadership in coming to Minnesota, promising a quick response and delivered. He also made a comment and made sure that one of our towns that was virtually destroyed, Rushford, Minnesota, needed to get back defending their State football championship. I am glad to report that they won Friday night, quite convincingly.

This disaster and the response from it, the silver lining of this is the great human qualities of compassion, courage, selfless service were shown by our first responders and everyone involved. It is a pleasure for me to put my name to a piece of legislation like this.

I thank and urge my colleagues to vote unanimously for H. Res. 606.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution honoring the city of Minneapolis, first responders and Minnesota citizens for their heroic efforts following the I–35W bridge collapse.

No Minnesotan will ever forget August 1, 2007, the day the 8-lane bridge collapsed into the Mississippi River.

No Minnesotan will forget the tragic loss of 13 people, the serious injuries and incredible devastation caused by the falling bridge.

And Minnesotans will never forget the countless acts of heroism they witnessed that day from first responders and concerned bystanders that ignored danger and rushed to help victims.

In spite of the devastation, chaos and confusion, there was a highly organized response from Minnesota officials, firefighters, law enforcement and EMS personnel, the Minnesota National Guard, the Twin Cities Red Cross, local hospitals and the individuals, charities and businesses that donated time, money and goods. It made me proud to be a Minnesotan.

America also witnessed an incredible story in the midst of that terrible disaster—the school bus on the collapsed bridge filled with children who miraculously survived the ordeal.

Our deepest gratitude goes to every person who responded to this disaster, saving lives, caring for the injured and comforting victims and their families.

A special thanks to Governor Pawlenty for his great leadership, as well as Hennepin County Sheriff Rich Stanek, Minneapolis Mayor R. T. Rybak, the author of this resolution, Representative KEITH ELLISON, and the dean of our Minnesota Congressional delegation, JIM OBERSTAR, for his leadership in moving bridge funding legislation last month.

Madam Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to support this resolution honoring the people who responded so bravely to the Minnesota bridge collapse.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 606, introduced by my colleague from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON). I extend my gratitude for his work to introduce this resolution and bring it forth for consideration on the House floor.

On August 1, 2007, at 6:05 p.m., during the evening rush hour, the bridge on Interstate 35 W spanning the Mississippi River suddenly collapsed. The eight-lane, steel truss bridge span carried approximately 140,000 vehicles each day. This horrific catastrophe claimed the lives of 13 people; 123 other individuals were injured.

Visions of this tragedy and the destruction left in the wake of the bridge collapse remain etched in our memories. Yet the scenes of the damage have been softened by the touching images of the hundreds of fire fighters, police officers, including the University of Minnesota police, and emergency response personnel that rushed to aid their fellow citizens. The direct actions of these civil servants and citizens immediately following this tragedy are examples of extraordinary courage.

The brave men and women who were first on the scene, and remained working around the clock after the collapse, helped to minimize the toll of this tragedy and undoubtedly saved lives. The aftermath of the collapse has also been made easier to bear with the help from over 50 organizations and local governments and a national outpouring of sympathy and prayers.

A few months ago, the people of Minnesota suffered a different kind of catastrophe: a raging forest fire. The blaze began on May 5, 2007, in the Gunflint Trail area in far northeastern Minnesota, roared across the Canadian border, and then returned to Minnesota to devastate my district. It consumed nearly 76,000 acres and destroyed 140 structures. Many first responders heeded the call to this fire. The dedicated men and women of the Gunflint Trail Volunteer Fire Department were among the first to arrive on the scene, followed by firefighters and fire departments from across the region. In all, over 1,000 personnel assisted in fighting this blaze. No lives were lost, there were only 11 minor injuries, and 759 structures were saved thanks to the efforts of these responders.

The responses to these disasters are just two examples of the countless selfless acts that our Nation's first responders carry out every day simply by doing their job. Twenty-four hours a day, every day of the year, all over this country, when any type of tragedy enters our lives, from a medical emergency facing a neighbor to a large-scale natural disaster, terrorist attack, or other incident, our Nation's emergency responders are the first on the scene to provide professional services, expert help, aid and comfort. These well-trained, highly-skilled individuals are truly on the front lines in preparing for, responding to, and mitigating damages from a variety of hazards.

Across the country, the millions of men and women who serve this nation as police officers, firefighters, and emergency medical personnel, including those in Minnesota, place themselves in great danger every day in order to protect each one of us. They deserve our deepest thanks and respect.

I stand with Congressman ELLISON in recognizing the outstanding work and effort of the first responders in response to the tragic bridge collapse in Minnesota and laud their unflinching dedication to duty. While we can never adequately express our gratitude to the brave men and women, this resolution is a fitting tribute.

I strongly support this resolution and urge its passage.

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend the good people of Minnesota who have banded together to begin the healing process. When that bridge fell on August 1st, every citizen of my state felt the grief and the pain together. It has certainly been a difficult month for everyone, but I am so proud of the first responders, of the volunteers, and of my colleagues here in the House. I'd like to give a special thanks to Chairman OBERSTAR, for acting so quickly. He has represented the State of Minnesota, and the House very well. I'd also like to say that Representative ELLISON has done a remarkable job in representing his district during these trying times.

It is a shame that it sometimes takes the worst events to bring out the best in people, but I am so proud of the wonderful actions Minnesotans have taken to help the victims of the I–35W Bridge. I think the people involved in the recovery actions have truly demonstrated the incredible character of Minnesota's citizens.

Nothing can replace what was lost on August 1st. No amount of money will do that. Neither will a new bridge. But the strength of the community has shown through during this long road to healing. Thank you Representative ELLISON, thank you to the members of the Minnesota Delegation and thank you to all my colleagues who have helped support the citizens of my State.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 606.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H. Res. 552, by the yeas and nays;

H. Res. 629, by the yeas and nays;

H. Res. 508, by the yeas and nays;

H. Res. 544, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA TO REMOVE BARRIERS TO UNITED STATES FINANCIAL SERVICES FIRMS DOING BUSINESS IN CHINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 552, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. MARSHALL) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 552.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 401, nays 4, not voting 27, as follows:

[Roll No. 850]

YEAS—401

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Carter
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Fallin
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastert
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hoyer
Hulshof
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (FL)

NAYS—4

Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
McCotter
Ros-Lehtinen

NOT VOTING—27

Bachmann
Davis, Jo Ann
Gordon
Hooley
Hunter
Jindal
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Kirk
Kucinich
Lewis (CA)
Lucas
Mollohan
Paul
Platts
Royce
Ruppersberger
Sanchez, Loretta
Schwartz
Shimkus
Tancredo
Terry
Wasserman Schultz
Watson
Weller
Wilson (NM)
Young (AK)

☐ 1415

Mr. MCCOTTER changed his vote from "yea" to "nay."

Mr. BERRY, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, and Mrs. DAVIS of California changed their vote from "nay" to "yea."

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 850, I was in a meeting in my district at the National Security Agency with NSA Director, General Alexander. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

MOMENT OF SILENCE IN MEMORY OF THE LATE HONORABLE JENNIFER DUNN

(Mr. HASTINGS of Washington asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, it is with great sadness that I inform the House of Representatives of the untimely death of our dear friend and former colleague, Jennifer Dunn, this morning.

Words cannot express the shock and sorrow that I feel today.

I know that all of you join me in keeping her family, sons Reagan, Bryant and stepson Angus Thomson, and her loving husband, Keith Thomson, in our thoughts and prayers.

All of us who have served with Jennifer Dunn in the House have known the kindness, the wit and political savvy that she embodied. She was vibrant, enjoyed life, and she always had a kind word for everyone.

She was known, Madam Speaker, as a fierce advocate when it came to supporting Republican women for election, both locally in our State of Washington and nationally.

On a personal note, for 32 years she was my friend, fellow Ronald Reagan activist, my State party chairman and colleague in the House where she served the Eighth District of Washington from 1993 to 2005.

Always positive, dignified and poised in everything that she did. A loving wife and mother, as well as a political leader with great skill.

Today, Washington State and our Nation has lost a giant, a true leader and a stateswoman in every sense of the

word. Madam Speaker, she will be dearly missed.

I yield to my friend, the senior Democrat from Washington (Mr. DICKS).

Mr. DICKS. I appreciate Congressman HASTINGS yielding to me, and I just want to echo his words. Our regrets go out to Jennifer Dunn's family, to her husband, Keith, and to her sons, Reagan, named after Ronald Reagan, by the way, and Bryant and Angus.

Jennifer Dunn was a great leader in our State. She was the first woman Republican chairman of the State Republican Party. She was elected to the Congress, was on the Ways and Means Committee. She always was willing to reach out across the aisle and work on projects. Congressman LARSEN reminded me of her efforts on the Wild Sky program which was enacted this year, something she worked on for many years. She was a leader on trade issues and tax reform issues. She will be missed.

I appreciated the fact she was always willing to cross the aisle and work with Democrats or whoever to get legislation enacted. She was a great advocate for tax issues. She will be missed by all of us. We pass on our condolences to her family.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, I know a number of Members want to express their views, and we will afford them that opportunity.

Madam Speaker, I ask the House to join the delegation from Washington State in observing a moment of silence in honor of our former colleague.

IN MEMORY OF THE LATE HONORABLE CHARLES VANIK

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise to inform the House that in addition to the loss of Ohio's beloved colleague PAUL GILLMOR today and former Congresswoman Jennifer Dunn, we have lost a beloved friend and indefatigable colleague when Ohio Congressman Charles Vanik passed away last week at the age of 94.

I know that Congressman REGULA and I, along with all of our delegation, feel this loss as deeply as we feel the others. I wanted to just mention to our colleagues that Congressman Vanik served from 1955 until 1981 and was affectionately known as Ohio's third Senator.

He is probably most remembered for his landmark legislation, the Jackson-Vanik amendment, that continues to connect U.S. trade policy to human rights. We in Ohio will always remember him as a true champion and leader on Medicare, Social Security and the plight of the poorest Americans.

I would like to yield to my colleague, my beloved friend, RALPH REGULA, now for some words.

Mr. REGULA. I thank the gentlelady for yielding, and I also would like to mention the loss of Charlie Vanik. I think for the people of Ohio, his greatest legacy is he joined John Seiberling and myself in creating the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, and it was his leadership that was vital in getting that legislation passed. Millions of Ohioans and others enjoy the great outdoors in this 33,000-acre park that serves our State so well, and that was a wonderful legacy that Charlie Vanik left as part of his service in this Congress.

Ms. KAPTUR. I thank the gentleman. We will never forget his good humor.

I would just ask for 10 seconds to say to my colleagues in terms of my neighbor, PAUL GILLMOR, with whom I served over 20 years in this body, we just happened to be flying over Ohio this past week to assess the flood damage in his district. My last memory of him is actually climbing out of the Apache helicopter we were both in. There were just the two of us with the Ohio National Guard, and he extended his hand to me to help me get out of the helicopter after a very long day in many communities, including Bucyrus and Findlay. I have many memories, but I shall never forget that. He was a gentleman of this House.

I thank my colleagues very much.

MOMENT OF SILENCE IN MEMORY OF THE LATE HONORABLE PAUL GILLMOR

(Mr. REGULA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. REGULA. Madam Speaker, I know that Leader BOEHNER has already informed the House of the untimely death of our colleague, PAUL GILLMOR, but I want to just add to that. I will be offering a resolution of bereavement after we have finished the suspensions for the day, which will be very shortly, for those who might want to comment.

It is a tremendous loss for Ohio. PAUL was a leader in the Ohio senate over a number of years, 22 years to be exact. He was a leader here on the Financial Services Committee. But most importantly, he was a person who cared about the people of Ohio. He made a tremendous effort to represent them well. It is evident by a number of awards that he received and so on. I won't take the time to go into that now, but all of you knew PAUL.

I think something that many were not aware of, he was chosen as the vice president of the International NATO Group, the parliamentary group that is made up of something like 22 nations, and they elected him as the number two person in their leadership responsibilities. It is a tribute to him and to Ohio and to this body that he was chosen for that assignment.

Madam Speaker, I would like if we would all rise and recognize his loss, too, in a moment of silence.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

EXTENDING CONDOLENCES AND SYMPATHY OF THE HOUSE TO THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF GREECE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 629, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 629.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 407, nays 0, not voting 25, as follows:

[Roll No. 851]

YEAS—407

Abercrombie	Brown-Waite, Ginny	Davis, Lincoln
Ackerman	Buchanan	Davis, Tom
Aderholt	Burgess	Deal (GA)
Akin	Burton (IN)	DeFazio
Alexander	Butterfield	DeGette
Allen	Buyer	Delahunt
Altmire	Calvert	DeLauro
Andrews	Camp (MI)	Dent
Arcuri	Campbell (CA)	Diaz-Balart, L.
Baca	Cannon	Diaz-Balart, M.
Bachus	Cantor	Dicks
Baird	Capito	Dingell
Baker	Capps	Doggett
Baldwin	Capuano	Donnelly
Barrett (SC)	Cardoza	Doolittle
Barrow	Carnahan	Doyle
Bartlett (MD)	Carney	Drake
Barton (TX)	Carson	Dreier
Bean	Carter	Duncan
Becerra	Castle	Edwards
Berkley	Castor	Ehlers
Berman	Chabot	Ellison
Berry	Chandler	Ellsworth
Biggert	Clarke	Emanuel
Bilbray	Clay	Emerson
Bilirakis	Cleaver	Engel
Bishop (GA)	Clyburn	English (PA)
Bishop (NY)	Coble	Eshoo
Bishop (UT)	Cohen	Etheridge
Blackburn	Cole (OK)	Everett
Blumenauer	Conaway	Fallin
Blunt	Conyers	Farr
Boehner	Cooper	Fattah
Bonner	Costa	Feeney
Bono	Costello	Ferguson
Boozman	Courtney	Filner
Boren	Cramer	Flake
Boswell	Crenshaw	Forbes
Boucher	Crowley	Fortenberry
Boustany	Cubin	Fossella
Boyd (FL)	Cuellar	Foxx
Boyda (KS)	Cummings	Frank (MA)
Brady (PA)	Davis (AL)	Franks (AZ)
Brady (TX)	Davis (CA)	Frelinghuysen
Braley (IA)	Davis (IL)	Gallegly
Broun (GA)	Davis (KY)	Garrett (NJ)
Brown (SC)	Davis, David	Gerlach
Brown, Corrine		Giffords

Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastert
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hoyer
Hulshof
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—25

Bachmann
Culberson
Davis, Jo Ann
Herseth Sandlin
Hooley
Hunter
Jindal
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Kucinich
Lucas
Mollohan
Paul
Platts
Royce
Sanchez, Loretta
Schwartz
Shimkus
Tancredo
Terry
Wasserman Schultz
Watson
Weller
Wilson (NM)
Young (AK)

☐ 1432

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING THE STRONG SECURITY ALLIANCE BETWEEN JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 508, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 508, as amended.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 405, nays 0, not voting 27, as follows:

[Roll No. 852]

YEAS—405

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Carter
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Fallin
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastert
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hoyer
Hulshof
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—27

Bachmann	Lucas	Tiberi
Bachus	Mollohan	Wasserman Schultz
Davis, Jo Ann	Paul	Watson
Herseth Sandlin	Platts	Weller
Hooley	Royce	Wilson (NM)
Hunter	Sanchez, Loretta	Woolsey
Jindal	Schwartz	Young (AK)
Johnson, E. B.	Shimkus	
Johnson, Sam	Tancredo	
Kucinich	Terry	

□ 1442

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SYMPATHY AND PLEDGING SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF SEVERE FLOODING IN EASTERN KANSAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SARBANES). The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 544, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 544.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 397, nays 0, not voting 35, as follows:

[Roll No. 853]

YEAS—397

Abercrombie	Boucher	Cole (OK)
Ackerman	Boustany	Conaway
Aderholt	Boyd (FL)	Conyers
Akin	Boyda (KS)	Cooper
Alexander	Brady (PA)	Costa
Allen	Brady (TX)	Costello
Altmire	Braley (IA)	Courtney
Andrews	Broun (GA)	Cramer
Arcuri	Brown (SC)	Crenshaw
Baca	Brown, Corrine	Crowley
Bachus	Brown-Waite, Ginny	Cubin
Baird	Buchanan	Cuellar
Baker	Burgess	Culberson
Baldwin	Burton (IN)	Cummings
Barrett (SC)	Butterfield	Davis (AL)
Barrow	Buyer	Davis (CA)
Bartlett (MD)	Calvert	Davis (IL)
Barton (TX)	Camp (MI)	Davis (KY)
Bean	Cannon	Davis, David
Becerra	Cantor	Davis, Lincoln
Berkley	Capito	Davis, Tom
Berman	Capps	Deal (GA)
Berry	Capuano	DeFazio
Biggert	Cardoza	DeGette
Bilbray	Carney	Delahunt
Bilirakis	Carson	DeLauro
Bishop (GA)	Carter	Dent
Bishop (NY)	Castle	Diaz-Balart, L.
Bishop (UT)	Castor	Diaz-Balart, M.
Blackburn	Chabot	Dicks
Blumenauer	Chandler	Dingell
Blunt	Clarke	Doggett
Boehner	Clay	Donnelly
Bonner	Cleaver	Doolittle
Bono	Clyburn	Doyle
Boozman	Coble	Drake
Boren	Cohen	Dreier
Boswell	Edwards	Duncan
Ehlers	Langevin	Rehberg
Ellison	Lantos	Reichert
Ellsworth	Larsen (WA)	Renzi
Emanuel	Latham	Reyes
Emerson	LaTourette	Reynolds
Engel	Lee	Richardson
English (PA)	Levin	Rodriguez
Eshoo	Lewis (CA)	Rogers (AL)
Etheridge	Lewis (GA)	Rogers (KY)
Everett	Lewis (KY)	Rogers (MI)
Fallin	Linder	Rohrabacher
Farr	Lipinski	Roskam
Fattah	LoBiondo	Ross
Ferguson	Lofgren, Zoe	Rothman
Filner	Lowey	Roybal-Allard
Flake	Lungren, Daniel E.	Ruppersberger
Forbes	Lynch	Rush
Fortenberry	Mack	Ryan (OH)
Fossella	Mahoney (FL)	Ryan (WI)
Foxx	Maloney (NY)	Salazar
Frank (MA)	Manzullo	Sánchez, Linda T.
Franks (AZ)	Marchant	Sarbanes
Frelinghuysen	Markey	Saxton
Gallegly	Marshall	Schakowsky
Garrett (NJ)	Matheson	Schiff
Gerlach	Matsui	Schmidt
Giffords	McCarthy (CA)	Scott (GA)
Gillibrand	McCarthy (NY)	Scott (VA)
Gingrey	McCaul (TX)	Sensenbrenner
Gohmert	McCollum (MN)	Serrano
Gonzalez	McCotter	Sessions
Goode	McCrery	Sestak
Goodlatte	McDermott	Shadegg
Gordon	McGovern	Shea-Porter
Granger	McHenry	Sherman
Graves	McHugh	Shuler
Green, Al	McIntyre	Shuster
Green, Gene	McKeon	Simpson
Grijalva	McMorris Rodgers	Sires
Gutierrez	McNerney	Skelton
Hall (NY)	McNulty	Slaughter
Hall (TX)	Meek (FL)	Smith (NE)
Hare	Meeks (NY)	Smith (NJ)
Harman	Melancon	Smith (TX)
Hastert	Mica	Smith (WA)
Hastings (FL)	Michaud	Snyder
Hastings (WA)	Miller (FL)	Solis
Hayes	Miller (MI)	Souder
Heller	Miller (NC)	Space
Hensarling	Miller, Gary	Spratt
Herger	Miller, George	Stark
Higgins	Mitchell	Stearns
Hill	Moore (KS)	Stupak
Hinchey	Moore (WI)	Sullivan
Hinojosa	Moran (KS)	Sutton
Hirono	Moran (VA)	Tanner
Hobson	Murphy (CT)	Tauscher
Hodes	Murphy, Patrick	Taylor
Hoekstra	Murphy, Tim	Thompson (CA)
Holden	Murtha	Thompson (MS)
Holt	Musgrave	Thornberry
Honda	Myrick	Tiahrt
Hoyer	Nadler	Tiberi
Hulshof	Napolitano	Tierney
Inglis (SC)	Neal (MA)	Towns
Inslee	Neugebauer	Turner
Israel	Nunes	Udall (CO)
Issa	Oberstar	Udall (NM)
Jackson (IL)	Obey	Upton
Jackson-Lee (TX)	Olver	Van Hollen
Jefferson	Ortiz	Velázquez
Johnson (GA)	Pallone	Visclosky
Johnson (IL)	Pascrell	Walberg
Jones (NC)	Pastor	Walden (OR)
Jones (OH)	Payne	Walsh (NY)
Jordan	Pearce	Walz (MN)
Kagen	Pence	Wamp
Kanjorski	Perlmutter	Waters
Keller	Peterson (MN)	Watt
Kennedy	Peterson (PA)	Waxman
Kildee	Petri	Weiner
Kilpatrick	Pickering	Welch (VT)
Kind	Pitts	Weldon (FL)
King (IA)	Poe	Westmoreland
King (NY)	Pomeroy	Wexler
Kingston	Porter	Whitfield
Kirk	Price (GA)	Wicker
Klein (FL)	Price (NC)	Wilson (OH)
Kline (MN)	Pryce (OH)	Wilson (SC)
Knollenberg	Putnam	Wolf
Kuhl (NY)	Rahall	Woolsey
LaHood	Ramstad	Wu
Lamborn	Rangel	Wynn
Lampson	Regula	Yarmuth
		Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—35

Bachmann	Kaptur	Sanchez, Loretta
Campbell (CA)	Kucinich	Schwartz
Carnahan	Larson (CT)	Shays
Davis, Jo Ann	Loebsack	Shimkus
Feeney	Lucas	Tancredo
Gilchrest	Mollohan	Terry
Herseth Sandlin	Paul	Wasserman Schultz
Hooley	Platts	Watson
Hunter	Radanovich	Weller
Jindal	Ros-Lehtinen	Wilson (NM)
Johnson, E. B.	Royce	Young (AK)
Johnson, Sam	Sali	

□ 1449

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken tomorrow.

RECOGNIZING AND COMMENDING ALL WHO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO FAMILIES AND CHILDREN OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 181) recognizing and commending all volunteers and other persons who provide support to the families and children of members of the Armed Forces, including National Guard and Reserve personnel, who are deployed in service to the United States.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 181

Whereas there are 1.2 million children who are the sons or daughters of members of the Armed Forces, including more than 153,000 children of members of reserve components, and more than one third of these children are under the age of five;

Whereas the families of members of the Armed Forces, and in particular their children, provide unconditional love and support to their loved ones serving in the Armed Forces before, during, and after their deployment;

Whereas the Department of Defense recognizes that the family of a deployed member of the Armed Forces also serves and has made a commitment to military families by establishing goals for a New Social Compact with members of the Armed Forces and their families;

Whereas the Government makes significant resources available to families and children of members of the Armed Forces who

reside on or near a military installation, however, resources for families and children of deployed Reserve and National Guard members are often difficult to access because the families do not reside near a military installation;

Whereas a number of nonprofit organizations have dedicated themselves to ensuring that children of military families receive the support they urgently need while they cope with the deployment of parents, in particular by providing essential extracurricular activities and programs for school-aged children of deployed Reserve and National Guard members;

Whereas these organizations include Our Military Kids, Inc., Parents as Teachers, Citizen Soldier Support program, Operation Homefront Inc., American Military Families, Inc., and Kids Serve 2; and

Whereas these programs and organizations have helped children of deployed members of the Armed Forces maintain as normal a life as possible by allowing funds to be used for a range of activities that might otherwise be unavailable to them: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress recognizes and commends all volunteers and other persons who provide support to the families and children of members of the Armed Forces, including National Guard and Reserve personnel, who are deployed in service to the United States and honors military families and the non-governmental organizations that support them.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ORTIZ) and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today we have the chance to thank the volunteers of nonprofit organizations who provide support for families and children of deployed members of the Armed Forces for their extraordinary contributions to those families.

I want to thank Congressman TOM DAVIS, Congressman JOE WILSON and others for their contributions and for helping us bring this resolution to the floor.

The families of United States troops serve this Nation by providing unconditional love and support for their deployed loved ones. While the government offers significant resources on military installations, when families live far away from a base, it is very hard to access those opportunities.

True patriots look at this kind of situation and ask, what can I do for my military families? That's what the patriots did who founded Our Military Kids, Kids Serve 2, and several other organizations that recognize and support military families.

These organizations' founders recognized the families' contributions and identified the need to provide opportunities and resources for their families, especially for the families and children of deployed Guard and Reserve troops.

The organizations' contributions are so significant that in May, General David Petraeus, the United States Army Commanding General of the Multinational Force-Iraq, personally thanked Our Military Kids for their great work and support for Guard and Reserve troops' families.

Our Military Kids is a nonprofit organization which is wholly devoted to offering financial resources and grants for children K–12 of deployed and severely injured Reserve and National Guard personnel. Our Military Kids helps families participate in sports, arts and tutoring programs that are so important to children during those stressful times.

Today my resolution puts the House of Representatives on record as supporting the excellent work these nonprofit groups do to support the children and families of deployed troops. I ask the House to support this resolution and thank the founders and volunteers at Our Military Kids and at the other nongovernmental groups that support military families.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the May 8 letter from General Petraeus be included for the RECORD.

MAY 8, 2007.

LINDA DAVIDSON,
Executive Director, Our Military Kids, McLean, Virginia.

DEAR MS. DAVIDSON: On behalf of the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen serving in Iraq, especially our Reserve and National Guard component forces, I want to thank you for the support of your wonderful organization, Our Military Kids.

We ask a lot of today's military families. And I know that families of National Guard and Reserve forces, in particular, often feel a strain when their loved ones are called to active duty. These troopers not only leave their families at home, but they also leave their civilian jobs, adding financial stress to the other stresses associated with deployment. The support your organization provides through generous financial grants helps to mitigate that financial stress. In doing so, you are making tough deployments that much easier on the forces deployed and their families at home. I applaud the efforts of your organization.

Thanks again for the important assistance you provide to our servicemembers and their families.

Sincerely,

DAVID H. PETRAEUS,
General, U.S. Army, Commanding.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 181, a resolution authored by Congressman SOLOMON ORTIZ, a dedicated member of the Armed Services Committee who is a proven friend of servicemembers and their families.

This resolution commends a large group of selfless and dedicated people, many of whom are volunteers, in organizations that provide support to the families and children of deployed Members of the armed forces.

As a 31-year veteran of the Army Reserve and National Guard, and as the proud father of four sons in the military, I know firsthand the rewards of service protecting American families and learning valuable skills.

Our military families face extraordinary demands, stresses and challenges related to the service of their loved ones. Every soldier, sailor, airman and marine understands the challenges they will face as well as the sacrifices their families must also make. These include extended deployments, risk of injury and death, frequent relocations, long and unpredictable hours, and the unfamiliar customs and lifestyles of foreign lands.

Many military families have multiple family members, which substantially outnumber the servicemembers themselves. According to a recent Army report, there are more than 1.8 million family members compared to 1.3 million active duty personnel. Beyond the statistics, however, is the reality that supporting and meeting the needs of military families is a matter of military readiness.

Every branch of the military as well as the Department of Defense provide significant resources to the spouses and children of members of the Armed Forces. Much of the excellent support is provided on and through military installations.

Actually, most military families do not live on military installations. Nearly two-thirds of the active duty Army family members live off post, and for virtually all the families of National Guard troops and reservists who reside in civilian communities, there is the challenge of ensuring access to the support they need, particularly during extended periods of mobilization and deployment.

To ensure that military families get the proper support wherever they live, numerous nongovernmental organizations have sprung up. This extraordinary community of volunteer and nonvolunteer groups seek to ease the challenges and promote the extraordinary opportunities of military life in many ways.

For example, some of their efforts include providing essential extracurricular activities for school-aged children, assisting new parents, building support systems in school districts not located on military installations, building bridges between local communities and military families to improve

access to State and local services, and providing emergency and financial assistance.

Today's resolution, introduced by my colleague, Representative SOLOMON ORTIZ, is a fitting way to celebrate and thank such organizations as Our Military Kids, Parents As Teachers, Kids Serve 2, Operation Homefront, American Military Family, and the Citizen Soldier Support Program, along with other volunteer groups who help families and children of deployed members of the Armed Forces maintain as normal a life as possible.

Again, as a 31-year veteran of the South Carolina Army National Guard and having a son, Alan, who served for a year in Iraq as a member of the Army National Guard, I have seen firsthand the many challenges and opportunities our National Guard troops and their families face.

Many members of my former unit, the 218th Brigade commanded by Brigadier General Bob Livingston and currently stationed in Afghanistan, have families and loved ones that can benefit from the types of assistance these organizations and programs provide.

I urge my colleagues to support House Concurrent Resolution 181 and to recognize and commend all the volunteers and others who help to take care of our military families and children. This new greatest generation deserves our support and assistance whenever and wherever we can be of service.

Additionally, with personal sadness, my sympathy to the families of our late colleagues, PAUL GILLMOR of Ohio and Jennifer Dunn of Washington State.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th.

Mr. Speaker, I yield so much time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE).

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. I thank the gentleman from South Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 181, a resolution to honor the efforts of those volunteers that support military families when a servicemember is deployed.

It is a superhuman task to fight for your country and take care of your family from thousands of miles away. Thanks to the efforts of volunteers and not-for-profit organizations across the country, deployments are made somewhat easier. Volunteers give their time, energy, and, most importantly, their prayers.

□ 1500

Some offer their time at after school programs, others may help around the house. However, no matter what they give, the difference they make in the lives of our military families is immeasurable.

Many nonprofit groups go beyond and provide backpacks, clothes and emergency funds to help military families. Beyond helping families in time of emergency, these organizations help with the problems associated with everyday life.

In particular, I'd like to recognize Hernando Home Front for their work with the families of the National Guard members who were activated from Brooksville, Florida. Whether they were builders, who helped in case the spouse had a problem, either a leaking roof or perhaps a plumbing problem that needed fixing, or just plain simple carpentry, this group was there. The home builders, various people throughout the community pitched in to help the family members of those National Guard units that were called up.

Mr. Speaker, our men and women in uniform give everything for their country, and it gives me great pleasure to recognize those who care enough to give back to them.

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 181, a resolution I was proud to cosponsor with my colleague Congressman ORTIZ, which recognizes and commends the many thousands of volunteers who provide support to the families of deployed military personnel, including those serving in the National Guard and Reserve.

We make significant resources available to families and children of members of the Armed Forces who reside on or near military installations. But resources for families and children of National Guard and Reserve members are often difficult to access. Of the 1.2 million young sons and daughters of members of the Armed Forces, approximately 153,000 are children of those serving in the National Guard and Reserve.

These children also need help when parents deploy. The heroic work of these volunteers stresses the importance of maintaining childhood routines during times of stress and sacrifice. Grants supporting extra-curricular activities, including tutoring, sports, art, camping and other educational opportunities that might be missing when a parent is gone, keep families active and linked to their communities. The help and support provided by these organizations tells military families, particularly the children, that they have not been left behind, but that we all recognize the personal sacrifices they are making when their family serves in the military.

It's gratifying that many private non-profit organizations have been created by caring and thoughtful Americans to help fill this gap for Guard and Reserve children. This resolution recognizes and honors their work.

One outstanding example is an organization called Our Military Kids, Inc, created by Linda Davidson and Gail Krusel of McLean, Virginia. It is a small corporation that has continued to expand nationally, providing assistance and grants to the children of deployed or severely-injured parents in over 35 states this year. The positive effect they have had on children of the National Guard and Reserve cannot be overstated.

I salute the people behind Our Military Kids, Inc., and other organizations that have dedicated time, effort and money to assist our nation's military children. I ask my colleagues to stand up and join us in this resolution honoring their commitment and patriotic service.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 181 which recognizes and commends all volunteers and other persons who provide support to the families and children of members of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard and Reserve personnel, who are deployed in defense of the United States. I appreciate the work of my dear friend and our colleague, Congressman Solomon ORTIZ, in bringing this resolution to the floor today and commend him for his leadership on issues affecting military families. Congressman ORTIZ is Chairman of the Readiness Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee. I think it is important to highlight that family readiness is first and foremost a readiness issue for our Armed Forces.

Never was this more apparent than on Congressman ORTIZ' recent Congressional Delegation to Guam in April 2007. The Congressional Delegation had the opportunity to meet with families and servicemembers of the Guam National Guard and Army Reserve. The Congressional Delegation heard firsthand accounts about the difficulties and challenges that are faced by military families during mobilization. The Congressional Delegation also heard how the families view their role in support of the soldier and reviewed the services that are available to them when a loved one is deployed. The testimonials of these families proved that our Nation is better served when families of deployed servicemembers are provided the best support and assistance at all times and from a variety of sources.

The Congressional Delegation also had the opportunity to meet with volunteers who help support families of Guard personnel and Reservists. It is volunteers that make the National Guard and Reserve family readiness programs a success. Volunteers in these readiness groups act as an extension of the unit by providing accurate command information. Most of the volunteers are the spouses of company commanders. The close ties of volunteers to company leadership also help foster a greater sense of community with shared benefits and help families navigate various issues at any time, but especially when a loved one is deployed. Without the support of thousands of volunteers across the country, many family readiness groups would not be able to provide the support that is needed for servicemembers families. It is important for these volunteers and the Congress to recognize the important role they fulfill in the readiness of our Armed Forces.

On Guam our families have recently endured many long deployments of their loved ones to the Horn of Africa and to other areas of the world associated with Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. Volunteers have been crucial to the success of these family readiness efforts. In particular, in 2002 the Department of Defense recognized the family readiness group of Charlie Company, 411th Engineer Battalion of the Army Reserve for their instrumental service in

improving many facets of unit readiness, including a 99 percent retention rate and 90 percent attendance rate for drill. The family readiness group engaged in many community activities and each member attended special events of importance to the other families. It was these initiatives and community activities that helped bring the families of the deployed soldiers together and made enduring the long deployment more bearable.

The recognition awarded to the Charlie Company emphasizes the critical importance of providing the best family support possible during deployments. When families of the deployed soldiers are taken care of it relieves our soldiers of worrying about their daily tasks at home and helps them to focus on the mission at hand. Indeed, the readiness of our men and women in uniform goes beyond providing the best equipment or training that is available. It is required that we provide a strong sense of community for their families at all times. Family readiness must be viewed as a continuum of support that continues beyond a servicemember's mobilization. Without volunteers who donate countless hours to this effort, family assistance would not be as effective and the readiness of our Armed Forces would not be as strong as they are today. House Concurrent Resolution 181 raises appropriate awareness of the readiness of our Armed Forces and the value of military families. I hope that all of us will recognize the important ways in which families and family readiness groups contribute to the strength of our Nation's Armed Forces.

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, at this time I don't have any further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, at this time I have no further requests for time and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ORTIZ) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 181.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING THE SACRIFICE AND COURAGE OF THOSE WHO WERE KILLED IN THE CRANDALL CANYON MINE DISASTER, AND RECOGNIZING THE RESCUE CREWS FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING EFFORTS

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 631) honoring the sacrifice and courage of the six missing miners and three rescuers who were killed in the Crandall Canyon mine disaster in Utah, and recognizing the rescue crews for their outstanding efforts in the aftermath of the tragedies.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 631

Whereas on August 6, 2007, six miners, Kerry Allred, Don Erickson, Juan Carlos Payan, Brandon Phillips, Manuel Sanchez, and Jose Luis Hernandez, were trapped 1,800 feet below ground in the Crandall Canyon mine in Utah;

Whereas Federal, State, and local rescue crews worked relentlessly in an attempt to locate and rescue the trapped miners;

Whereas three rescuers, Gary Jensen, Brandon Kimber, and Dale "Bird" Black lost their lives during the rescue attempt;

Whereas the loss of the miners has had a tremendous effect on the local community;

Whereas the emergency efforts coordinated by the Emery County Sheriff's Department have been exemplary;

Whereas Utah is one of the largest coal producing States in the Nation, producing over 21 million tons of coal in 2005;

Whereas coal continues to be the economic engine for many communities;

Whereas during the last century over 100,000 coal miners have been killed in mining accidents in the Nation's coal mines;

Whereas the Nation is greatly indebted to coal miners for the difficult and dangerous work they perform to provide the fuel needed to operate the Nation's industries and to provide energy to homes and businesses; and

Whereas many residents of Emery County and Carbon County, Utah, and the surrounding areas, came together to support the miners' families and the community has been steadfast in its efforts to help the families of the missing and deceased: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House—

(1) recognizes Kerry Allred, Don Erickson, Juan Carlos Payan, Brandon Phillips, Manuel Sanchez, Jose Luis Hernandez, Gary Jensen, Brandon Kimber, and Dale "Bird" Black for their sacrifice in the Crandall Canyon, Utah coal mine;

(2) extends the deepest condolences of the Nation to the families of these men;

(3) recognizes the many volunteers who participated in the rescue efforts and provided support for the miners' families during the rescue operations; and

(4) honors the long national heritage of coal mining families and supports the tradition for the future.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) and the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may insert material relevant to H. Res. 631 into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is sponsored by Representative MATHESON from Utah where, just last month, 6 miners and 3 rescuers were lost in a mine tragedy at the Crandall Canyon mines.

Let me begin by expressing the horror and outrage I felt as I, like millions of other Americans, watched this tragedy unfold last month. First, 6 miners, working some 1,500 feet underground, were trapped when the mine collapsed. And then three rescuers were killed as they mounted a dangerous operation to rescue their fellow miners. The operation was so dangerous it was actually called off.

The Crandall Canyon disaster joins the other mine tragedies that have occurred in the last 2 years. My heart goes out to the families of the lost miners. My heart goes out to the rescuers who were also killed at Crandall Canyon.

This tragedy is compounded by the fact that the administration and the mining industry have not taken the necessary steps to stop them. There is a background piece on mine safety actually that has been prepared by the staff of the Education and Labor Committee and is available on the committee Web site. I really hope that Members will access this information. The paper actually provides background on the situation prior to the year 2006, the accidents that year, the enactment of the MINER Act, and the work of the committee so far this year. It also includes a summary of the legislation introduced in June of this year by Chairman MILLER, by Chairman RAHALL, myself and others that are particularly relevant to the incident in Crandall Canyon. And this piece has some initial thoughts on the lessons of Crandall Canyon.

The full committee will be holding a hearing on the Crandall Canyon incident on October 3. Thereafter, the committee will be holding a markup on the legislation on which my subcommittee held a legislative hearing just before the recess. I hope all Members on both sides of the aisle will join us in our effort to bring the mine safety and health laws of this country into the 21st century.

But today, we are not here to talk about deficiencies in the laws or in problems with particular mine operators; rather, we're here to honor those whose lives were lost in this tragedy, all those who tried bravely to rescue them, honoring their families and all who lent a helping hand.

I know Representative MATHESON spent hours at the site and with the families, and I commend him for his hard work and courage.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to join both of my colleagues from Utah, as well as, apparently, the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee in expressing our profound sympathies for the Utah families who lost their loved ones at the Crandall Canyon mine. I'm not a miner, but I have been told that unless one has been a miner, it's impossible to understand the profession, the mindset

and the courage that is displayed by those who work daily under dangerous conditions so that the rest of us can live in an element of comfort.

Today, this body honors 6 competent, courageous men who labored to provide a better future for their families and all of us.

On August 6, the Crandall Canyon mine experienced a shift in the Earth that registered a 4 on the Richter scale at the nearby University of Utah. This left almost 2,000 feet of debris between the working area of the mine and the last known location of these miners. Kerry Allred, Don Erickson, Luis Hernandez, Carlos Payan, Brandon Phillips and Manuel Sanchez were lost in this catastrophe.

In addition, 3 very courageous heroes sacrificed their lives to rescue their fellow miners. Only miners fully understand this commitment to those they consider brothers. Dale Black, Brandon Kimber, Gary Jensen, miners and a mine safety official lost their lives during this rescue effort. We cannot also forget the 5 other miners and the Mine Safety and Health Administration officials who were injured in this effort.

Dozens of miners and officials put their life at risk by entering this mine to try and find and recover their colleagues, and over a period of 4 weeks the rescue efforts tried to reach these men through the working section of the mine, as well as horizontally, with seven bore holes drilled in a vain attempt to find the trapped miners. This self-sacrifice has been demonstrated throughout mining history.

I have the firm belief that this life is not finite, and we shall all be reunited again; that these noble men who lost their lives will be reunited with their loved ones in the future. And though the separation may be short, it is extremely difficult for those left behind to bear that separation.

I applaud our colleague, Congressman MATHESON, for introducing this resolution, one which deals with the sympathy for those who were involved in this particular effort and as an effort to try and comfort them at this particular time.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. MATHESON).

Mr. MATHESON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution. And I would like to recognize and thank Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member MCKEON of the House Education and Labor Committee for their support of this resolution and enabling us to move it to the floor so quickly. I'd also very much like to thank both of my colleagues from Utah, Mr. BISHOP and Mr. CANNON, who are here on the floor today also in support of this resolution. And I'd like to acknowledge the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, who is here also to speak on this resolution today.

I rise today to honor the sacrifice and the courage of 6 missing miners and the 3 rescuers who died in a mine disaster at the Crandall Canyon coal mine in Huntington, Utah just a few weeks ago. It was in the early hours of August 6, the six miners were trapped when rocks and debris exploded off the walls of the tunnel where they were working more than 1,800 feet underground. And the cave-in created a ground shock that measured 3.9 on the Richter scale at the University of Utah's seismographic center. Very quickly, rescue crews assembled in an effort to locate and reach the 6 men, but, to date, Kerry Allred, Don Erickson, Juan Carlos Payan, Brandon Phillips, Manuel Sanchez and Jose Luis Hernandez are still missing.

Ground movement, what miners calls bumps or bounces, continued at the mine. During the rescue attempt further disaster struck. Three rescue miners, Gary Jensen, Brandon Kimber, and Dale "Bird" Black were killed when once again underground activity caused a burst of rubble to explode off the cavern walls. Rescuers had to literally dig with their hands to get their colleagues out from beneath piles of coal and rocks. Their efforts saved another six rescuers who were injured but are thankfully recovering.

Throughout this catastrophe the local community has remained steadfast. The Emery County Sheriff, his deputies and other first responders worked round the clock to maintain order as private, State and Federal teams maintained the search effort.

Community leaders and the families of these mining towns in Emery and Carbon Counties came together to support the trapped miners' families, the rescuers and the emergency crews. They did what they have always done in coal country during hard times; they held each other close, they hoped, and they prayed.

Today the House honors the missing and the dead. We extend condolences of our Nation to their families. We recognize the many volunteers who rushed to their aid and who provided endless hours of compassionate support.

And finally, we honor the proud heritage of coal mining families. Their skill, their hard work and their dedication contributes to the prosperity and quality of life that each and every one of us enjoys.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield to the senior member of our delegation to, once again, signify and symbolize the unity that the entire State feels as we face this disaster. I yield as much time as he may consume to Mr. CANNON of Utah.

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank first of all my colleague, ROB BISHOP, for yielding me time and my colleague, JIM MATHESON, for bringing this resolution before us. We appreciate his introduction. This is an area that he represents. It is an area that I have represented in the past. It's an area which I expect to represent in the future if we get the fourth, if the Senate will act on giving a vote to the District of Columbia and a fourth seat to the State of Utah.

I rise in support of this resolution and in support of the thousands of miners throughout Utah and the rest of the United States and throughout the world who undertake this difficult and dangerous work.

After weeks of watching demonstrations, videos and explanations of the process, no American can doubt the courage and dedication of these brave men and women who work in darkness so that the rest of us can work with light.

John Wayne defined courage the way a miner would define it. "Courage is being scared to death and saddling up anyway." The miners of Utah saddle up every day, and they deserve our thanks.

Miners Kerry Allred, Don Erickson, Juan Carlos Payan, Brandon Phillips, Manuel Sanchez and Jose Luis Hernandez all "saddled up" in the best traditions of Utah and make us proud.

□ 1515

The tragedy on August 6 is indelibly imprinted on the hearts and minds of all Utahns. But as it always has in times of need, America's best responded. The rescue effort spared no expense and left no stone unturned in trying to reach the 6 sons of Utah trapped below. In the process 3 rescuers lost their lives and more were injured.

Americans should take heart to know that we have such men as Gary Jensen, Brandon Kimber, and Dale "Bird" Black who would risk their lives for others. The Bible tells us that greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for another. Imagine the love, dedication, and courage it takes to lay down one's life for a friend or stranger.

In moments such as these, politicians tend to try to do too much and accomplish too little. While there will be time to decide what, if anything, we need to do to ensure that such tragedies as these can be averted, now is the time for elected representatives for the people to thank those involved on behalf of the people.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "The true test of civilization is not the census, nor the size of cities, nor the crops, no, but the kind of man the country turns out." Utah and America turn out the best, and for that we thank their families, our communities, and Almighty God.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may

consume to the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL).

Mr. RAHALL. I thank my colleague from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) for yielding and for bringing this resolution to the floor.

I also can sympathize and empathize with what my colleagues Mr. MATHESON and Mr. BISHOP and Mr. CANNON have said and the experience through which they have been the last month or longer.

Mr. Speaker, coal mining is a dangerous occupation. Many of these individuals, these brave, courageous individuals that work in coal fields across our Nation and especially those in the Appalachian coal fields that I have the honor of representing will go to work before the sun comes up. They will not see their loved ones again until after the sun has gone down. They will do this for 5, 6, even 7 days a week, never seeing the light of day so that our Nation, as the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON) has said, will be able to have light, so that those in the big cities who automatically turn on their air conditioning and their lights every morning can reflect on from where that power comes.

We in West Virginia have known our share of tragedies, and it is unfortunate that when we look back over the history of our mine safety laws in this Nation that it has taken a tragedy for the Congress to act. It is unfortunate that every mine safety and health law on the books today is written with the blood of our Nation's coal miners. Congress has responded. We did respond, as has been referred to already, in passing the MINER Act after the West Virginia disasters of Sago and Aracoma in my district, and I hope that we will respond again.

The gentlewoman from California has referred to the mine safety legislation introduced by the chairman of the Education and Labor Committee, Mr. MILLER, and myself and several other Members of Congress in a bipartisan fashion. This builds upon the MINER Act that this Congress passed and, yes, President Bush signed into law. While I agree we do not know the causes of this latest disaster and we know a little more about the causes of the West Virginia disasters over a year ago, it is important that we take a look at those responsible for enforcing our mine safety laws in this country, those at MSHA, currently serving under a recess appointment director. And it is important that we beef up that agency, that we do all we can within this Congress's power to give them the morale, the authority, and the knowledge that they must enforce our mine safety laws without fears of retribution, that there cannot be the cozy relationships that perhaps have existed in the past between those who inspect our mines and those who operate our mines. That relationship, if it has existed, must no longer exist.

But that is getting into what comes down the pipe later on. What we are here today to do is to praise those miners that lost their lives, all of our Nation's coal miners, in fact, and to pray for their families. We also especially recognize those three brave individuals that went into the bowels of this Earth to try to rescue and find their friends and their fellow workers and lost their lives in the process of trying to save other lives, those mine rescuers. That tragedy was most unfortunate and only made the original tragedy that much worse.

So I join with my colleagues in offering our prayers, in offering our sympathies to the families of the lost miners as well as the rescuers because myself, having spent time with coal miners' families while they wait word from below as to the fate of their loved ones, it is a cruel experience that no individual should have to experience. But, unfortunately, unless the Congress acts and even when we do act, it may yet occur again because mining is a dangerous occupation.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON).

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 631 and to honor the memories of the miners who lost their lives in the Crandall Canyon mine accident. Our thoughts and prayers are with the miners' families and with those miners and the Mine Safety Health Administration personnel killed as well as those injured in subsequent rescue operations.

The Committee on Education and Labor has announced an investigatory hearing for October 3 to begin examining the circumstances surrounding the Crandall Canyon mining accident, including the response to the accident by the Mine Safety Health Administration and other stakeholders. Only then will we be able to determine what steps Congress should take in the aftermath of the Crandall Canyon tragedy to further ensure the safety of our Nation's miners.

As a former member of the South Carolina Mining Council, I plan to continue to track this issue closely. I am committed to maintaining the openness and integrity of this process so that the issue of miner protection receives the fair and comprehensive consideration it deserves.

Coal miners have a very dangerous job, and it is our role to ensure that the conditions in which they work are as safe as possible. We renew our commitment to examining our Nation's mining laws to ensure they are protective for the changing mining environment.

Last year, in the wake of the Sago and other mine disasters, Congress worked in a bipartisan fashion to pass the MINER Act. That legislation took significant steps to improve mining safety. It requires the Mine Safety Health Administration to revise its penalties, increase penalties for major violations to $220,000, undertake several studies regarding mining practices, and to work to improve the technology for communications underground.

No law passed by Congress can console the families of those who have lost loved ones as a result of this tragedy. In the coming months, we will thoroughly review what happened at Crandall Canyon and what steps may be considered to prevent it from happening again. But today we are here to mourn the tragic loss of life at that mine in Utah and pay our respects to the families of these brave miners.

Kerry Allred, Dale Black, Don Erickson, Gary Jensen, Luis Hernandez, Brandon Kimber, Carlos Payan, Brandon Phillips, and Manuel Sanchez. We honor these men today, express our condolences to their families, and recognize the important work of the rescuers who volunteered to enter the mine to try to rescue their fellow miners.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this resolution.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, though the structure of these resolutions require a Republican and Democrat both to present legislation, on this day when we deal with an issue of comfort, not on politics, this day we are all united as we honor these miners who were trapped and those who worked to find these men. We grieve with their families in our hearts, our prayers, our thoughts. The memory of these nine men will not diminish, and I urge all my colleagues to join with Mr. MATHESON, Mr. CANNON, and myself in supporting this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 631.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING THE CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE DEATH OF THE HONORABLE PAUL E. GILLMOR, A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE STATE OF OHIO

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged resolution (H. Res. 632) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 632

Resolved, That the House has heard with profound sorrow of the death of the Honorable Paul E. Gillmor, a Representative from the State of Ohio.

Resolved, That a committee of such Members of the House as the Speaker may designate, together with such Members of the Senate as may be joined, be appointed to attend the funeral.

Resolved, That the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House be authorized and directed to take such steps as may be necessary for carrying out the provisions of these resolutions and that the necessary expenses in connection therewith be paid out of applicable accounts of the House.

Resolved, That the Clerk communicate these resolutions to the Senate and transmit a copy thereof to the family of the deceased.

Resolved, That when the House adjourns today, it adjourn as a further mark of respect to the memory of the deceased.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Ohio is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR), my colleague, who is the senior member of the Democrat delegation, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my friend and colleague PAUL GILLMOR of Tiffin, Ohio. PAUL GILLMOR was a leader in Ohio. He was elected five times by his colleagues in the Ohio Senate as a leader and was President of the Ohio Senate three times.

He was a leader here in this House on financial issues, focusing effectively on legislation to protect the general public. Additionally, PAUL's leadership extended beyond Ohio and Congress to his position as Vice President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

His awards from grateful constituents and community groups he represented were powerful evidence of PAUL's diligent efforts on behalf of those who depended on his caring representation on their behalf. Five Ohio colleges and universities honored his outstanding leadership with honorary degrees.

In addition, he served his country as a captain in the Air Force with active duty during the Vietnam conflict from 1965 to 1966. Ohio Wesleyan University and the University of Michigan Law School are proud to claim him as an alumnus.

□ 1530

Our sympathy goes out to PAUL'S wife, Karen, and his 5 children.

To those of us who cherished him not only as a colleague, but as a friend, we will long remember PAUL and will always be grateful that he was part of our life.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would very much like to thank the dean of the Republican delegation from Ohio, Congressman RALPH REGULA, a dear friend, for helping to organize this very special moment tonight in honor of our friend and colleague from Ohio, Representative PAUL GILLMOR, who last evening succumbed to a call that will greet us all. We never know the time nor the hour.

I understand that PAUL flew back to Washington yesterday with several of his colleagues. And sometimes we wonder why things happen the way they do, but he was able to speak with several of them upon his return to Washington after having spent most of August with his family in Ohio. That itself is a gift.

It is with shock and sadness that we on this side of the aisle extend heartfelt sympathy to the Gillmor family. To his wife, Karen, I can't tell you how many White House Christmas parties I recall sharing with her, our travels to Mexico long before the passage of NAFTA as we evaluated the situation on the ground. Those are memories that I will hold forever.

To the five Gillmor children, PAUL was a very, very dedicated father. I recall one time I was going into Channel 11, our CBS affiliate, I'll probably get in trouble for saying this, the other affiliates won't be mentioned, even though it didn't happen in their stations, and PAUL had one of his sons with him that day, and he was so polite. And we were talking about where he was going to school. PAUL tried to be with his family, especially with his younger children, as much as he could.

He suffered great tragedy in his own life, serving in Vietnam as a Captain in the Air Force in that very troubled conflict. I'm sure that he carried memories and wounds from that. And then having lost his first wife in a tragic automobile accident, having to survive that and continue to serve.

He dedicated his life to public service. Many people I don't think realize what a wealthy man he was. He didn't have to be here in the Congress. He could have checked out long ago. But in the tradition of service that his family represented and very deep, deep roots in Buckeye land in Ohio, he served his country not just in the Air Force, but in the Ohio Senate where he was the majority leader, and finally, the people of the Fifth Congressional District in this House since 1989, a decade and a half.

There are many pieces of legislation for which he exhibited leadership. One of those dealt with brownfields, a problem well known in a State like Ohio, and trying to move legislation in order to convert those over for reuse. As a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee and Subcommittee Chair during a portion of his career, he made a real national contribution there.

Together, we worked on saving the 180th Tactical Fighter Squadron of the Army Air National Guard in our districts. When gerrymandering occurred a few years ago and the districts were redrawn, literally, he ended up with one half of the airport and I ended up with the other half. And I thought, oh, this is interesting. So we were very successful in our efforts there. And without question, that particular unit, which will be returning to Ohio this week, is returning to a facility that he helped to save. One of my memories is that before their departure about four months ago, PAUL and I were there together wishing every single one of the members of that unit Godspeed and a quick return to our country.

There were many times that we spent together in our region of the State. Just last week, PAUL and I appeared in Findlay, Ohio as a result of the tragic 1,000-year flooding that occurred up in our area. Congressman JIM JORDAN was there as well from Urbana, Ohio. And then PAUL and I met with Secretary Chertoff. We were planning meetings here upon our return here this week. And we talked about the need for FEMA to be more responsive to the needs of this region. And we then took an Apache helicopter with General Wayt from the Ohio National Guard and we flew over to Bucyrus, just the two of us together in that helicopter. And we were pointing out different reservoirs and different dams and different things that had to be done in order to prevent this type of tragedy again. And we met with the mayor of Bucyrus and with the county commissioners there and the emergency management officials. We had quite a visit. And then PAUL and I got back on the Apache helicopter and we flew back to Findlay, Ohio where his sister was waiting for him at the airport. And they were on to the next stop. I think he was headed over to Ottawa, Ohio in his district, which had also been very, very badly flooded.

I see Congressman JORDAN over there. I never knew that when we were in Findlay, Ohio together, we kind of grabbed hands and tried to deal with the flooding in your district as well, that that would be the last time that we would do that together.

So we had many memories that we share of PAUL'S service. And I offer the consolation and the condolences of the people from the Ninth Congressional District, which literally wraps its arms around the northern part of PAUL'S district, to his family, to his friends, to his colleagues, and to say we are there in dutiful service to do what is necessary to transition in these very difficult days and months ahead.

I want to say personally to Karen, his wife, that I value our friendship. And many of us who have reached the age we are know what a loss this is, and we are praying for you, we are praying for your children, we are praying for your family.

I wanted to extend the opportunity for our dear colleague from Tennessee, Congressman JOHN TANNER, who is down here on the floor, who wanted to offer words on behalf of PAUL GILLMOR whatever time he wishes to consume. I yield him such time.

Mr. TANNER. Thank you very much, Ms. KAPTUR.

I just felt compelled to come down here. And Mr. REGULA, I thank you for taking this time.

I guess I've traveled more with PAUL GILLMOR than any other Member. We have traveled together on the NATO Parliamentary Assembly business for at least the last 9 or 10 years, and that's two or three trips a year to the parliamentary meetings of NATO. And during that time, not only have my wife, Betty Ann, and his wife, Karen, become close friends, but I don't have or didn't have a closer friend in Congress than PAUL GILLMOR.

He was not only an extraordinarily talented individual who made people comfortable around him, but he also had a leadership quality that I observed up close and personal many, many times in these NATO meetings.

It hasn't been all that easy the last few years. There has been unrest in the alliance. And PAUL was chairman of the Economics and Security Committee during part of that time, and I was a member and succeeded him as chairman. And it was an easy transition from the standpoint that PAUL had gained so much respect from our European allies and colleagues that it was easy for us to run that committee in a way that I think was constructive.

He was extraordinarily dedicated to his family. He talked about them all the time. And beyond that, he was a man that had a well-grounded sense of himself. He was one who not only cared deeply for his family, his State and his country, but was willing to go out of his way and inconvenience himself time and time again to go the extra mile to try to make things better. I feel very privileged to just have known him and to be a friend of his, and more importantly, him being a friend of mine.

I'm going to miss him a lot. I know this House will miss him a lot. The country will miss him a lot. He is currently serving as North American Vice President of NATO PA, and I'm sure that that organization will miss him as well.

Thank you for allowing me this time.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE).

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the dean of our delegation for authoring this resolution. I also want to thank our Democratic friends from Ohio and Members from other States who I see gathering on the floor.

Mr. Speaker, there is no way to describe today's news about our friend, PAUL GILLMOR, other than shock, a devastating loss to his family, to his friends, his colleagues, Ohio and our Nation.

Unlike a number of the other members of the Ohio delegation, I didn't come to Congress through the Ohio legislature, and so I didn't serve with PAUL in the Ohio legislature, although I knew of him from Republican gatherings around the State of Ohio, he also was my mom's Congressman. She always told me the story about how excited the people were who were up in Lakeside, Marblehead and the Islands that Congressman GILLMOR was going to come up and share his thoughts. But I didn't have the chance to work with him until I arrived here about 13 years ago. What I found was what I had heard, and that was that Congressman GILLMOR was a hardworking, smart legislator who loved his family, loved his friends, loved this institution and the people he served. He was willing to take the time to show a young freshman around back in 1995. He was willing to share his vast knowledge of financial services with those that didn't quite have the same expertise. If you were having a sadness or a joy in your life, he was willing to share in that. And he was a wonderful fellow to sit and have dinner with. And after dinner, he was a wonderful fellow to sit around with and tell war stories. And over the course of the years, many of those stories were exaggerated with the passage of time and also the failing of memory, but it was always a good time.

I was reminded by my staff, because I want to talk about PAUL's family, but I also want to talk about PAUL's other family. And my staff reminded me, when they learned of PAUL's passing today, that we were neighbors in the Longworth Building, and my staff told me how lucky we were to have a neighbor whose staff was always willing to walk us through another clueless day in the 104th Congress. And how you could always walk into the lobby, and how he taught us about constituent services because you would always find a bowl of Dum Dum suckers because the Spangler Candy Company was located in Bryan, Ohio, which was in the Congressman's district.

Our Ohio delegation is poor today with the loss of our friend, neighbor and mentor, PAUL GILLMOR. Our thoughts and prayers are with PAUL's wife, Karen, his five wonderful children, and also, Mr. Speaker, with his Capitol Hill family, many of whom have been with him for many, many years and who miss him very badly today.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Ohio, Ms. SUTTON, will control the remainder of the gentlewoman from Ohio, Ms. KAPTUR's time.

There was no objection.

Ms. SUTTON. Mr. Speaker, I was deeply saddened today to hear of the passing of Congressman PAUL GILLMOR.

As a freshman Member of this body, I haven't known Mr. GILLMOR as long as some of my colleagues who have already spoken and who will, I'm sure, rise to speak in moments following my remarks.

I did have occasion enough to spend time with Mr. GILLMOR to know what a friendly and unpretentious and likeable man he was. And my thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Karen, and his family and his friends. I did have the opportunity to serve with Karen in the State legislature in Ohio. And Karen, as I said, you're in our thoughts and prayers.

The State of Ohio and the United States Congress have lost a great friend. PAUL GILLMOR devoted his life to serving his community, his State and his Nation. From his service in the United States Air Force to his tireless efforts on behalf of the people of Ohio in Congress, PAUL GILLMOR always fought hard to make a difference in people's lives. We will all miss him greatly. And I am grateful for the opportunity to have known him even for the short time that I did.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON), chairman of the committee on which PAUL served.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Well, the former chairman, the ranking member now.

When I think of PAUL GILLMOR, I think of two words, "team player." Earlier this year, when the Republicans lost the majority, we had to downsize the number of Republicans on the Energy and Commerce Committee, and I made a decision, as the ranking member, to try not to have to kick anybody off the committee and not bump off our junior members. So I went to the senior members of the committee and asked if there were any volunteers who might want to take a leave of absence to allow the junior members not to have to be bumped off, and of course PAUL GILLMOR was one of the ones who volunteered to take a leave of absence so he could serve on the Financial Services Committee and keep his seniority on the Energy and Commerce Committee.

□ 1545

Because of that, several of our junior members were able to stay on the committee.

Well, about a month ago, we had a contentious mark-up coming up. Sure enough, one of the junior members had a personal family situation that they couldn't get out of. They were going to have to take a leave of absence. We needed every vote. So I went to PAUL, and I said, "Would you be willing to come back on the committee for 1 or 2 days?" He kind of grumped a little bit

about it, but he said, "If you need me, I'll be there." Not only did he come back on the committee, but he offered amendments and was there all of the time and didn't complain, whine, moan or groan about how tough it was. He was a team player. He did a good job.

When we were in the majority, PAUL was the chairman of the Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials, which is not one of the more glamorous subcommittees of this Congress. It deals with such things as the Superfund and the Clean Water Act and all these international treaties. It's a tough job. PAUL did it not only with good grace, but he did it in an excellent fashion.

PAUL GILLMOR is going to be missed as a friend. He is going to be missed as a Congressman. He is going to be missed as a statesman for this country. My sympathy goes out to his wife, Karen, and his family. We will definitely miss the services of the Honorable PAUL GILLMOR in the House of Representatives.

God bless him, and God bless his family.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WILSON) will control the remainder of the time of the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. SUTTON).

There was no objection.

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleagues here today saddened by the death of PAUL GILLMOR. PAUL and I took much the same track to come here to Congress in that PAUL served diligently for the State of Ohio in the Ohio senate. As a matter of fact, he and his wife, Karen, both left quite a legacy there and then moved on to Congress. I knew PAUL, but through other people, so to speak, until I came to Congress. I can still remember how welcoming he was to me as another Ohio delegate and welcoming me to be here in Congress. I was very comfortable when he, DEBORAH PRYCE and I were the Congress people hosting a banking financial seminar in Columbus not too many months ago, 4, 5 or 6 months ago. It was good to sit with PAUL. We sort of chatted in between the time.

One of the things that comes to mind about PAUL is that he was my sister, Becky's, Congressman. She lives in Henry County in part of his district. She is a yellow dog Democrat, but she loved PAUL GILLMOR. Just as recently as last night, before we knew any of this had happened, we talked about him at dinner. She said, "Paul Gillmor always listens to us." So she felt very proud of her relationship with her Congressman.

I think many people have felt that way about PAUL. When this type of thing happens, it shows you the compassion and the feeling among us, as one body, as one set of people representing America. I think that is what makes our country different from others. PAUL GILLMOR was certainly a perfect example of that. So my heart and my sympathy go out to his wife, Karen, and his 5 children. Hopefully, they will be able to continue the legacy he has set for the Gillmor family.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE).

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, we all rise in shock and great sadness to mourn the death of our friend and colleague, PAUL GILLMOR. There is really so much to honor about his life. He was actually a legislator's legislator. Before he came to Capitol Hill, he spent 22 years in the Ohio statehouse where he became the senate president for 3 terms. He was there during those formative years of his professional life so long, and to the extent of which he became a real pro at it, that he had an innate sense of the legislative process. He got to know the people, because half of this work is getting to know the people.

He seemed to come by it naturally. We would sit at whip meetings when he came to Congress. He would ask all the right questions and get to the bottom line in half the time as anyone else. PAUL GILLMOR really knew what he was doing, and he always made it look so effortless.

He cared about other people. He cared about his staff. He cared about his colleagues. He cared about his friends. I didn't know a single soul that didn't like PAUL GILLMOR. And that is saying a lot in this business. PAUL was a people person. He was a person that others gravitated to because he cared about them.

But he cared about no one more in life than his family. As a Member who on occasion myself has missed a vote on the naming of a post office or two, I really respect the priorities that PAUL GILLMOR had about putting his family first. That's the right thing to do and that's the way PAUL did it.

He has a lot for which Karen, his dear wife, and his family can be proud to look back upon as they examine the legacy that he left to Ohio, to them, and to our country.

Once again, we have much to honor in PAUL GILLMOR's life. Our prayers are with his family.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) will control the remainder of the time of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WILSON).

There was no objection.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would yield time to Mr. OBEY, the Chair of the Appropriations Committee, such time as he may consume.

Mr. OBEY. I thank the gentlewoman for the time.

I simply cannot believe that PAUL is gone. I first got to know him when we both served on a task force to rewrite the code of ethics in the nineties. That was not an easy job. PAUL's performance was solid. It was thoughtful. In all the time that we discussed those issues before we brought our recommendations to the floor, I never saw him for one moment raise a partisan angle on any ethics question, and I never saw him question anyone else's motives.

What I did see was a man who understood that ethics is important, and yet because it involves the rules of the House, it can also be exceedingly complicated.

I never saw PAUL take a single cheap shot in all the time that he served on that committee. That is one of the reasons that he became one of my favorite Republicans in this place, because there are very few people on either side of the aisle who aren't willing to take a cheap shot at the other side, even if it results in damage to the institution. That's where PAUL drew the line.

He didn't mind seeking partisan advantage. That's what all of us try to do from time to time. But what he always tried to do, in my judgment, was to seek whatever advantage he saw without taking advantage of the institution at the same time. That's an important line to draw in an institution like this.

I think we can all be grateful for the job that PAUL did for as long as God allowed him to do it. I simply cannot believe he is gone.

I extend my sincere regrets and best wishes to his family and all the members of the Ohio delegation.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TIBERI).

Mr. TIBERI. Ladies and gentlemen of the House, my heart goes out to PAUL's wife, Karen, and his 5 children.

As Mr. OBEY said, I can't believe it, either. I first met PAUL GILLMOR when he was president of the Ohio senate and served in the senate. He had a very distinguished career before having ever come to the United States Congress, a career that many would admire, just there in our statehouse in Ohio.

His reputation was as a man of great humility. Something that we all could learn a lesson from is PAUL GILLMOR's humility, the gentleness of PAUL GILLMOR, the way he treated people, the way he loved to serve the public of Ohio and northwest Ohio and the constituents he was so proud to serve.

PAUL was an Air Force veteran. Many didn't know that. He was a proud graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University in my district, and, for an Ohioan, a proud graduate of the University of Michigan's law school.

PAUL was known around the statehouse as a very gentle person, as a man who rose to the top of the political game, but never forgot where he came from, a successful politician, a successful public servant, a successful businessman.

Yesterday I had the opportunity with a couple of other Members, Congressman JORDAN and Congressman HOBSON, to sit in the airport in Columbus in the afternoon to chat with PAUL as we were coming back to Washington, DC.

I had the added opportunity to spend some time with him on the airplane sitting next to him. I will remember PAUL in the way that I have always known PAUL, a very happy warrior, a man who loved what he did on a daily basis. He enjoyed August, reaching out to community after community in northwest Ohio at town hall meeting after town hall meeting, up at the lake with friends and family. He enjoyed August. He had a smile on his face. He enjoyed public service. He enjoyed representing the people of northwest Ohio.

That's how I will remember PAUL GILLMOR. We lost a good friend. Ohio lost a native son. And America lost a patriot.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, my first comments are to Karen Gillmor. Karen, I stand in your stead. Only 4 years ago, I lost my husband suddenly. All I can say to you is hold on to God's unchanging hand. He will help you through all of this. And as you think about all the wonderful memories and the wonderful opportunities and the blessing that you had to have PAUL GILLMOR in your life. To your sons and daughters, I say the same thing. I always talk to my son, and I say, "Merv, just remember all the good times. Remember all the fun you had, all the things you learned, and cherish each and every one of them."

As a Member of Congress, I rise to speak to honor the life of my colleague and friend, PAUL GILLMOR. PAUL and I served on the Committee on Financial Services together. When I first came to Congress, PAUL reminded me of the big bear, kind of a gentle bear. You don't even know he is really in the room until he kind of humbles into the room. I remember him saying on occasion, Stephanie, Congresswoman JONES, so forth and so on.

I was pleased to have had the opportunity to cosponsor some legislation with him with regard to historic preservation. He and I both understood the importance of preserving historic buildings in this Nation and offered legislation that would have provided tax incentives for people to be able to shore up that legislation.

Unlike PAUL, I was not in the legislature when I first came to Congress. The advantage of having a colleague and a friend who has had some experience in the legislature works greatly. I can remember one time at a Financial Services hearing, as usual, I was going at a witness. Later PAUL said, "Now, Stephanie, just calm down a little bit. It ain't like you're in a courtroom anymore."

We're all going to miss PAUL GILLMOR. The beauty of the United States Congress is that it is a bipartisan body where you have Democrats and Republicans who are there and who are able to argue or debate their particular issue. But the beauty also of a bipartisan body is that you have Democrats and Republicans who can get along, who understand the importance of raising the issues on behalf of their constituents, but also understand the importance of working together.

□ 1600

I know everyone has already placed into the RECORD all of PAUL's background, experience and things that he did to represent the great State of Ohio. Again, I stand here as a colleague and a friend to talk about my experiences with PAUL GILLMOR, to record them in my memory, and to smile, because at these times it is often hard to smile and lift up a time of laughter. But I call upon all of our friends and colleagues and his family to look to the good times, to look to all the great memories, and, over time, time will heal some of the wounds.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the leader, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER).

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the dean of our delegation for bringing this resolution to the floor, and thank my colleague from Cleveland, Mrs. JONES, for her enlightening remarks and lightening this up.

I was here earlier to announce PAUL's passing to the House. I can remember the first time I met PAUL GILLMOR. I was a brand new State legislator. It was 1985, and it wasn't at the statehouse; it was down the street at the Pewter Mug.

Now, for those of us who served in the statehouse, we have all been to the Pewter Mug. That is where I got to know PAUL GILLMOR. He was the senate president; I was a lowly new house member, and Helen used to come over and wait on us. For those who came to the statehouse who went to the Pewter Mug, you would remember Helen, because you could never forget her, and she would never forget PAUL.

But I got to know PAUL GILLMOR. In 1986, PAUL decided to run for Governor in a Republican primary, and I was on his team. As a matter of fact, it might have been one of the first political checks I actually wrote was to PAUL GILLMOR when he ran for Governor. Unfortunately, he didn't win that primary election, but I really got to know PAUL GILLMOR.

He really was a public servant who enjoyed what he did, who enjoyed representing people, and someone that came to Congress right before I did. He came in 1988; I came in 1990. We have been close friends over the 17 years that we have worked here together. We worked on a number of issues.

PAUL loved to understand what was happening around the world, and he certainly did his share of traveling to try to understand what was happening. But his work on the Energy and Commerce Committee, his work over in the Financial Services Committee will speak for itself.

But earlier this year, I think it was mentioned by the gentleman from Texas, Mr. BARTON, earlier this year we lost our majority, we lost a number of seats, and PAUL GILLMOR took the magnanimous step of relinquishing his seat on the Energy and Commerce Committee to take a seat on the Financial Services Committee to help make room for other Members. It was that kind of kindness and consideration that I think all of us will remember about PAUL GILLMOR.

Karen and the children, our prayers are with you. PAUL was a great servant, a great friend, and someone who we will all miss.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio, TIM RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman, and I also thank our friend, the dean of the delegation, Mr. REGULA.

I would just add for a minute my thoughts and memories of Mr. GILLMOR. I graduated from Bowling Green State University, so I knew of Mr. GILLMOR before I even got into politics, because as many of the Members from Ohio know, he is a legend in northwest Ohio, especially in Bowling Green and especially with the Bowling Green Young Republicans. He was very familiar.

I remember, as we all do, taking the little trolley back and forth from the office buildings over here, and for some reason our conversations always ended up talking about Ohio State football. Mr. GILLMOR loved the Buckeyes. He loved going to the Ohio State football games. I remember being in the State senate seeing him at the Ohio State football games. That is just the kind of guy he was. He loved football, he loved his country, he loved his constituents, he loved this institution, and he certainly will be missed.

So from the citizens of the 17th District, we just want to thank Mr. GILLMOR for his service and send our condolences and our prayers to his family and his children and his wife, Karen. And also to say, as Mr. BOEHNER, the minority leader said, he was a gentleman. He was a gentle man. In the midst of all the chaos of Washington, DC, his silence and his gentleness were very refreshing, and he will be missed.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS).

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio.

We have heard words about PAUL GILLMOR, our friend, and one word we

keep hearing over and over is "caring." He really cared. He cared about his family. You would go in his office and you would see the pictures of his family.

He cared about his staff. Mark Wellman, his chief of staff; Dave Oxner, great guys. They were sort of a reflection and extension of PAUL. They were gentlemen. They really did not care about who got the credit. They were hard workers. I say to Mark and Dave, I know that you are grieving right now.

Mr. OBEY mentioned that he cared about this institution. He truly did. He cared about every Member. I never heard him insult another Member. I never heard him say something unkind.

He talked about issues. He felt strongly about issues. The brownfields legislation was a great example of how he was very tenacious, had very strong feelings. He did that earlier this year on the industrial loan companies when, as a small town banker, mainstream banker, he felt very strongly that small town banks were being disadvantaged. But he never said anything unkind about those who opposed his position.

To his credit, I think part of that kindness, that caring, and also his capable leadership, that legislation passed the House 371–16. I think brownfields will be part of his legacy, particularly to the industrial States, the people of Ohio that he loved; as will the industrial loan company legislation, that really will help preserve small town mainstream banking.

He was a banker. I had the privilege of appointing PAUL as the ranking member of the Financial Institutions Subcommittee. I never regretted that decision. I knew that what PAUL cared about was not himself or not the glory, but doing what was right for the American people. He never disappointed me. I will miss him deeply.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS).

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I thank him for convening this resolution this evening and I thank the Ohio delegation for allowing me to be part of this remembrance of the life of our friend PAUL GILLMOR. Like everyone else, I was shocked and saddened this morning to hear the news about the loss of our friend.

We have heard several people talk about Mr. GILLMOR and his work on the committee. I remember last year in the 109th Congress when he was the subcommittee chairman and the work he did on persistent organic pollutants. It really was not something I had ever thought about before I came to Congress, it really wasn't something I ever campaigned on, but PAUL had a way of explaining it and making it understandable and worked through a very complex issue working with both sides of the committee dais to get meaningful legislation passed.

Then at the end of the 109th Congress, after the election, coming back for the 110th Congress, and someone explained to me the arithmetic that happens when you lose the majority, and counting on my fingers the number of seats we had lost on the Energy and Commerce Committee and I was no longer going to be on that committee, and then later PAUL came to me and said, "Doc, you are too important on that committee, so I am going to stay on Financial Services and I will take a leave from Energy and Commerce."

You heard Ranking Member BARTON mention it. You heard Leader BOEHNER mention it. I was the guy that he let stay on the committee by his selfless act of taking a leave of absence from a committee that he loved, committee work he loved to do. I thank him so much for giving me the opportunity to stay on the committee.

Of course, we welcomed him back a few weeks ago when we needed that extra vote when we were discussing energy legislation. And, sure enough, PAUL was there not just to be a vote, but he brought amendments with him. He tied things up. He behaved just like the PAUL GILLMOR that I had remembered on the committee from the year before.

So, to his family, I wanted you to know, you had heard me mention before how selfless PAUL was about giving up a place on the committee. I am the guy that he let stay on the committee. I will never forget that, and I will always try to live up to his expectations.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to our colleague from Ohio (Mr. JORDAN).

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the dean of our delegation.

Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues from Ohio in expressing great shock and sadness at the passing of our friend and neighbor Congressman PAUL GILLMOR.

As previous speakers have mentioned, Congressman GILLMOR was in our district last week with the flooding. I had the opportunity to just visit with him yesterday, as Congressman TIBERI mentioned as well, at the airport before we flew down here. You just can't believe this has happened.

PAUL was a husband and a father. He was a proud Republican, an Air Force veteran, as others mentioned, with Vietnam era service, and a long time congressional leader on international leaders.

Prior to his distinguished service in Congress, he made his mark in the Ohio legislature with an impressive 22-year career in the Ohio Senate, and as Congresswoman PRYCE mentioned, three terms as senate president.

I had the unique opportunity to work with PAUL on issues that affected our part of Ohio. I counted on him as a staunch ally in promoting the workers and the mission at Lima's Joint Systems Manufacturing Center, our tank plant in Lima, Ohio.

We also shared in challenging times, including the tragic Bluffton University bus crash earlier this year, and more recently, as I mentioned, the flooding that took place and devastated many areas of both of our districts.

I served with PAUL's wife, Karen, in the general assembly, although she was on the senate side and I was on the house side, and got to know their family a little bit over the years. Our family's prayers are with her and the entire Gillmor family as they attempt to find peace in the midst of this tragedy.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ADERHOLT).

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in remembering one of our own, PAUL GILLMOR. It is moments like this that you realize the fleeting nature of time. Indeed, we truly realize the shortness of time and the greatness of eternity. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family, his friends and all of the people that he touched during the time he was on this Earth.

Representative GILLMOR was a friend. He was a gentleman who I had the pleasure of getting to know as a neighbor. Because we lived across the street from each other at one time, there were several occasions that we shared a ride home after a long night of votes. During those times, I was able to gain a small measure of the man and discovered him to be generous, kind, and, above all, considerate.

The people of Ohio were privileged to have known him as a public servant. The Members of Congress were honored to share him as a colleague. His friends were rewarded with his company, and his family was embraced by his love.

We will miss PAUL and remember our time with him and honor his memory. May God give Karen and his children an extra measure of grace during this most difficult time.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio, Mrs. SCHMIDT.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, I am deeply saddened today by the news of the loss of my dear friend PAUL GILLMOR. PG, as many of us called him, was a shining example of service and leadership. As president of the Ohio senate, he led Ohio through good times and bad times with such grace.

For the last 2 decades, he fought for all Ohioans here in Congress, not just those in his own district. During his entire life, PAUL GILLMOR was a true leader, a gentleman and a statesman. Most importantly, he was a nice guy, a true friend to all.

When I was first elected, he became a mentor to me. I would always welcome his kind words on the House floor, "How is it going, kid?"

Just as important, he was a great father and a loving husband.

□ 1615

My prayers go out to his wonderful wife Karen and all of his children. Ohio has suffered a great loss. America has suffered a great loss. We here in this House have lost a dear friend. May God be with you, PAUL. Godspeed.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER).

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the dean of our delegation, RALPH REGULA, for bringing this resolution forward to honor the life of PAUL GILLMOR. We are all deeply saddened by the passing of our dear friend, PAUL GILLMOR.

I want to tell you one story from when I first got to Congress. Mr. GILLMOR, as I referred to him, as many have said, had a gentle spirit and an informal way and a very accepting way. When I referred to him as "Mr. Gillmor," he corrected me and said, You're to call me PAUL. You will hear, as almost everyone comes forward today and eulogizes him, as they honor him, they refer to him as he had us refer to him, and that is PAUL.

One time we were having dinner and he was talking about some of his accomplishments. Brownfields is an area that is very important to me. When you look across Ohio and see the number of abandoned factory sites and the potential that they represent, PAUL told about his work on the Brownfields Remediation Act that changed the laws that made it easier for those sites to be remediated, and provided tax benefits so that capital would be brought to them.

As you go throughout Ohio today and see abandoned factory sites where buildings are being demolished and new buildings and businesses are being built, it is to PAUL's credit and one of the things he was most proud of, that he was able to work to change the laws to help make it easier for their sites to be developed.

He talked about the number of jobs that it brought, not just in construction but the jobs that it brought to communities, recognizing the impact on families.

Most recently, Ohio has been plagued by scandals arising from predatory lending, and PAUL was a leader in trying to help families and communities that had been subject to predatory lending, pulling together the Ohio delegation to talk about ways we can impact our neighborhoods and support laws that could impact families that had been subject to predatory lending.

PAUL will be remembered as an effective legislator, and as someone who cared deeply for Ohio and for this institution and for his country, and had an impact on the lives of Ohioans.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the Speaker of the House, NANCY PELOSI.

Ms. PELOSI. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding on this very sad occasion. I am sad to join my colleagues as we face the very sad news regarding the loss of our colleague, PAUL GILLMOR.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all Members of Congress, I rise to pay tribute to PAUL GILLMOR, who passed away suddenly today. I offer my deepest condolences to his wife, Karen, to his two daughters, Linda and Julie, and his three sons, Paul Michael, Connor, and Adam. How proud he was of his children. That was one thing that we used to chat about quite regularly. I would hear about the progress of the twins and how everybody was doing.

Congressman PAUL GILLMOR was an experienced and talented legislator who spent much of his life serving his country. His service began in the Air Force where he rose to the rank of captain as an Air Force Judge Advocate. As a true Ohioan, Congressman GILLMOR then served his State in public office for more than four decades, first in the Ohio State senate where he was elected President of that body, and later here in the House where he also served ably and was held in highest esteem by his colleagues.

More interested in policy than in seeking the limelight, PAUL GILLMOR focused his time here in the House squarely on the needs of his constituents. On the Energy and Commerce Committee, he was deeply involved in consumer issues, including protecting consumers from unfair credit report practices. He also worked to preserve our history by supporting and improving sites honoring our Nation's Presidents. As vice president of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Congressman GILLMOR was the highest ranking American in this highly esteemed international organization of parliamentary members from the 26 NATO states.

Congressman GILLMOR's passing is a loss for this House and for our Nation. It is, of course, a greater loss for his family. I hope it is a comfort to them, to PAUL's family and friends, that so many people mourn their loss and are praying for them at this sad time.

Mr. Speaker, this is a sad day for us because we also learned of the sudden passing of our former colleague, Jennifer Dunn. She was a distinguished former Member of Congress from the State of Washington and I know we will acknowledge her service and leadership in the Congress on another occasion. But getting hit from all sides on this in one day is a great loss for the Congress.

As I yield back to the distinguished gentlewoman, I also want to thank her for bringing to the attention of so many Members of Congress the passing of Congressman Vanik who served so ably in this body who passed away last week. Anyone who knows about international human rights knows that Congressman Vanik as part of the Jackson-Vanik amendment did so much to free people in the Soviet Union. He made a very big difference for Soviet Jewry.

Ohio has been generous to the country. We mourn the loss of PAUL GILLMOR and Jennifer Dunn and Charles Vanik, who lived until his 90s, so God blessed him with that long life.

God did not give PAUL GILLMOR a long life, but he gave him a life of great quality with a beautiful family and the opportunity to serve a State he loved and a country that he was very patriotic about.

On behalf of all of our colleagues, I extend my deepest sympathy to his family.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT).

Mr. CHABOT. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I stand with my colleagues today to honor the memory of PAUL GILLMOR. He was really a great guy. He actually ran the first time in 1988 for this esteemed institution, for the Congress, the same year I first ran. He won and I didn't. But in 1994 I did get to join him here.

He was one of the guys that, as other Members have said, he was just an all around good guy. He really was. You liked to talk to him. For some reason, he used to call me Mr. STEVE; I don't know why he did that. So I started calling him Mr. PAUL, and that is the way we referred to each other.

Yesterday evening after we had our votes, we had all come back into town from the August recess and we were asking each other what did you do over the break, what happened. He was telling me how he had stayed pretty close to home. He had worked with his constituents, been with his family for some time, and he wanted to know what I had done. I said I had done some of those same things, and that I had also had an opportunity to go to Darfur where there is probably one of the greatest human tragedies that we have seen on Earth in a number of years, and he was very interested and wanted to know what we can do to help the people in Darfur. So we spent a period of time discussing that right outside those doors just last evening. I was just shocked when I learned that PAUL had passed away suddenly so recently.

He was somebody that really I think made a difference in this institution. As has been mentioned, he loved his Buckeyes. He would talk about what they had done and how the game had

been played and how he couldn't wait to go to the next game. And he loved our State of Ohio. He loved the people that he represented. And most especially, he loved his family.

We are all going to miss PAUL GILLMOR, and we wish the best to his wife, Karen, and his five children. God bless you, PAUL.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY).

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, and I rise to express my deep sadness to learn of the passing of one of my good friends and colleagues, PAUL GILLMOR.

PAUL was the ranking member of the Financial Institutions Subcommittee that I chair, and I had the great privilege of working with him on so many important issues throughout the years. In fact, this morning at the hearing we were holding on the subprime mortgage crisis, I had reserved 4 minutes for PAUL to speak and he didn't come to the meeting. He was always punctual, and so we sent a staff member out to find him and found out the very, very sad news.

PAUL was a distinguished Representative representing Ohio for many years. He held some partisan positions as the minority deputy whip; but on Financial Services, he was always ready to reach across the aisle and to work in a bipartisan way for the safety and soundness of our financial institutions and protections of consumer concerns.

He had a great deal of experience in banking, and in fact had run banks back in his home State of Ohio, so he brought the practical common sense of having known the business firsthand, and he always had valuable insights.

Just before we broke for our August work period, we had introduced a bill together on file freeze and negotiated various aspects that he thought was important for the bill. He was an outstanding person.

He served in Vietnam and he was a distinguished veteran. He served in the Air Force and achieved the status of captain. My brother served in Vietnam, and we shared conversations about that experience.

He was an extremely outstanding leader in his home State of Ohio, and actually served in the State senate and headed the State senate for five terms before becoming elected to Congress.

My heart goes out to his wife and children. I know I speak for many of my colleagues when I say that PAUL'S presence in this Chamber will be deeply, deeply missed. He was an outstanding patriot and outstanding Congressman and an outstanding spouse, husband and father. We are all deeply, deeply saddened.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS).

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, it is obviously with great sadness that we all honor the service of our colleague and friend, PAUL GILLMOR.

PAUL and I came to Congress the same year. We were in the 101st Congress and we were both veterans of the United States Air Force. He obviously expressed a great love for this Nation, for this institution, and I believe sincerely he brought credit upon all of us.

This dedication was matched by his love for his family, his wife, Karen, his two daughters, Linda and Julie, and his three sons, Paul Michael, Connor and Adam. I express my deepest condolences to the family.

I had the opportunity when I first met PAUL to talk informally with him about his background. He said he was a leader of the senate. Coming from the private sector and not understanding the full significance of what that meant, I became acutely aware of what it meant when I heard him in informal sessions or in meetings where he had a presence about him, an aplomb, and also a sincerity, in which he would express his ideas in a way that would get to the meat of the issue and cut to the chase. And I realized during this, he could do it tactfully. He was not a partisan individual. He was bipartisan, in fact. I can't recollect on the floor him having a really partisan speech because I think it goes to when he was a leader of the senate, he understood to get things done, he had to develop consensus. So when he went to a meeting, he listened more than he talked and he also stepped forward with the idea of what we should do in a very nice way such that most people would say, Wow, at the end of the meeting, PAUL GILLMOR made the most sense.

Another vignette is when he was in the Speaker's chair. I watched when there would be a huge din on the floor, and somehow his voice rose to such a crescendo and also a pitch that he could pierce this noise and bring order and stability to the House here. I used to watch him also with great admiration on how he did this. It was a tribute to his leadership and also his background as leader of the senate.

So I come to the House floor to say his dedication and expertise will be greatly missed. He has had 40 years of public service. He established a long record of working for average Americans. God bless the Gillmor family, and God bless PAUL GILLMOR.

□ 1630

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. REGULA) has 2 minutes.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that both sides have 5 additional minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. SPACE).

Mr. SPACE. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank my colleague for yielding the time.

I'm a first-year lawmaker here in Washington and came in with this new majority in a very partisan time in American political history, a time where too often we're preoccupied with political bickering, a time when we needed more people like PAUL GILLMOR on this floor.

PAUL befriended me. We, by chance, both flew out of the Columbus Airport to and from Washington, so we had a chance to sit and talk about nonlegislative matters, about our families, about some of the nonpolitical aspects of this job. And PAUL was one to give advice, despite the fact that we're on the opposite sides of the aisle. He provided me, as a good man would, with the wisdom he's obtained, and as a freshman, I was very grateful to him for his help.

I didn't know PAUL before being elected to the House last November, but we share many mutual friends. Harry Mishel is a dear friend of mine, a former president of the Ohio senate, was a good friend of PAUL'S and spoke very highly of PAUL. And I think it's a testament to the kind of person he is that he would engender that kind of friendship and support, regardless of where one stands on the political aisle.

One other small anecdote that I think sums PAUL up. A very good friend of mine worked in the Ohio caucus 20 years ago when PAUL was with the Ohio senate, and recently, this friend returned to Columbus and ran into PAUL who was there while on break here. And after 20 years, PAUL still remembered this man, not just his last name, but his first name, and greeted him as a friend after 20 years.

That's the kind of man PAUL GILLMOR was. That's the kind of man I will remember, and my deepest and heartfelt condolences from not just me but the many good folks of Ohio's 18th District go out to PAUL and his family. He and they are in our prayers.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE).

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding.

This is truly a day of great sadness for our conference, for this House, for the State of Ohio and, yes, Mr. Speaker, for our Nation.

Though only in my second term in Congress, I came to know and appreciate PAUL GILLMOR, serving on one of his committees, Financial Services, and I came to appreciate him for many different and wonderful attributes. He had a warm and gentle temperament, a calm and friendly demeanor, a measured and thoughtful reason, a respected

and a respectful legislator. These and so many other attributes shall be missed by one and all.

I join my colleagues in extending our thoughts and our prayers to his constituents, to his friends, and most, to his family. We are truly a better Nation because of the service of PAUL GILLMOR.

May God rest his soul.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the minority whip.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend for yielding and for managing this recognition of our colleague PAUL GILLMOR.

Like so many people in this room, I've had lots of experiences with PAUL, and they were all good, whether they were watching him represent our country in diplomatic situations in his role leading our NATO parliamentary effort, one of the leaders in that effort, or whether it was every Thursday when we had the deputy whip meeting and talked about where we ought to be going as a conference, where we ought to be going as a country.

I remember PAUL said to me one time, he said, you know, that's my favorite meeting of the week because that's where we talk about the future, and PAUL GILLMOR was a future-oriented guy who loved his family, who loved his country, who loved the concept of public service. And he performed that public service well, whether it was years in the Ohio State senate or two decades in the U.S. Congress.

We will truly miss him. We are surprised at his leaving us way too early. His contributions would have continued to be great here, and the country will suffer from the loss that we feel today.

I also want to reach out to his family. And as I said, PAUL loved his country, but he also loved his family. And you didn't have to spend much time with him to find out that deep love he had for his sons, for his daughters, for his wife and for his extended family. And I appreciate him so much, and I'm going to join his family and his friends in missing him. His place here will be hard to fill, and his contributions have been great.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that both sides have an additional 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I yield so much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HOBSON), a good friend of PAUL, a good friend of our Ohio delegation.

Mr. HOBSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember our good friend PAUL GILLMOR. Just yesterday, the three of us rode together in from Columbus.

I saw him in the airport, and I said, Hi, GILLMO. He said, Hi, Honorable DAVE, and we started to talk, as we did often, because we've known each other a long time.

And I said, What'd you do, and he told me about going to the floods. And then we got into boats and he told us about his boat and the times he was having on the lake with his children and Karen, and he was happy.

Then we started to talk business, because PAUL wasn't just a legislator. He was a businessman, too, and he was starting a bank in Florida. He says, You want to invest? I said, Well, we've been talking about that. So we talked about that for a while, and he was happy, and we were all happy. We were colleagues, friends.

I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for PAUL GILLMOR. When PAUL GILLMOR was president of the senate, I lost an election and got appointed to the State senate that PAUL GILLMOR was president then for a few more weeks before we went in the minority, and he helped pick me. He picked me, and the newspaper read "Loser Wins." But PAUL GILLMOR set me on the way.

I've never lost another election, thanks to PAUL GILLMOR. PAUL GILLMOR was always there, and I think his staff knows that.

I met a young man then in the State senate named Mark Wellman who was working for PAUL then. He works with PAUL to this day. That's the kind of loyalty people had to PAUL GILLMOR.

I know of no politician in Ohio today who doesn't have respect for PAUL GILLMOR and wasn't his friend. He transcended partisanship. He had his way about the things he had to get done, but it never became personal.

When we were in the legislature, both sides had great respect for PAUL GILLMOR, and we used to meet together and talk about things together. PAUL GILLMOR was a unique person in that respect because there's always somebody out there that's got it in for somebody, but they didn't have it in for PAUL GILLMOR because he was what I would call a true gentleman.

We're SAEs and Ralph's an SAE, too, and PAUL went to Ohio Wesleyan, and I went to Ohio Wesleyan. We went there at the same time. But I would meet people when I got in the State senate, and they said, Do you know SKIP, SKIP GILLMOR? I said, No, I don't know SKIP GILLMOR. I know Senator GILLMOR, but he was SKIP GILLMOR to all the people at Ohio Wesleyan. And they loved him at Ohio Wesleyan, and they still do. One of the first calls I got today was from people at Ohio Wesleyan saying what do we do. I said I don't know.

We've lost a good friend. I hope Karen and the children can review the statements that have been made about PAUL today. It's something that is not said about a lot of people. He was a good man, he was a great man, and he was a great father to his children, which is the most important thing, and we're going to miss him.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute. I just want to say, too, that PAUL cared a lot about his staff. He was always a person that cared for others, and particularly his staff, and I want the members of his staff to know that we understand the great loss that they feel.

And I guess particularly when I left the Ohio senate, my staff person was inherited by PAUL, and we used to often talk about Celia Foraker, about Celia did this and Celia did that, because we both shared a great fondness for her. I know that PAUL felt that way about his staff here. It's a great loss to his staff to have a Member that had the caring concern that he did.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the people of Ohio have lost a dedicated public servant and genuine leader today with the passing of Congressman PAUL GILLMOR. As a colleague and friend in the House of Representatives, PAUL was a strong voice for the needs and interests of the people he represented as well as a model of integrity.

In addition to the almost 20 years he served as a Member of Congress and the two decades he spent in the Ohio State Senate, PAUL was also a veteran of the United States Air Force serving on active duty during Vietnam.

As a fellow member of the Republican Whip Team, I enjoyed sitting with PAUL at the weekly meetings where he always was perceptive and provided insight from his decades of legislative service.

Our thoughts and prayers are with PAUL's family during these difficult times.

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker I rise today to pay tribute to the life of Congressman PAUL GILLMOR and offer my sincere condolences to his family. My wife and I extend our sympathies to PAUL's wife Karen and their 5 children. I know that no words can provide comfort during this difficult time or shine light on this period of darkness, but please know that PAUL's family remains in my thoughts and prayers.

I had the pleasure to work closely with PAUL as a Member of both the Energy and Commerce Committee and Financial Services Committee for nearly 10 years. I got to see first-hand his passion for public service, his commitment to the people of Ohio and the earnest way in which he approached his job. He truly loved representing his community and making a positive difference in their lives and the lives of all Americans.

The 5th District of Ohio was well served with PAUL GILLMOR in office and he will be remembered dearly for his many years of public service.

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the late PAUL GILLMOR. PAUL was a gentle, compassionate man who will be missed by all of us in Congress, as well as by those in his district. Our hearts go out to Karen and his children during this difficult time.

I'm an Ohio native and before redistricting, PAUL represented my family members in Ohio.

His wife Karen served on the Heidelberg College Board of Trustees with me, and I

know all the Heidelberg family also mourns his passing. He was an ardent supporter of the college.

Please keep his family in your prayers.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in heartfelt sorrow to mourn the passing of the Honorable PAUL E. GILLMOR, a true friend and a wonderful statesman for the people of Ohio. I was greatly saddened when I was told the terrible news of his passing this morning. The House of Representatives has lost a hard-working leader who was a friend to many on both sides of the aisle in this chamber.

My heart goes out to his wife Karen, and their children Linda, Julie, Paul, Adam, and Connor during this difficult time. I will be keeping his memory, and his surviving family in my thoughts and prayers. I pray for his Washington, DC and Ohio Congressional staffers who have served him and the people of the 5th Congressional District of Ohio.

Congressman GILLMOR never forgot his roots and he was always a champion for the people who he represented in Congress. He won his first primary election for Congress by only 27 votes; the grit and determination that carried him to victory on that day never left him for the remainder of his service in Congress. When I first arrived to the House in 1997, I was instantly impressed with the plain-spoken gentleman from Ohio. He leaves behind a strong legacy of service to this House. I have lost a friend, and words cannot fully express my sorrow in his passing. God Bless.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise with our colleagues today to pay tribute to the lifetime of public service of our late colleague PAUL GILLMOR of Ohio.

I know this House today is in shock at the devastating news of PAUL's passing just last night. I join in expressing profound sympathy to PAUL's family—his wife Karen, 2 daughters Linda and Julie, and 3 sons, Paul Michael, and twins, Connor and Adam. Our thoughts and prayers are with them.

PAUL, who began his 10th term in the House in January, chose a noble life of serving his country. A graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University and the University of Michigan Law School, he attained the rank of captain while on active duty as an Air Force judge advocate during the Vietnam War. Before coming to Congress as the representative of the 5th District of Ohio, he diligently served the people of Ohio for 22 years in the Ohio Senate. As a state senator, he was unanimously elected Republican leader 5 times, and served as president of the Senate for 3 General Assemblies.

PAUL was a respected member of this House and friend to those on both sides of the aisle. He loved this institution and worked hard for the people of his district and for all Americans not only on national issues, but he also was unanimously elected in 2006 by representatives of the 26 NATO countries to serve as vice president of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, in remembering PAUL GILLMOR and his proud life of public service, I am reminded of the words of scripture in Matthew 25: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

This House and this Nation will miss the service of PAUL GILLMOR. God bless you, PAUL, and God's blessings on your family and many friends and constituents in Ohio.

Mr. WALSH of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my friend and colleague, the Honorable PAUL GILLMOR.

Throughout his life PAUL was a dedicated servant for the people of his home state of Ohio and his country. He proudly served in the United States Air Force, attaining the rank of Captain.

In 1967 PAUL began what would become a long and successful political career. He served 22 years in the Ohio State Senate, and he served as Republican leader 5 times. A classmate of mine, in 1989 he began the first of 10 terms in the U.S. House of Representatives serving the people of the 5th District in Ohio. PAUL was the senior member of the Committee on Financial Services and the Ranking Republican on the Financial Institutions Subcommittee. He also served as a member of the Subcommittees on Capital Markets and Housing. PAUL had a lot of responsibilities in serving the second largest district in Ohio, but he did so valiantly and with tremendous success, showing that he was a true leader. He served 8 terms as a member of the Republican Whip Team, including serving as Deputy Minority Whip. PAUL was also unanimously elected to serve as Vice President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. His ability to lead earned PAUL great respect amongst his colleagues and his constituents.

His length and success of service was evidence of how he truly listened to his constituents and did all that he could to help them. He was the consummate professional—always putting the best interests of his constituents and his country ahead of partisanship by being willing to work across party lines to successfully achieve goals.

PAUL was a soldier, a state senator, and a congressman, but the roles he cherished most were that of husband and father. Few things meant more to PAUL than his constituency, but his family definitely ranked number one in his life. PAUL's 5 children were his pride and joy. His happiest times were spent with his wife and children.

My deepest heartfelt condolences go out to PAUL's wife Karen and his children Linda, Julie, Paul Michael, Connor, and Adam. My thoughts and prayers and those of my wife Dede are with them at this difficult time, and we thank them for sharing PAUL with us for so many years. He was a wonderful friend and colleague and will be sorely missed.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my good friend, Representative PAUL GILLMOR. I learned of his sudden passing on Wednesday, and my wife and I are greatly saddened by this news. I offer my prayers of support to his wife Karen and their two daughters, Linda and Julie and their three sons, Paul Michael and twins Connor and Adam.

I take great pride in knowing such an honorable gentleman who humbly served his country and constituents. PAUL began his life of public service as a Judge Advocate in the Air Force during the Vietnam Conflict from 1965–1966. He continued his service as a State Senator for 22 years and was President of the Ohio Senate for 3 General Assemblies. Ever since he was first elected to Congress in 1988, he has honorably represented his constituents in the most ethical manner. He was reelected to each subsequent Congress by substantial margins, indicating the trust and confidence his constituents placed in him. He served them well and diligently.

Representative GILLMOR and I were both long-time congressional representatives to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. PAUL was particularly active in this organization and served several years as Chair of the important Economic Committee, and most recently has been serving as the Vice Chair of the entire Assembly. In all Assembly activities, Representative GILLMOR conscientiously and honorably represented the interests of the United States.

Above all, PAUL was a good friend, confidante, and advisor to me. He was a fountain of wisdom and sage advice, and I deeply appreciated his friendship and that of his wife Karen. My wife and I both enjoyed their company as we traveled together to NATO meetings to represent the U.S. Karen and PAUL were particularly proud of their children, and often told us about their development and prowess.

We will all miss PAUL, and express our condolences to Karen and the children. He made an important mark on the history of our Nation and the world. Our country is the better for his participation in the Congress and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

May God bless Karen, the children and all PAUL's relatives, and give them comfort and strength during this time of sorrow.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a great American and a member of this House. PAUL E. GILLMOR was a veteran, lawyer, businessman, and Member of Congress from Ohio.

Congressman GILLMOR, who died on Wednesday, September 5, 2007, was a respected member of this body and respected by all who knew him. He was actually a legislator's legislator. He was known often to put aside partisan politics and reach across the aisle to legislate in a bipartisan manner for the best interests of the American people.

In 1961 he received a bachelor of arts degree from Ohio Wesleyan University. Although he was a lifelong Buckeye, PAUL GILLMOR received a law degree from the University of Michigan Law School. From 1965 to 1996, he served his country in the U.S. Air Force as a judge advocate, attaining the rank of captain. He married Karen Lako, who also served in the Ohio Senate, in 1983. He had 5 children: Daughters Linda and Julie and sons Paul and twins Adam and Connor.

Before he came to Capitol Hill in 1988, he spent 22 years in the Ohio statehouse where he became the senate president for three terms. He got to know the people, because half of this work is getting to know the people. His presence will be greatly missed and we all mourn his loss and extend our sincerest condolences to his family and friends.

More interested in policy than in seeking the limelight, PAUL GILLMOR focused his time here in the House squarely on the needs of his constituents. On the Energy and Commerce Committee, he was deeply involved in consumer issues, including protecting consumers from unfair credit report practices. He also worked to preserve our history by supporting and improving sites honoring our Nation's Presidents.

PAUL GILLMOR was unanimously elected in 2006 by representatives of the 26 NATO countries to serve as Vice President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. As vice president of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Congressman GILLMOR was the highest ranking American in this highly esteemed international organization.

Most recently, Ohio has been plagued by scandals arising from predatory lending, and Representative GILLMOR was a leader in trying to help families and communities that had been subject to predatory lending, pulling together the Ohio delegation to identify ways we can impact our neighborhoods and support laws that could impact families that had been subject to predatory lending.

Mr. Speaker, a dear colleague has fallen but he will not be forgotten. We are all saddened by our loss but we are happy to have served with him. Our prayers and condolences go out to his widow Karen, his 5 children, and to thousands of his friends around the Nation. He touched so many lives during his career in politics, and he will truly be missed by me and the American people.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of our time.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests and join with my colleagues issuing condolences to the Gillmor family, and I yield back the balance of my time as well.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the resolution.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 632.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under clause 5(d) of rule XX, the Chair announces to the House that, in light of the passing of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. GILLMOR), the whole number of the House is 433.

□ 1645

COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF MEMBER OF THE HONORABLE JOHN T. DOOLITTLE, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ELLSWORTH) laid before the House the following communication from Alisha Perkins, Scheduler/Office Manager, Office of the Honorable JOHN T. DOOLITTLE, Member of Congress:

OFFICE OF JOHN T. DOOLITTLE,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, September 4, 2007.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: This is to formally notify you pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives that I have been served with a grand jury subpoena for testimony issued by the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

After consulting with my attorney, I will make the determinations required by Rule VIII.

Sincerely,

ALISHA PERKINS,
Scheduler/Office Manager.

HONORING PRIVATE FIRST CLASS OMAR E. TORRES

(Mr. LIPINSKI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to Private First Class Omar E. Torres, a courageous young soldier who died in Iraq on August 22.

Omar Torres grew up on Chicago's southwest side and played football at De La Salle High School. After graduating in 2005, Torres received a full ride scholarship to attend The Ohio State University.

During his freshman year at OSU, Torres followed his strong desire to serve his country and joined the U.S. Army Reserves. This decision led to his activation during his sophomore year, and in May of 2007, Torres was deployed to Iraq as part of the 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas.

Although his mission was hazardous, Private Torres bravely and honorably carried out his duties. Sadly on August 22, PFC Torres was killed by an IED while patrolling Baghdad. He was only 20 years old.

Aside from his military service to our Nation, Omar Torres was interested in politics and had a strong desire to work for positive change in our country. While attending his wake last month, I was moved by the large number of lives PFC Torres had touched.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in mourning the loss of Private First Class Omar E. Torres. We will never forget his sacrifice and are forever indebted to him, as well as to all our soldiers. Our thoughts, prayers and deepest sympathies are with the Torres family and friends in this difficult time.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

THE TIME IS NOW TO PLAN SAFE AND ORDERLY DEPARTURE FROM IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, there is a great deal of spin coming from the White House on why America needs to stay the course in Iraq, and why we must keep the surge going on and on and on, on how victory is near if we simply escalate the number of troops we have in this region of Iraq or another region of Iraq.

Enough, Mr. Speaker, enough. It seems the President hasn't read his own National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq. If he had, he would find a grim picture of the political and security reality in Iraq, one quite different from his own.

Let me read just a few conclusions from this August 23 report:

One, the level of overall violence, including attacks on and casualties among civilians, remains high; Iraq's sectarian groups remain unreconciled; al Qaeda in Iraq retains the ability to conduct high-profile attacks; and to date, Iraqi political leaders remain unable to govern effectively.

Two, population displacement resulting from sectarian violence continues, imposing burdens on provincial governments and some neighboring states and increasing the danger of destabilizing influences spreading across Iraq's borders over the next 6 to 12 months.

Three, broadly accepted political compromises required for sustained security, long-term political progress and economic development are unlikely to emerge unless there is a fundamental shift in the factors driving Iraqi political and security developments.

Mr. Speaker, just the first few pages of the NIE on Iraq should concern everyone. Also on the President's reading list should be the August 30 draft GAO report on Iraq, which also paints a very pessimistic picture of Iraq. It concludes that Iraq has failed to meet all but three of the 18 required benchmarks for political and military progress. Rather than embrace these nonpartisan findings, the White House has actually denounced the GAO report for holding Iraq to too high a set of standards.

Mr. Speaker, while the White House speaks of how violence has been reduced in Baghdad, it ignores how the number of Iraqi civilian deaths across the country rose by about 20 percent in July. This is not the time to paint rosy scenarios and declare victory is at hand if only Congress coughs up another $200 billion to cover the costs of the war over the next few months.

Mr. Speaker, the President and we in Congress must face the facts. We need a plan on how to leave Iraq in a safe and orderly manner in 2008. We need the President to meet with congressional leaders and map out a concrete plan for how to draw down our forces and leave Iraq over the next 9 to 12 months. It can be done, and it must be done.

We can redeploy troops to Kuwait in the surrounding region. We can safeguard the Kurdish north. We can redeploy troops to Afghanistan. And we can bring troops home to their families, friends and communities. We need the Pentagon to provide a realistic plan for withdrawal, one that is logistically sound and can be achieved over the next year.

President Bush, with great fanfare, recently invoked the Vietnam analogy to support our continued escalation in Iraq. If anything, Vietnam and Iraq prove that wars are a lot easier to get into than out of. If we want to avoid the haste, confusion and humiliation of our final departure from Vietnam, a withdrawal that occurred almost entirely without planning and hurt U.S. military prestige more than any other single action, then we must plan now for our departure from Iraq. If we fail to plan and control the safe and orderly withdrawal of our forces, then we will surely fail our troops once again, holding them hostage to events on the ground beyond their control.

The administration lacked a plan for what to do in Iraq the day after the fall of Saddam Hussein. We must not repeat that mistake when it comes to the welfare and the safety of our troops as they leave Iraq.

For far too long, Congress failed to live up to its responsibilities. We must not continue to send blank checks to the White House.

Mr. Speaker, this House should not consider the President's supplemental request until we come to an agreement with him on how to bring our troops home in a safe, orderly and timely way.

Let me be clear. This means we should not consider on the floor of this House any additional funding for this war until we have a plan to end it.

As The New York Times stated last Friday, "In Vietnam, like Iraq, American Presidents and military leaders went to great lengths to pretend that victory was at hand when nothing could be further from the truth."

We don't need more spin, Mr. Speaker. What we need is a plan to end the war in Iraq, and we need it now.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2786, NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSING ASSISTANCE AND SELF-DETERMINATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2007

Mr. McGOVERN, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-316) on the resolution (H. Res. 633) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2786) to reauthorize the programs for housing assistance for Native Americans, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

CALDERON'S COLONY

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, "Wherever there is a Mexican, there is Mexico. Mexico does not end at our borders." To the roar of a standing ovation, the arrogant saber-rattling words are from Mexico's President Calderon in his first state of the union message.

It seems clear to me that these aggressive words are a renewed call by Mexico to colonize the United States. Does El Presidente Calderon claim that the southwest United States is really part of Mexico since many illegals have colonized that area? Sounds like it to me.

Is Leader Calderon calling for a continued stealth invasion into the United States by its citizens? Sounds like it to me.

Does clever calculating Calderon want the United States to become a union with Mexico? Time will tell.

Meanwhile, I wonder if anyone in charge of protecting our homeland is aware of and disturbed by these indignant words. In the history of nations, it appears that when one country invades, colonizes, infiltrates or occupies another without permission, the invaded country either resists invasion at the border or just loses its existence. Time will tell what the United States will do.

And that's just the way it is.

ARMY SPECIALIST KAMISHA BLOCK—DAUGHTER OF TEXAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, small towns and rural America are historically notable and courageous for sending their young sons and daughters off to fight the wars of America. When volunteers are called for duty, it is these close, small communities that seem to always answer America's call to arms. When one of their number is killed in war, the entire community is emotionally affected.

In southeast Texas, the small town of Vidor has lost one of its daughters of democracy. Army Specialist Kamisha Block was killed in Baghdad August 16, 2007, in the hot war for Iraq.

Kamisha Block became the first female from southeast Texas to die in this war. She enlisted in 2005 at the age of 18 in the United States Army.

Mr. Speaker, Kamisha volunteered for the Army when this country was at war, and she probably expected to be sent to the desert of the gun and the valley of the sun. She joined the Army right out of high school. Specialist Block was a military police officer, and eventually wanted to be in law enforcement with a career in the FBI or the CIA.

She was assigned to the 401st Military Police Company, 720th Military Police Battalion and 89th Military Police Brigade out of Fort Hood, Texas.

Kamisha and her best friend, Amanda Buck, grew up together. As Amanda says, we rode the school bus together from kindergarten all the way up through high school. Amanda said Kamisha knew where she was headed in life, had a big heart and genuinely wanted to help people.

Specialist Block's death hit her family hard, and the whole community mourns for her. Her loss has not gone unnoticed. Let me explain.

Local newspapers, the Examiner and the Beaumont Enterprise, carried numerous front-page stories about Block and her life. In this small town of Vidor, Texas, almost every business had posted a message for Block and words of support for her family on signs and placards.

When Specialist Block was returned to Texas draped in the cloth of the red, white and blue, the funeral procession traveled through rural areas and small towns. The Patriot Guard led the procession with their 75 motorcycles, many carrying large American flags. Next were the numerous police vehicles from the nearby communities.

As the funeral proceeded, hundreds of teary-eyed people lined the streets of Beaumont, Texas and Vidor, Texas, removing their hats, placing their hands over their hearts, and waving American flags. Cars even pulled off the road and drivers stood out of their vehicles to pay honor and respect to this warrior. People came out of their homes and stood on their porches in honor of the dead.

According to a local paper, The Examiner, Jamie Reynolds, a friend and coworker of Block's at the Waffle House in Vidor, said, "It was so amazing. I had chills all up and down my arms. It was overwhelming."

Mr. Speaker, showing silent respect and tribute is what people do in southeast Texas when one of their kids is killed in war.

People who knew Block from the Waffle House said that she was always happy with her bright eyes and endearing smile as she served waffles, eggs, and grits and a happy spirit.

While Jerry and Jane Block, the parents of Kamisha, mourn the death and absence of their daughter, America owes them our gratitude and our patriotic appreciation.

Specialist Kamisha Block while serving in Korea and Iraq was awarded several commendations. She was awarded

the National Defense Service Medal, the Korean Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Good Conduct Medal, Operation Iraqi Freedom Service Ribbon, and the Bronze Star.

Here is a photograph of Kamisha Block, not yet 21 years of age. She died at the age of 20. It has been said "that how we yet live will echo throughout eternity."

Specialist Block showed in a mere 20 years the example of compassion, duty, determination, love of country, and love of God that will echo in her small town of Texas throughout eternity.

Rare breed these women warriors who go to war for the rest of us.

And that's just the way it is.

□ 1700

HONORING CORPORAL PHILLIP J. BRODNICK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to Corporal Phillip J. Brodnick, a courageous young soldier who died in Iraq on August 22, 2007. As we mourn his loss, we use this time to honor his life and express our gratitude for his dedicated service.

Phillip Brodnick was born in Mokena, Illinois, and lived in Burbank until he was 8. He then moved to Frankfurt, Illinois and graduated in 2000 from Lincoln-Way High School. After graduation, Brodnick's desire to serve his country led him to enlist in the Army, and he soon served a 2-year tour of duty in Kosovo before being discharged in 2002.

However, the country's need and Brodnick's desire to serve led him to re-enlist in the Army in 2005.

In August of 2006, Brodnick was deployed to Iraq as part of the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division based out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. His excellent service, leadership and ability were soon recognized, leading to a recent promotion to the rank of corporal.

Although initially scheduled to return home in June, Corporal Brodnick dutifully accepted a 4-month tour extension in Iraq. Tragically, on August 22, Corporal Brodnick and 13 other soldiers were killed when the Black Hawk helicopter they were on crashed. He was only 25 years old.

Aside from his military service to our Nation, Corporal Brodnick is remembered as patriotic and as a great friend and also as an animal lover who always looked out for his family. He aspired to one day follow in his father's footsteps and become a police officer.

While attending his wake last week, I was moved by the large number of lives that Corporal Brodnick had touched in his 25 short years. Today I ask my colleagues to join me in mourning the loss of Corporal Phillip J. Brodnick. We will never forget his sacrifice and are forever indebted to him, as well as all of our soldiers who have died for making the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Our thoughts, prayers and deepest sympathies are with Corporal Brodnick's family and friends in this difficult time.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, this House will soon be considering a reauthorization of No Child Left Behind. Now, when President Bush signed No Child Left Behind into law 5 years ago, the theory went that schools would raise their standards and strive to make improvements and that this would then eventually trickle down and assist all, even the underperforming students that needed the help the most. Now as we now reconsider this reauthorization of this bill, I submit that many of these changes brought on by this bill have had tremendous burdensome unintended consequences.

See, instead of giving local school districts the flexibility to develop their own curriculum, they are instead hampered by the NCLB's testing requirements and must tailor their classes now around these tests. Instead of schools setting their standards high in an aggressive drive towards excellence, we have seen just the opposite. In order to maintain their Federal funding, the States are now setting their standards low. In essence, it's a race to the bottom, if you will, as far as standards in this country. And instead of allowing our educators to focus on education, NCLB has instituted some absurd regulatory burdens on the States.

According to the GAO, 41 percent of the financial support and staffing of State education agencies was a product of Federal dollars and regulations. In other words, this means that the Federal Government was the cause of 41 percent of the administrative burden at the State level, despite the fact that the Federal Government only sends 7 percent of overall education funding in this country.

Also, according to the GAO, the testing requirements of NCLB alone will cost States around $1.9 billion between 2002 and 2008 and spend up towards 6.6 million hours to administer all the paperwork that comes with it as well.

Now, I recently held a town hall meeting on NCLB. Every person that came to that meeting, showed up, had something negative to say about the administrative burdens in NCLB. At one point during the meeting I asked how many people had contact and met with either their local principal or their local school board about some of these problems. Just about every hand in the room went up.

So then I said, Well, how many people here in the room went and talked to somebody down at the New Jersey capital, the New Jersey Department of Education? About half the people raised their hand.

I said finally, Well, how many people went to Washington and took the time out to go and visit somebody with the U.S. Department of Education? Only one person raised their hand.

You see, my point in this is, by instituting these requirements for NCLB in Washington, we are moving accountability for education farther and farther away from where it belongs: parents, students, educators at the local level.

In addition to this, the regulations NCLB places on schools often attempts to fix problems that really don't exist.

One of the schools in my district consistently was cited in publications as one of the top performing schools in the State, but it was placed, because of NCLB, on its watch list 2 years after NCLB was instituted. Now, notice, this was not an underperforming school. Every year nearly 100 percent of the kids graduated. Most went on to college. The average combined scores of SATs was 1100; 14 AP programs were offered at the school. This was a great school. But instead, NCLB found it underperforming. And because of this, now the teachers and administrators at this school have to turn their attention away from what they were doing, which was running an excellent school and now focus on the paperwork and the burdensome accountability requirements of NCLB. So less good education is coming about because of this.

Now, let me be clear. I share, along with all my colleagues from both sides of aisle in Congress here, the ultimate goal of providing a high quality education for every child in America. This year I introduced legislation that would allow a State then to opt out of the majority of the requirements of NCLB, but, at the same time, would allow that State to keep their education funding through a refundable tax credit.

My bill is H.R. 3177. I call it the LEARN Act. That stands for Local Education Authority Return Now. It gives the States the ability to opt out of NCLB and provides residents of those States a State tax credit equal to the amount of money that otherwise would have gone to Washington and then come back to their State for Federal funding. What it does is give control back to the States, allow them, the States, the parents, the school boards, the option to pursue local and State educational initiatives based on

what they know is best for their kids. It allows the States and local school districts to set their own standards, enforce their own penalties for failure, and establish their own goals for their teachers and their students. With my bill, education accountability is transferred from DC bureaucrats back to the people who know the schools and the students personally.

See, under my proposal, States that feel that the regulation of NCLB is both necessary and beneficial to continue on, well, they can stay in the system. If they need Washington bureaucrats in their State to tell them what to do, well, they can stay in NCLB.

However, if the State's residents feel that the responsibility for educating their children is best left in the hands of the State, then this legislation will empower them to do so and keep the funding in place that the States rely on.

ANNIVERSARY OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, next week we'll be celebrating the 6th anniversary of the terrible attacks that happened on September 11 in New York, here in the Washington area, the Pentagon and in Pennsylvania.

While we remember those that we lost, I hope that we also reflect on how our Nation, and especially this Congress, came together during the weeks and months that followed that terrible, terrible day.

Following 9/11, we, as Americans, demonstrated the best of all of us. Thousands volunteered to help with the rescue and recovery efforts on Ground Zero. Scores more donated money, gave blood, took time to help people that they didn't even know. Millions prayed for the families of those that lost loved ones. It was a remarkable time. People from all walks of life stood together with a renewed sense of purpose and compassion.

While we remember those we lost on this anniversary of September 11, let's also remember how we came together to help get America through perhaps the most difficult time in our history. Let's remember the firefighters, the police officers, the union workers who risked their lives to save others. Let's remember the families who lost loved ones on 9/11, who became advocates for commonsense laws down here in Washington that would prevent another tragedy from happening. These courageous men and women worked tirelessly so that other families wouldn't experience what they went through.

As each year passes, the needs of those affected by 9/11 change. We work with a number of families back on Long Island in my district, especially the children, that still need mental health care. We need to improve the health care for the recovery workers who put their lives on the line and are now suffering from illnesses. And local residents, it is still paramount in our minds to make sure that they stay healthy.

The long-term mental health of families and children who lost loved ones maintains its high importance. Most people will remember it as being post-traumatic syndrome. One never knows when those flashes of that day come back. Sometimes it takes years and years for the treatment to take hold.

The Fourth Congressional District, I want to salute such groups as the South Nassau Communities Hospital and the World Trade Center Family Center that have been working hard to address the mental health needs of the children affected by 9/11 and have made great progress in helping them cope with this horrible tragedy.

In my office, I have a painting that was done several years ago by a young child on how they saw the world. And through therapy, you can now see the paintings have improved with the sun shining, meaning the young child is getting on with their life. Their work is equally as important as the search and recovery efforts following the attacks, and I commend them for it.

On September 11, 2001, our hearts were broken, but our spirits grew stronger. On September 11, 2007, I can think of no better memorial to those we lost on 9/11 than making their children and grandchildren's world a better place.

Some will say time has passed and it's time to move on with their lives. I have worked with many of those 9/11 families, and they have moved on with their lives. But again, through every great tragedy one never knows when you'll break down and cry because you remember something.

Every American remembers September 11, the year 2001. Every American knows where they were that day. Every American came together to make sure that those that needed help would have it.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the American people for standing together. I thank those that lost their lives to save other lives and, hopefully, we will never forget those that made the great sacrifices who still need our help. September 11 will be in everybody's minds forever in history. Let us not, here in this Congress, forget those that have survived but still need our help to get them through the illnesses they are facing.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT RICCIARDI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute and honor to Robert Ricciardi, a New York City firefighter who's retiring today after many years of service to the city of New York and to the people of New York.

Robert is an exemplary model of what makes the Fire Department of New York the best Fire Department in the world. Like many other firefighters, Robert spent a great deal of his free time volunteering throughout his community on Staten Island. He was an active member of his church and spent much time coaching youth sports. As a matter of fact, I bet tonight Robert will be at the St. Claire's gym for youth basketball tryouts.

Robert has served New York City with distinction as one of New York's bravest. Over the course of his career he's helped save the lives of countless people, risking his own safety to protect others. Like his fellow firefighters and so many throughout the country, Robert rushed into burning buildings as others ran in the opposite direction with a singular mission, to save the lives of the people whose names he did not know, that he never met and might never see again. Robert understood that one of the most important contributions we can make is to help others in need. He's dedicated his life to this principle, and he leaves behind a great legacy of service.

Robert, like so many firefighters across Staten Island and the city also knew many who lost their lives on September 11, as the previous speaker just mentioned, and with that, he carries that with him throughout his life.

We also know that Staten Island and all of New York are better off because of Robert's dedication and decision to be one of New York City's bravest. His service will be clearly missed, but we are fortunate that Robert will continue to be a positive force in our local community. We wish Robert and his wife, Dorine, along with their four children, Robert, Christian, Nicole and Gregory, the best of luck in their future, wherever it may take them.

I'm honored to call Robert a friend, and I'm delighted to have this opportunity to say thank you for all that you've done for New York City.

Good luck, Robert. We wish you well.

□ 1715

THE NEW DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, today marks the eighth month since my colleagues and I were given

the privilege to enter this sacred institution to represent our respective districts across the country. The Democratic freshman class, one of the largest in recent history, also came at an historic time in changing control of both houses of Congress and leading America in a new direction.

Much has changed in eight months. Much has changed personally for each and every one of us. Eight months ago I stood in this very spot with my 2-month-old son, Gus, as we were sworn into this esteemed body. My 5-year-old was a kindergartner at the time.

Well, now, 8 months later, Gus is 10 months old, on the verge of walking; and that kindergartner is now an experienced first grader.

Much has changed for us professionally. I had the opportunity last week to go back and address the school where I taught. Many of us came to this institution from many different walks of life. We were teachers. We were newspapermen. We were law enforcement officers. We were physicians. We were farmers. We were many different things. But each and every one of us came to this institution with a very sacred duty: to change the direction that America was going; to listen to the American public; and to make sure that this institution was once again judged on effectiveness, not ideology. And this Congress has done just that.

This Congress has changed the priorities that have permeated Washington for the past 12 years. This new Congress has changed things from some of the most historic funding for veterans to the most sweeping ethics reform, described as some of the biggest changes since the Watergate era.

We have much to be proud of and much work yet to do. The Democratic freshman class was given an opportunity to change the course and to change the debate.

I had the opportunity to speak with some reporters asking what will the legacy be? What will this class have accomplished when all is said and done? And I think, in looking at this group of people and having the sense of pride that I have in serving with them, that the answer will not be known for many years. This class has thrown themselves into their work with such due diligence that I think the American people would be proud. We passed legislation not just on a Democratic agenda but on a bipartisan agenda.

We knew, each and every one of us that got here, that we did not come to this institution with an ideological mandate. We knew that the American people, when they were speaking last November, were not saying that they were enamored with just Democratic ideology. They were enamored with the speaking about changing the direction of the country, providing a new direction, providing ethics that actually work. Providing funding for our veterans, funding for our children, and taking this country in a new direction in the war on terror and what was happening in Iraq.

And I am proud to stand here today with my colleagues, and we are going to spend a little bit of time highlighting those achievements, and it is one that all American people should be proud of.

This Congress can do nothing with just one party. This Congress can do nothing with just ideology. When this Congress works together, things get done that would amaze the American people.

I, coming from Minnesota, have witnessed two of the biggest disasters that my State has ever witnessed. Back on August 1, the collapse of the I-35W bridge, to see a major interstate, eight-lane highway, crash into the Mississippi River. We lost seven people with a hundred injured. That tragedy and the response to it illustrates what can be the best in America.

Within 60 hours, the House of Representatives and the Senate had passed legislation to rebuild that bridge. It went to the President's desk within 72 hours, was passed, and the money is already flowing to the State of Minnesota to correct that.

Last week on August 19, we saw some of the most massive flooding in my district that had ever been witnessed, 17-plus inches of rain in a 24-hour period. We had seven deaths and thousands of homes washed out. The response was quick. It was bipartisan. It was professional. And it is one that the American people should expect, not hope for.

While the rains were still falling, I toured the area in the first few hours with the Republican Governor of Minnesota. The following day I toured with the Republican Senator and a Democratic Senator, and we held a news conference together with the Republican Governor. On Tuesday, President Bush was in Minnesota saying he would do everything he could to support us. On Wednesday, the Governor asked for a declaration, a disaster declaration, and on Thursday the President approved it. By the weekend FEMA was on the ground and people were rebuilding their lives.

That is what the American people should expect out of government: it is effectiveness; not its ideology; its bipartisanship, and it can be judged on what we do for the American public.

Those things have happened. They have happened across the board. They have happened in great numbers. And it is a message that I think the American people should be proud of.

As I said, much has changed. Much has changed for me personally. This is the first year I didn't start a school year teaching in a classroom. But I said many of those years, those 20 years in the classroom, taught me something about the next generation of Americans. They are optimistic. They believe that the best days are yet to come. They have a vision that can extend beyond the next election into the next generation. Our young people understand this. The American people understand this.

My colleagues are here not out of anything great that they personally did, but they are here and this change is happening because of the greatness of the American public. The American public and the system knew it needed to self-correct itself. It needed to bring change to this institution, and that change is happening.

So for the next few minutes, we are going to discuss some of those. I am privileged to be joined by my colleague from Kentucky, another one of the freshmen that came here that sprung up from this greatness of the American public and brought a message of change, of optimism, of prosperity that all of us can benefit from.

With that, I yield to my colleague from Kentucky (Mr. YARMUTH).

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Minnesota for yielding. And I want to join many of us in expressing my great empathy for him and the residents of his State who have gone through so much recently. And we all, I think, not only empathize but sympathize with what the people of Minnesota have had to go through, and I know we all stand ready to help in any way that we can.

But my colleague is right, Mr. Speaker. When we all came to this body last year right after being elected and we all met for our orientation and, as freshmen, we met for the first time and started comparing notes, it was clear that we all came with pretty similar mandates. We were sent by our people to change what was going on in this country. We were sent by the people of this country to deal with energy problems. We were sent by the people of this country to deal with a dysfunctional health care system. We were sent by the people of this country to deal with the income and wealth inequality that has put such a strain on the great working families of this country and has seen the wealthiest people in America have their wealth increased by leaps and bounds while, as the census report just mentioned last week, 95 percent of the people in this country have not seen their standard of living improve over the last 6 years.

We were sent by the people of this country to do something about the education system, to make sure it not only leaves no child behind but moves every child forward; that we work with the most gifted kids and we work with the kids posing the greatest challenge; that each one of them will have the best that our teachers have to offer and have the greatest support system that we can provide for them.

And foremost of all these things, the people of America sent us to Congress with one overriding thought, and that was to change direction in Iraq.

And it is very interesting because I know that the people on the other side, our colleagues in the Republican Party, want to try to spin our activities by saying, well, we haven't really accomplished very much. Well, I think every one of us knows how hard we have worked over the last 8 months to accomplish the mission that the people of the United States sent us here for.

We have dealt with minimum wage, increasing the minimum wage for the first time in 10 years. We have dealt with the energy situation. We tried to eliminate the great and unnecessary tax cuts that were given to the oil companies when they were making record profits. We dealt with health care, not just recently by trying to expand the Children's Health Insurance Program to cover 5 million more American children, but also in trying to save money and make the system more efficient by forcing the pharmaceutical companies to negotiate with Medicare in the Medicare part D program.

In every area of our jurisdiction, we have tried to respond to the demands of the American people. We have listened to them. We are dealing right now with the revision of No Child Left Behind. The changes we are making in that program stem directly from what we have heard from the American people. We are listening. We are acting. We are moving.

And so it is with not only a great deal of personal disgust but also with a sense of outrage that I listened to President Bush make a statement when he was halfway around the world in comparing this Congress, this body, with the Parliament in Iraq. And I know he likes to be cute and that is the way he is, but for him to stand halfway across the world before international cameras and international media and tout the fact that the Iraqi Parliament has passed 60 bills when, according to him, we haven't passed that many in this session of Congress to me is an outrage. It's not even factually correct. We have sent him 57 bills; he signed 55. We have passed several hundred bills in this House.

But the most important thing is look at what he has done. Look at the vetoes he has threatened, the vetoes he has actually made. He has already threatened to veto 10 out of 12 appropriations bills we passed in this body. After the committees in this body, both parties working hand in hand, have dealt with these issues and the budgeting for months and months and months, he says arbitrarily, they weren't my budgets, it wasn't what I asked for and, therefore, I'm going to veto them.

For him to criticize the United States Congress for not passing legislation is like the Vice President criticizing his lawyer friend for getting in the way when he shot him. I mean, if anyone is more responsible for retarding and obstructing the work of this body, it is the President of the United States and his party. And it happens day after day. It happens hour after hour. And the only reason it happens is because the Republican Party and the President of the United States have run out of initiatives. They have run out of ideas. They know the American people have rejected their agenda, and they are looking for a new direction, and they just simply don't want to see us succeed.

But that's not what we're here for. We're here to continue working. We're going to generate the type of grassroots support for what we've done. We know it's out there. We're listening to the people. They will be listening to what we're doing, and they will force this Republican Party and this President to move in our direction.

I am convinced that we are doing the right thing, that we are working, we are making progress for the American people. We will continue to do that under the great leadership we have in Speaker PELOSI and Majority Leader HOYER. And I know eventually the Republican Party will come to their senses and they will begin to realize that the American people want us to act to solve the very demanding, the very challenging problems that face this country. We are about that task. That's why we came here. That's what we will continue to do as long as we are here.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Kentucky. And he sums it up well. One of the things that the American public is most frustrated with is the idea of nothing happening or obstructionism. And I think some know that there is a difference between legislation and politics. But most people in America don't want to deal with the political side of it. They want to see the effectiveness.

And I should note 8 months ago on this day a couple of major changes were made that we were able to make. We have three branches of government, but the business that happened in this House for both sides of the aisle can be changed with rule changes. And on that first day we made some major rule changes that affect the American public, to understand that rhetoric is not good enough, that action is what is demanded.

The first thing that we did is we enacted PAYGO budgeting. No more blank checks. No more recklessly spending our children's rightful inheritance to this country by putting in fiscal policies that are short-term, feel-good tax breaks for very few Americans. PAYGO budgeting is exactly what the American people live by. It is how every middle-class American has to get by in their own life. And this House of Representatives finally put that in. By doing so, we will do something that the American people should expect to happen: We will balance the Federal budget by 2012.

□ 1730

But that's not good enough. We have a $9 trillion deficit. The idea that this Congress has been able to tell people you can have something for nothing, you can give tax cuts to the wealthiest and underfund programs, what's happened is this country is using the equity in our own country that belongs rightfully to our children and spending it now. Those days are over. PAYGO is a rule of this House and it will continue to be so as long as the Democratic Congress stays as it is.

The other major change was one that the American people simply don't understand. Many of us who came here didn't understand it, and many of us were incredibly frustrated by it, how this sacred institution, the most important, deliberative legislative body, democratic institution the world has ever seen has an image problem when it comes to ethics. Every single Member who walks through this door should be very, very cognizant of what this means to the American people.

So the ethics changes that were taken up 8 months ago, I think the American public would probably be hard-pressed to even believe that it didn't happen. The difference between 8 months ago and today is simply this: Lobbyists will no longer be able to provide one penny in food, not one penny in gifts, and not one penny in travel to any Member of this body. Now, that's a far sight from golf trips to Scotland and special interests that we had seen before. Those who think that the election of last November made no difference, look no further than K Street to understand the changes that happened here. Ethics changes have been sweeping.

Now, one of the things in standing here and talking about these things, I think there is a sense of frustration amongst many of us, the game seems to be coming from the other side of the aisle, is to delay and slow everything down and to drive the approval rating of this Congress as low as it can possibly go. None of us should be happy with the fact that when a Presidential approval rating is as low as this President's is and a congressional approval rating is as low as this body is right now, that's nothing to be proud of. And it's nothing to point one finger at each side of the aisle. What we're doing is we're undermining the basic tenet of this great democracy. And for those who think that this is someplace else, it's full of your neighbors, it's full of the people you work with, it's full of the teachers, the newspapermen, the law enforcement officers that you sent

here. It is incumbent upon this institution to get the ethics changes right.

So we have passed some of the most sweeping ethics changes. And soon, maybe by the end of today, we will see the President sign in more of that; tightening up of not only the bans on gifts, but also making sure that bundled contributions to campaigns are being shown, that we know who's giving money, that we understand who is trying to look at and who is trying to influence decisions that are made in this House.

Now, one of the things I would like to say is that, speaking of your own accomplishments, there is a saying in Minnesota, "Act and let others do the speaking for you." I want to quote a few things that have come out of newspapers basically over the last 30 days of all things that are happening here. We have a couple of things here. "Democrats who control Congress headed into a summer recess having passed several high-profile bills, raising the minimum wage, bolstering U.S. security, expanding children's health care. Their top priority, ending the Iraq war, remains frustratingly unfulfilled. But the Democrats who took over in January were able to go home last month for a month-long break having won more support in the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives for bringing combat troops home by next year than any time before, marking a significant turnaround from last year." Reuters of August 5 of this year.

"Some non-partisan observers agree, Democrats have reason to boast. Democrats have had a good run legislatively over the past few weeks, and that does help them going into the recess," said Larry Sabato, Director of the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia.

"Congressional Democrat majority made major strides towards implementing its domestic agenda before going home. It will face hurdles when lawmakers return at summer's end, President Bush being the main one. Farm bills, lobbying reform, energy, education, children's health insurance, all advanced in the final 10 days, establishing House Speaker NANCY PELOSI as a major legislative player." Wall Street Journal.

"Besides their success on increasing the minimum wage, ethics and lobbying, September 11 Commission recommendations, Democrats have moved forward with initiatives to expand health insurance for all of America's children through the SCHIP program, a shift in U.S. energy policy away from reliance on foreign fossil fuels. They have helped focus the war debate on the question of when, not if, U.S. forces will be pulling out." The Los Angeles Times.

"I have long been and continue to be an advocate of congressional oversight as a fundamental element of our system of government. I also have publicly expressed my belief that congressional debate on Iraq has been constructive, appropriate and necessary." That last one coming from Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates.

This Congress is making changes. This Congress is listening to the American public. This Congress is taking what it can control in its own hands, like rules, and strengthening them, making sure that ethics reform is a top priority, making sure that people can once again walk in this building, see this American flag, understand the history that's been written here, and trust the Members that have been here to do the duty of the American public. And in doing so, we have passed some of the most sweeping legislation.

The first one I want to talk a little bit about is veterans issues. Now, in serving on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, it's something that, of course, is very near and dear to my heart, something that I can't say that it's a personal sense of pride, but it's one of a personal sense of responsibility. The House historian notified me, after a week or two here in Congress, that as a retired command sergeant major in the Army National Guard, that I was the top ranking enlisted soldier to ever serve in Congress. Now, those Members familiar with the military understand that being an enlisted soldier brings a sense of responsibility of making sure troops are taken care of.

So to sit on the Veterans' Affairs Committee and watch the historic progress that has been made on veterans issues, I think it's interesting to keep a couple of facts in mind. In the 77-year history that we've had a Veterans Administration or the Veterans Affairs, in that 77-year history there has never been the infusion of resources given to that administration as we've seen in the last 8 months. There is a group of veteran service organizations led by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American Veterans, the Paralyzed American Veterans, the American Legion, that each and every year for the last 22 years have put together what they call the independent budget. And this independent budget does something very simple. It takes a look at the needs of all American veterans. It determines how many veterans are going to need services, whether it be veterans health care, reemployment, educational benefits, and the gamut of resources that we provide our veterans for the service they do this country. They take that number and then they figure out the real dollar cost of providing exactly those services, services that were promised, services that were guaranteed to our veterans when they signed up or were drafted to serve this Nation at times of peace and times of war. They take those two numbers and they put it in a budget and they send it to Congress. They say, you have X number of veterans at X number of cost; therefore, you should budget X number of dollars. And for the past 21 years, Congress has failed to meet that.

Congress has so blatantly understated the need that the current administration stated 3 years ago, when they made their budget, that their determination was that we would see fewer veterans and the cost of veterans health care would go down. Most of us will take the bet that the sun will not rise tomorrow before that would happen. And guess what? It did not happen. So we were left, 2 years ago, with a nearly $2 billion shortfall in taking care of our veterans. And the decision came then, who doesn't get care? Who do we turn away? And the answer was simply, turn away Priority 8 veterans. We will prioritize these veterans.

Now, Priority 8 veterans, to the American public, that may not seem like too much, but a Priority 8 veteran is this. It's someone in my district making $27,701 or more can be thrown off as a Priority 8. That can be a combat veteran. That can be a veteran of our conflicts, our current conflicts, Vietnam, or World War II, determined mostly on the economic scale, not the need, the accessibility, not what was promised to them, not what the right thing to do was. But lo and behold, you knock off several million veterans, and look, we had a balanced budget. That's not the way this Congress is going to deal with it. That is not the way this Congress is going to keep their responsibilities. And in this budget, we increased $3.6 million in veterans funding over the President's request.

When we passed that piece of legislation by, I believe, and I believe this is correct, I may be off by one or two, 409–2 was when this passed, and that piece of legislation was being threatened to be vetoed in that appropriations by this President. One of the 12 appropriations bills which, by the way, for the first time in a decade, all 12 were done on time, all were done by the August recess. That, in addition to passing nine earlier this year that were not done from last year's work.

So for any American who listens to the rhetoric, who listens to people talk about nothing being done, the question would be, can they back that up with fact? We can back it up with fact.

We've made some major changes on dealing with the current situation in Iraq and Afghanistan. The signature injuries of this war is the traumatic brain injuries and the concussive injuries caused by improvised explosive devices. They have become more sophisticated over time in the damage that they're doing.

The care our soldiers are receiving on the battlefield is second to none. It is the best care that has ever been given in the history of warfare on this planet. One of the problems with that is we

are sending soldiers home with horrible injuries, injuries that are going to be with them for a lifetime, that is going to take a lifetime of care. And what this Congress has done is we passed legislation introducing new research dollars, new research centers, five of them, to be placed around the country in conjunction with our VA hospitals that have our polytrauma centers, the ones that are dealing with these concussive injuries. And we're going to put the funding there, we're going to put the research there, and it's going to do something. It's going to provide care not only to the soldiers, but it's going to provide the necessary resources to the families that are going to have to adjust their entire lives to deal with the damage that has been done by these injuries. This is not something that these veterans and their families should feel lucky to have. It's not something that they should have to come here, even though that's exactly what happens, and lobby this Congress to do that. It's what is the morally right thing to do. It is also the best way to show future generations of our young people who want to serve this country, who want to defend this country, that if they do so, we will be there every step of the way.

What we're seeing coming out of this conflict is post-traumatic stress disorder and suicide prevention. We passed H.R. 327, Joshua Omvig Veterans Suicide Prevention Act. That is starting to get centers up and running. It's starting to do more identification. We are now screening every single soldier who returns from this conflict for traumatic brain injury and for post-traumatic stress disorder.

We are changing the way that we welcome our soldiers home. We are changing the way that we treat them and we screen them and we bring they and their families into the process of making them whole again.

We have the Rural Veterans Healthcare Improvement Act. One of the things we have a problem with, and this is one the American people should be incredibly frustrated with that I, as a veteran, was, our veterans who have to travel to VA centers to get health care are reimbursed at the 1978 rate of 11 cents a mile. And I have a veteran, a first sergeant no less, who saw combat duty in Korea. When he brought this up about a year ago to an official, he was simply told to get a more fuel-efficient automobile. Now, this Congress has found fit to reimburse itself at 48½ cents a mile. At some point, the American public should ask where is the hypocrisy in who we're treating and who should receive the benefit. But those have changed.

We also introduced legislation that changed the GI Bill. We have soldiers, in the units that I served with, in the 34th Division who served the longest tour of duty in the war of Iraq of any unit in the U.S. military, 22 months. These are the same soldiers that, 14 months previously, served a tour of duty in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, the war in Afghanistan. And the way the GI Bill is written, these soldiers have been gone for 4 years. Many of them signed up for a 6-year commitment. Their commitment is coming to an end, and at the same time, their benefits. They would have been able to use their GI Bill had they not been out fighting a war to defend America, had they not been doing what they were asked to do, and because of that they were losing their benefit. Previous Congresses took no action to correct that. This Congress did. That's taking care of our veterans. That's not only standing in front of them for photo opportunities, it's standing behind them.

I am proud to say this new Congress puts its money where its mouth is. It truly supports our veterans. It understands that it's bipartisan. And this is a great accomplishment.

At this point, I would like to yield a little time to my colleague from Kentucky to talk about a few more initiatives.

Mr. YARMUTH. I thank the gentleman.

I would like to follow up on something to which you alluded because I think it's really important. This Congress has not only taken on a lot of new initiatives and has tried to deal with substantial problems that face this country and our people, but it has also made up for a lot of lost ground and a lot of inactivity in prior Congresses. And we hate to sound partisan around here, and I know the American people don't want us to be partisan, they want us to work together, and I think we have tried to work together and to reach out, but the fact remains that over the last 6 years the Congress did not do a lot of the things that it was supposed to do. We've seen the impact in a lot of ways. We've seen the impact on our budget, where we have increased the Federal debt, the national debt by $3 trillion, 50 percent over the last 6 years. That's because the previous Congresses were not doing their fiscal accounting the right way.

We've seen time after time, program after program, you mentioned veterans. We also had situations with education. We've had situations with health care where basic research that we were supposed to be funding has been cut. A lot of human services have been cut or zeroed out in past budgets. So we've not only had to take new initiatives, but we've had to make up for a lot of lost ground and programs that have affected a lot of Americans adversely. So we've had a lot to do.

And another area we've had a lot to do, and this is, again, something you alluded to, my colleague from Minnesota has alluded to, is that we've had to finally provide the accountability for many of the operations of government which have basically gone unsupervised for the last 6 years. We've seen it time after time after time. We've seen it in the reconstruction effort in Iraq. We've seen it in cases of fraud and abuse in the Medicare and Medicaid situations. We've seen it in the enforcement of coal mine safety rules. We've seen it in environmental regulations. Across the entire spectrum of government we have seen time after time where problems in the operation of government have basically gone unsupervised and unaccounted for.

□ 1745

We have taken steps to do that. I hope that the American people all have the occasion, for instance, to read the new Rolling Stone where there is an article about all of the subcontracting, the private contracting in Iraq, and the billions and billions of dollars which have been lost or essentially stolen by fraudulent activities by contractors in no-bid contracts and in sweetheart contracts given to friends of the administration. Nobody was looking at these deals until this Congress decided to take action and look at them. And now we have tried to implement new contracting laws and new supervision so that the taxpayers' dollars are accounted for. This is what the Congress is supposed to do. This is what we're doing.

Again, it comes to me as an incredible affront for the President of the United States to stand halfway around the world and say to the world that this Congress is not doing what it should be doing and that it is not functioning as effectively as the most dysfunctional parliament in the world, which is the Iraqi Parliament. I can't imagine what the American people would say if Speaker PELOSI or my colleague from Minnesota, or any one of our Members went to Australia or went to Iraq and compared President Bush unfavorably to Mr. Maliki. There would be an outcry unheard like anything in this country. And yet the President does it in Australia and criticizes this Congress. I hope the American people respond with the same degree of outrage which I think they would, and probably justifiably, if we were out there comparing him to Prime Minister Maliki.

I would like to expand on that a little bit, just for the sake of having fun, since the President likes to be cute and have fun when he makes these statements. Since he was so interested in the Iraqi Parliament, let's talk about what the Iraqi Parliament has done with regard to some of the benchmarks that they were supposed to make progress on. We're going to get a report from General Petraeus in a few days. But the Government Accountability Office has already given us a report on

the progress of the Iraqi Parliament, the one that Mr. Bush seems to appreciate so much.

One of the benchmarks, enacting and implementing legislation on de-Baathification, nothing done. Laws were drafted, not passed. Enacting and implementing legislation to ensure the equitable distribution of hydrocarbon resources of the people of Iraq, none being considered by the Parliament. Enacting and implementing legislation on procedures to form semiautonomous regions, that one they did enact a law. Enacting and implementing legislation establishing an Independent High Electoral Commission, provincial elections law, provincial council authorities, and a date for provincial elections supporting laws, not enacted. Enacting and implementing legislation addressing amnesty, no law drafted. Enacting and implementing legislation establishing a strong militia disarmament program to ensure that such security forces are accountable only to the central government and loyal to the constitution of Iraq, no laws drafted. Nothing done.

So this is the great Iraqi Parliament that President Bush seems to appreciate when he is standing halfway across the world. The fact of the matter is, this Congress has acted. It has acted in so many areas that I am so proud to speak of and that my colleague has done such an excellent job of enumerating. But this Congress continues to work in education, in health care, in the environmental issues, and, yes, in Veterans Affairs, for the great heroes of our country to whom we made a critical promise when they decided to give their service. We had made a promise to them, and we haven't been keeping it. This Congress is going to make sure that we do keep it, even though prior Congresses and this administration is not.

So again, I am very proud of the record that this Congress has assembled over the last 8 months. I am, again, ashamed of the President of the United States for what he said in Australia. But I hope he will come back. I hope he will realize that his legacy is going to depend, to a certain extent, on how he reaches out to us and deals with us over the next 15 months.

The Constitution begins with article 1, which vests the legislative authority in this country in this body, not in him. Now, he doesn't seem to have read the Constitution. With 700 or so signing statements in which he said he is basically going to ignore what this Congress does with executive orders, vetoes, and virtually every other parliamentary procedure or technical procedure he can use to invalidate the work of this Congress, I think basically he has a lot to answer for, both to the American people and to us. The Constitution vests the legislative authority in this body. We are doing our job. We will continue to do our job.

I ask the President and the Republicans on the other side of the aisle and in the other body to recognize that this is our job. We are the ones mentioned by article 1. We are mentioned first in the establishment of this government, and I think we will continue to act first in the interests of the American people.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. The gentleman's point, one of the things that is very well taken is that the genius of our system lies in the system of checks and balances, the oversight that should have been provided. Now, those of us who were expressing grave misgivings about the President's plan to basically simply trust him that he had a plan for Iraq, to trust him that he had a plan on this, and any of us who spoke out and said, the responsibility for enacting foreign policy lies between the Congress and the President, carrying out the military side of it will always be done with great professionalism.

But as we ask the questions, what is the step beyond the military? What is the step for political gain in Iraq? What is the bigger picture, the geopolitical picture, of the Middle East? When we started asking those questions for 3 years prior to this Congress coming, we were told we were unpatriotic, that we were somehow undermining the troops. Forget that we funded them in terms of the VA and everything else at a historic level once we got here. We were told that. This oversight and this ability to check the executive branch is exactly what the American people are looking at.

I stress it and say it again. I do not believe that the American public were enamored strictly with Democratic ideology. But I can tell you what they were disgusted with; the belief of the sense of righteousness that was coming that there could be no room for debate, there was no room to compromise, there was no room to listen to the experts, and there was no reason to back off and say, "Perhaps we were wrong." That's what we heard. That's what we heard for 6 years from this administration. That's what we heard with a Congress that provided this President no reason to veto. None. Zero. Why should he? They were writing the legislation. The President has been using the word "veto" in almost every sentence since we came here. That tells me the system is working beautifully. That tells me that the system is providing those checks and balances.

In this idea of oversight, there are a couple of important pieces of legislation that I would like to bring up and then talk about how bills are now being written here, how laws are being enacted, and how the rhetoric that gets to the American people is all based on spin and politics. It is not based on reality.

The first of these is the Rail Safety Act. We had a sense in this country over time, and it was fought for by our grandparents and by our great-grandparents, it was fought for by every generation, to provide safe working conditions for our workers, to provide child labor laws, to provide good, safe ability of our people to make a living and return home to their families at the end of a hard day. The Rail Safety Act was to be authorized by Congress to oversee the operations of our railroads. Well, for the last 12 years, Congress has basically said, "We should just let the rail industry determine their own safety". That is pretty much how we did it with airlines prior to September 11. "They'll provide it." No thought that maybe the purpose of business is to provide returns to their investors. No thought that maybe they would try and save a little money by cutting off safety at the expense of what might happen. So for 12 years, we have sat around and we have done nothing to reenact the Rail Safety Act.

This year we have already held three hearings. There will be a reauthorization of this. I have sat in those hearings in the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and watched rail workers come up and talk about how many long hours they are being forced to work, how their grievance process is held up and never listened to, how we are simply running on borrowed time before we are going to see a major accident, and how we have seen the data that has shown we are no safer. I have listened to people from the railroads testify in front of our committee and tell me how safe it was and how the numbers are comparable to previous years. And I have to note, "but your numbers only went to October of last year. We had 3 more months that you didn't include."

"Oh, yeah, sorry about that."

That's the type of thing that went on. The American public doesn't expect us to take one side or another. They expect us to stand here, look at data, be fair, work with our colleagues across the aisle, hold firm to our convictions, disagree on issues, but do it agreeably, and come to a consensus that works. Don't try to figure out what the talking point is. Don't try and figure out how you can make the other side look bad. I spend a lot of time down here watching how much time goes in watching my colleagues make sure they say "Democrat" instead of "Democratic." If it weren't so sad, it would be funny. But the problem is that's one small area that is a much bigger problem, that it's about the message, not about the effectiveness.

The second one I want to talk about is a very important one. Maybe many Americans don't know about it, but we have been waiting 8 years to get a reauthorization of the Water Resources Development Act, the WRDA bill. The WRDA bill deals with everything from transportation, clean water, everything in this country dealing with how

we work with one of our most precious natural resources, our lakes and rivers. In my State of Minnesota, one of the most important assets economically, environmentally and culturally is the Mississippi River. It is something that is so inherently ingrained in who we are as Americans and those States that are on that river that how we treat it and how we deal with it is critically important. Well, the locks and dams that make Minnesota a major shipper of our grain in the breadbasket of America are over 70 years old. They're in decay. We need to invest in the upkeep of these. That can only be done, the locks and dams on the upper Mississippi, through the Water Resources Development Act. We need to pass that. We need to move it forward so that our economic vision will extend to our children.

For 8 years, nothing was done. Nothing was invested in. And now, today, taking it one step further, I sat in a hearing in the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee dealing with the state of the bridges in our country. Now, it's obviously very timely. It has obviously been driven by the catastrophic and horrific collapse of the I–35W bridge in Minnesota. But when you see a map highlighting the thousands of structurally deficient bridges across this country, and I watch the administration's representatives say, "We've got plenty of money to take care of this. We don't need to find a new revenue source," the aversion to speaking together and taking something off the table before we've had a chance to debate it is absolutely something the American people will no longer tolerate. This Congress has said, "We need to figure out how to get these bridges funded." If it is through a Federal gas tax, then let's talk about it. And if it is through public-private partnerships, let's talk about them. If it is through reprioritizing how we use the resources we have, let's talk about them.

But we don't get that. What we get is slogans and radio ads talking about Democrats want to tax. Democrats don't want to tax. Democrats just want a country that works. This new Congress wants to have that discussion. We have sat here and watched bill after bill after bill go through subcommittees, committees, the full House, and minutes before we are to vote on it, the other side brings up a motion to recommit, which means a new piece of legislation. Most of the time, I have already got it down pretty well, is this one immigration or is this one felons? Which one are they going to bring up? They bring these up so they can go to the American people and tell them, "They didn't vote against giving benefits to illegal immigrants." Well, one of the reasons we didn't do that was because they're not telling you the whole story. First is, it's already illegal and it doesn't happen. Secondly, the little part of the line that they don't say is, it would totally gut the funding of the piece of legislation we put out there.

That type of politics has the American public frustrated beyond all belief. Those two pieces of legislation, Rail Safety Act and the WRDA bill, should be absolutely nonpartisan. They should have maybe some philosophical differences on how you administer that or possibly how you pay for it. But here was the solution we had: "Let's not regulate it. Let's not provide oversight. Let's let the corporations themselves do so. That's the best way to do that."

Well, the American public has rejected that. The American public has said, no. The American public says, We're not against regulation. We're against excessive regulation.

□ 1800

We are against regulation that doesn't make sense in terms of safety and the ability of our railroads to profit. But somehow because we are asking for these pieces of legislation to go through, that we are not supportive of economic growth, is ludicrous, especially on the WRDA bill.

Everybody agrees that the WRDA bill will be a major economic driver. It will put billions of dollars into the economy in terms of rebuilding and rehabilitating the locks and dams and other resources, as well as speeding up the transportation time. The Mississippi River has such a bottleneck near St. Louis that we can barely move cargo through that. We have an aging infrastructure, bridges that are unsafe, roads that are clogged.

The solution from the administration, they are talking about congestion pricing. That means we will charge a higher toll on roads that are busy in order to force people off them. I guess they assume that some of us are just driving around in the mornings, not taking our kids to school, not going to work; that we just like driving and clogging the roads. So the best thing is those of us who can't afford us, get us off the roads so those lanes will be nice and wide open for the people who can afford to pay to go down them.

The American public said that is not a solution. Get something else and debate it. That is what we are trying to do.

Now I would like to take a minute to explain to you how I believe and what I have seen and what I was hoping when I left that high school classroom, when I came to this building, when I came to this sacred floor, how I was hoping legislation would work. I live in southern Minnesota. It is one of the most productive agricultural lands in the Nation; in the world, I should say.

The county I live in is called Blue Earth County. People on the prairie are pretty literal. When they call towns Plainview, that is because that is what you see. When they called that county Blue Earth, that is because the soil there is so black and so rich that when the sun shines on it on the summer days, it literally looks blue. This is land that can produce 200 bushels an acre of corn. This is land that feeds the world.

The farm bill is an important piece of legislation to that district but also across the country. The farm bill is a big piece of legislation that has historically been very, very bipartisan. That is because 66 or so percent of the farm bill deals with nutrition programs; how we feed our children in schools, how we feed our seniors, how we feed those who are not fortunate enough or need to use food stamps or other programs. That is 66 percent of it.

About 12 percent deals with the safety net that keeps our farmers in business, that provides this country the cheapest, most abundant, safest form of food at the least expensive disposable income of any nation in the world. That farm bill does that. It also provides things like rural development. It also provides conservation measures.

Well, here is how the farm bill was written. When I got here to Congress and was placed on that committee, we were given the instructions by the chairman of that committee in January to spend the next 2 months going out and listening to everybody, holding sessions, holding hearings, soliciting information, doing whatever you could to let people start writing that farm bill, because here was the directive. The farm bill would be written by the people through the subcommittee, to the full committee, to the House of Representatives, and then we would get a piece of legislation that we could be truly proud of.

So we did it. I went out and held 14 listening sessions throughout my district. It varied in attendance from maybe 50 to 150 people. It varied from teachers to social workers, of course farmers, agribusiness people. And as they came there, they came with a lifetime of ideas. They came with a vision of what agriculture should look like in America, and they wanted to be part of the process.

So they came and told me this: Congressman WALZ, the average farmer in the first district is 58 years old. We are getting old and our children are leaving. It is very difficult to get into farming.

So groups as diverse as the American Farm Bureau and the Land Stewardship Project and the Farmer's Union got together, and each of them had proposed different ideas on beginning farmer and rancher legislation. Their members came to these meetings and explained the need for this.

We, myself, my staff, the ag committee staff, got together and helped write legislation. That legislation was taken into and offered up in the subcommittees as amendments to the

farm bill. My colleagues on both sides of the aisle debated both for and against this piece of legislation and offered secondary amendments to change it, which we debated, accepted some, rejected some. When we were done, we had a piece of legislation that was heralded by most farm groups as a major step forward in making agriculture accessible to future generations.

That piece of legislation got added in. It was not written by special interest; it was written by people who care about this. Did special interest have their say? Of course they did. Our job was to sort that out.

Well, that piece of legislation in the farm bill happened in all the subcommittees, and that piece of legislation was debated in the full committee and that piece of legislation passed out of the full committee and came to the House floor. My colleagues on both sides of the aisle, I can guarantee you this, many of them, especially those in farm country, said this is a good piece of legislation.

Bipartisan groups, groups that were on the spectrum of politics about as far apart as you could get from one another, from environmental groups to production ag groups, were saying: You know what, I think they got it right. And then as we brought it to the floor, one of the things that we had to do was figure out how this thing is going to be paid through the whole process. Because commodity processes have been high in past years, we did not pay about $60 billion in subsidy payments, whether it be direct payments, contracyclical payments.

So what happened was when we budgeted under PAYGO, our budget for this year's farm bill was $60 billion less. So when we got to the end it became apparent, because Democrats wanted do make sure we did something as simple as this, we let the Food Stamp Program, senior feeding programs and some of our nutrition programs that had been underfunded for years, we wanted to do something as simple as boost them up to a level that people could get the caloric intake they needed to have a healthy diet, and then we wanted to peg it to inflation to make sure that what we put in the bill this year isn't eaten up by inflation next year. Doing any budgeting without considering inflation, to me, seems disingenuous.

So we did that. The way we came up paying for it was a suggestion given to us by President Bush and his budget director. They had identified several years ago approximately $7½ billion in uncollected taxes from companies, in the President's own words, that were inappropriately using the U.S. Tax Code to shift their tax burden by shifting profits to offshore entities, mainly in the Caribbean, Bermuda being the one, meaning foreign corporations doing business in America, making a profit here, shifting that profit to Bermuda and reporting zero in tax liability.

The President said it was inappropriate, as did his budget director. We agreed with him. We closed that loophole, asking them to do the thing that is most American of all, pay your fair share and take that money, put it in to enhance our nutrition programs.

Well, that was unacceptable because now that is considered a tax. That was the rhetoric that was coming. So now a decision has to be made. Are the American public, when they listen to this farm bill that needs to pass, and, by the way, we told them in January that we would have it done by the end of July, and there wasn't a single person that thought that was possible. Well, it was done. It was done by the end of July. We took it home.

I went to Farmfest, Redwood Falls, Minnesota to wide acclaim for this piece of legislation. It is not perfect. Nothing here is. It is a compromise. But it is a good one. It is good for rural America. It is good for our nutrition programs. It is good for our economy.

Well, that thing is now under a veto threat by the President. So the President has a decision. He can stand in front of the American public and say "I am going to veto a really nice piece of legislation that was worked on from the grassroots level," exactly how you would hope the American democratic system works, "and I am going to veto that because I believe that those foreign corporations have the right to avoid paying their taxes," or he can tell the American public, "You know what? This was worked on bipartisanly, this was done correctly, and we should vote together on this."

We should tell the American public, this isn't about politics. This isn't about trying to get a campaign ad that says the Democrats are trying to raise taxes. This is about doing the right thing that we can all take credit for. That needs to happen. Now I would say the ball is in the President's court. The ball is in his court when it comes from the Senate to do exactly that. This Congress will continue to do that.

The last thing I would like to talk a little bit about is this new direction. One of the things that I think Democrats are rightfully proud of, it is the first piece of legislation many of us got to cosponsor, that was the small business tax relief and the raising of the minimum wage.

This piece of legislation, we know it has been over a decade since we saw a raising of the minimum wage. Some of my colleagues say, what's the big deal? I have got many names and many stories I could tell them why it is a big deal to raise the minimum wage, why the 3 million children living in families with parents with minimum wage, it is probably a pretty big deal to them.

But part of the story is focusing on the small business tax relief. The rhetoric that will come out is always one or the other, either/or, the false dichotomies. "Well, Democrats are for raising the minimum wage, but they are not for helping business." Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, we passed this and it was signed into law.

Here are a couple things that it did, just to let you know. It was endorsed, by the way, by the Chamber of Commerce and the National Federation of Independent Businesses. I don't hear my colleagues on the other side talking a whole lot about this. I think they should. It would be a good one for them to talk to their constituents about.

It extends a tax provision that lets small business owners write off more equipment each year for use in their trade or business, understanding that small businesses have a need for the infusion of capital purchases and things that they need to get started with their business, making sure they are able to write those off. Absolutely appropriate, absolutely the right use of the Tax Code, and absolutely a sense of investment in the future.

If we give these tax cuts, and some of them are pretty substantive, about $4.84 billion total, it ensures married couples who jointly own a small business both receive credit for paying Social Security and medicare taxes.

I am at a loss to understand why over the last 12 years of Republican control that was never fixed. This is a pretty important fix, and it is one that small businesses understand is important. It includes enhanced tip credit to ensure employers don't lose current tax benefits when the minimum wage goes up; S Corp provisions to keep tax benefits of being a small business even as they grow and expand; and extends the Work Opportunity Tax Credit through August of 2011.

These are things that are going to impact positively on small businesses. Seventy percent of our jobs are created in small businesses, employers with 50 or less employees. Those are the things that we have taken to do.

So those who would say nothing positive is being done, this Congress is not moving anything forward, would be remiss to look at the facts, what the facts have been. The most significant increase in veterans care that we have seen in the 77-year history, probably I think it is safe to say in this Nation's history; an ending of a 10-year period without a raise to the minimum wage for millions of American workers; a small business tax package that is going to enhance their ability to compete in the world; an ethics reform package that independently has been hailed as one of the most significant since Watergate, to bring back the dignity, to bring back the trust of the American people in this institution.

You heard some of the things about energy, focusing on energy independence. We have got a farm bill that is

going to be one of the best we have seen. And when the President decides he is going to choose our farmers over foreign companies that avoid paying taxes, we are going to get a great farm bill.

We have got a Water Resources Development Act that is going to enhance our ability to compete in the world while adding billions of dollars in investments to our infrastructure.

We are going to clean up the Rail Safety Act. We have seen packages to education to make college more affordable, the most significant increase to Pell Grants. We have cleaned up what has been an absolute debacle in private lending, moving away from government-subsidized, low-interest loans to get our children through college by saying, gee, we have this vast pool of American kids who need to go to college to compete. Why shouldn't we profit from that? Why shouldn't we let private lenders make a whole bunch of money of them? That would be a good thing to do.

Now, that is quite a difference from what she said when I went to school, when future generations invested in me and said we are going to keep college as affordable as possible. We are going to make sure we use grants as much as we can, and we are going to make sure that the GI Bill can be used by these young people who are willing to sign up and they are able to get their education. That was wisdom. That was vision. That was nonpartisan.

Many of those accomplishments can be attributed to ideas coming from the Republican side of the aisle. Unfortunately, for the last few years, that hasn't been the case. But we have got a new direction. We have got a new optimism.

As I started speaking today, I talked about the changes each one of us have seen. We have been here for 8 months. In my home State of Minnesota, I am happy to tell you that I think I have witnessed change that all us want to know.

On August 19, as we talked a little bit about it, my district saw some the worst flooding that they have ever seen; 17 inches of rain in a 24-hour period. We had entire towns wiped out, towns of 2,500 to 3,000 people. I went into that town riding on a boat as people were leaving their second story windows as people were picking them up. We have seen catastrophic displacement of large numbers of people.

As I said, on Sunday, the rains were falling, and I was there with a Republican Governor. On Monday, a Republican Senator and a Democratic Senator, a Republican Governor and a Democratic Congressman toured together and promised to do everything that was possible. On Tuesday, a Republican President was in Minnesota pledging to the help of the U.S. Government. On Wednesday, a Republican Governor requested that help. And on Thursday, the administration delivered on that. By Sunday, FEMA was in the district caring for our people, taking care of the needs, and showing that, you know what? When we work together, there is nothing this Nation can't accomplish.

I am proud to be a member of this new class. It has been 8 months of change. The new direction we are going in is one that the American public wants.

□ 1815

SITUATION IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIRES). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the tone and the statement of our colleague who just completed his hour and was talking about what our country can do when we pull together. Over the next hour, I believe that several Members of the Republican Conference here in the House of Representatives will come down and share their perspectives gained, many of them from physically going to Iraq or Afghanistan, or both, during the recent August district work period when Members were back in their district and allowed to travel to give firsthand accounts of what they learned and their meetings with General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker and others, and a real up-to-date report on the situation in Iraq.

But I do agree with the gentleman in his closing comments that we must as a Nation take ownership again of certain things not even in a bipartisan way but in a nonpartisan way because these are America's problems. They are not Republican or Democratic problems. And frankly, as much as some people would like to say it or believe it or use it for political purposes, this is not President Bush's war; this is America's fight. President Bush and Vice President CHENEY will be gone in just a little over a year. The problems will not go away. The threats will still be here. The challenges of this generation to answer our patriotic call to this Nation, to answer our responsibility in sacrifice and service will continue, I believe, for some time.

I did not go to Iraq in August, but my nephew did. Specialist Jeffrey Watts is now serving his country as a soldier in Iraq for the next 15 months as part of the 1–181st Field Artillery Brigade. I heard the gentleman from Minnesota talk about the deployments. What I was fascinated by when I was with the 1–181st earlier this summer as they shipped out to Fort Bliss to train to go to Iraq, is how many members of the 1–181st, and this is a National Guard unit, also deployed with the 278th from our Tennessee National Guard a year and a half ago and came back and redeployed with the 1–181st. They didn't have to but did; and how many vice versa went before, many of them because they are volunteering to serve their country in harm's way. In harm's way, big harm's way, because they love the opportunity to serve their country. They are incredibly selfless patriots of the highest order, and I do think this House comes together in praise of these valiant Americans who understand that freedom is not free and that somebody has to stand between a real threat and our civilian population, and that is what they are doing.

General Petraeus will be here next Monday with Ambassador Crocker to give us an update. Everybody is anticipating that, and you have this review and that review and these stats and those stats. And even the Government Accountability Office is heavily involved, as if they somehow supervise the Pentagon. But I think it is important for us all to prepare to listen objectively next Monday because I think you are hearing in a bipartisan way, Members like the gentleman from Washington State from the Democratic side who recently came back and clearly said much progress has been made. This Petraeus plan is working.

The guy who understands this insurgency threat more than anyone in our military and therefore anyone in the world is leading a new approach in Iraq. And the report will come beginning next week. And if we are objective, I think we will support his recommendations. If we are not objective and we have a political bias or an agenda, we may reject it.

Some of his words in anticipation of next week are already out. He talks about the extraordinary progress in the Anbar Province. General Petraeus says that was the result not of military actions certainly alone, it was the result of really a political shift where the population, led by the sheikhs of major tribes, decided to reject al Qaeda and its Taliban-like ideological behavior and the extremist behavior that they have come to associate with it.

He said: "That is what brought the level of violence down so dramatically, because al Qaeda no longer finds a hospitable place in the Euphrates River valley the way it certainly did in the past. We have been banging away at al Qaeda for years, but until we could hold them off with the help of the local population and local volunteers, those operations were never as meaningful as they have been in recent months. That is what we are trying to do in other locations in Iraq. That has also led to a rise in the detainee population over the last 6 months as more al Qaeda operatives have been caught. And while there is always a concern that they will gain strength, the pool of potential

recruits has actually shrunk. Their sanctuaries have shrunk considerably so they don't have the ease of locations and movements where they are safe the way they were before. Clearly there is real progress being made. War is an ugly thing. It is always an ugly thing. It is not perfect, but great progress is being made."

Now, I am going to take the time before I introduce the gentlelady from Virginia and others that will come to read an opinion from a German journalist about Iraq that was in the Wall Street Journal last Monday and then submit it for the RECORD. Josef Joffee. He says:

"In contrast to President Bush's dark comparison between Iraq and the bloody aftermath of the Vietnam War last week, there is another, comforting version of the Vietnam analogy that gained currency among policymakers and pundits. It goes something like this:

"After that last helicopter took off from the U.S. Embassy in Saigon 32 years ago, the nasty strategic consequences then predicted did not in fact materialize. The 'dominoes' did not fall. The Russians and Chinese did not take over, and America remained number one in Southeast Asia and in the world.

"But alas, cut-and-run from Iraq will not have the same serendipitous aftermath, because Iraq is not at all like Vietnam.

"Unlike Iraq, Vietnam was a peripheral arena of the Cold War. Strategic resources like oil were not at stake and neither were bases. In the global hierarchy of power, Vietnam was a pawn, not a pillar, and the decisive battle lines at the time were drawn in Europe, not in Southeast Asia.

"The Middle East, by contrast, was always the 'elephant path of history' as Israel's fabled defense minister, Moshe Dayan, put it. Legions of conquerors have marched up and down the Levant, and from Alexander's Macedonia all of the way to India. Other prominent visitors were Julius Caesar, Napoleon and the German Wehrmact.

"This is not just ancient history. Today, the great Middle East is a caldron even Macbeth's witches would be terrified to touch. The world's worst political and religious pathologies, combined with oil and gas, terrorism and nuclear ambitions.

"In short, unlike yesterday's Vietnam, the greater Middle East is the central strategic arena of the 21st century, as Europe was in the 20th century. This is where three continents—Europe, Asia and Africa—are joined. So let's take a moment to think about what would happen once that last Black Hawk took off from the Baghdad International Airport.

"Here is a short list. Iran advances to No. 1, completing its nuclear arms program undeterred and unhindered. America's cowed Sunni allies—Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the oil-rich Gulfies—are drawn into the Khomeinist orbit.

"You might ask: Wouldn't they converge into a mighty anti-Tehran alliance instead? Think again. The local players have never managed to establish a regional balance of power; it was always outsiders—first Britain, then the U.S.—who chastened the malfeasants and blocked anti-Western intruders like Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia.

"With the U.S. gone from Iraq, emboldened jihadi forces shift to Afghanistan and turn it again into a bastion of Terror International. Syria reclaims Lebanon, which it has always labeled as a part of 'Great Syria.' Hezbollah and Hamas, both funded and equipped by Tehran, resume their war against Israel. Russia, excluded from the Middle East by adroit Kissingerian diplomacy in the 1970s, rebuilds its anti-Western alliances. In Iraq, the war escalates, unleashing even more torrents of refugees and provoking outside intervention, if not partition.

"Now, let's look beyond the region. The Europeans will be the first to revise their romantic notions of multipolarity, or world governance by committee. For worse than an overbearing, in-your-face America is a weakened and demoralized one. Shall Vladimir Putin's Russia acquire a controlling stake? This ruthlessly revisionist power wants revenge for its post-Gorbachev humiliation, not responsibility.

"China with its fabulous riches? The Middle Kingdom is still happily counting its currency surpluses as it pretties up for the Olympics, but watch its next play if the U.S. quits the highest stakes game in Iraq. The message from Beijing might well read: 'Move over America, the Western Pacific, as you call it, is our lake.'

"Europe? It is wealthy, populous and well-ordered. But strategic players, those 27 member-states of the E.U. are not. They cannot pacify the Middle East, stop the Iranian bomb, or keep Mr. Putin from wielding gas pipelines as tools of 'persuasion.' When the Europeans did wade into the fray, as in the Balkan wars of the 1990s, they let the U.S. Air Force go first.

"Now the upside. The U.S. may have spent piles of chips foolishly, but it is still the richest player at the global gaming table. In the Bush years, the U.S. may have squandered tons of political capital, but then the rest of the world is not exactly making up for the shortfall.

"Nor has the U.S. become a 'dispensable nation.' That is the most remarkable truth in these trying times. Its enemies from al Qaeda to Iran—and its rivals from Russia to China—can disrupt and defy, but they cannot build and lead.

"For all the damage to Washington's reputation, nothing of great import can be achieved without, let alone against, the United States. Can Moscow and Beijing bring peace to Palestine? Or mend a global financial system battered by the subprime crisis? Where are the central banks of Russia and China?

"The Bush presidency will soon be on the way out, but America is not. This truth has recently begun to sink in among the major Democratic contenders. Listen to Hillary Clinton who would leave 'residual forces' to fight terrorism. Or to Barack Obama, who would stay in Iraq with an as-yet-unspecified force. Even the most leftist of them all, John Edwards, would keep troops around to stop genocide in Iraq or to prevent violence from spilling over into the neighborhood. And no wonder, for it might be one of them who will have to deal with the bitter aftermath if the U.S. slinks out of Iraq.

"These realists have it right. Withdrawal cannot serve America's interests on the day after tomorrow. Friends and foes will ask: If this superpower doesn't care about the world's central and most dangerous stage, what will it care about?

"America's allies will look for insurance elsewhere. And the others will muse: If the police won't stay in the most critical of neighborhoods, why not break a few windows or just take over? The U.S. as 'Gulliver Unbound' may have stumbled during its 'unipolar' moment. But as giant with feet of clay, it will do worse and so will the rest of the world."

[From the Wall Street Journal, Aug. 27, 2007]

IF IRAQ FALLS

(By Josef Joffe)

In contrast to President Bush's dark comparison between Iraq and the bloody aftermath of the Vietnam War last week, there is another, comforting version of the Vietnam analogy that's gained currency among policy makers and pundits. It goes something like this:

After that last helicopter took off from the U.S. embassy in Saigon 32 years ago, the nasty strategic consequences then predicted did not in fact materialize. The "dominoes" did not fall, the Russians and Chinese did not take over, and America remained No. 1 in Southeast Asia and in the world.

But alas, cut-and-run from Iraq will not have the same serendipitous aftermath, because Iraq is not at all like Vietnam.

Unlike Iraq, Vietnam was a peripheral arena of the Cold War. Strategic resources like oil were not at stake, and neither were bases (OK, Moscow obtained access to Da Nang and Cam Ranh Bay for a while). In the global hierarchy of power, Vietnam was a pawn, not a pillar, and the decisive battle lines at the time were drawn in Europe, not in Southeast Asia.

The Middle East, by contrast, was always the "elephant path of history," as Israel's fabled defense minister, Moshe Dayan, put it. Legions of conquerors have marched up and down the Levant, and from Alexander's Macedonia all the way to India. Other prominent visitors were Julius Caesar, Napoleon and the German Wehrmacht.

This is not just ancient history. Today, the Greater Middle East is a cauldron even Macbeth's witches would be terrified to touch.

The world's worst political and religious pathologies combine with oil and gas, terrorism and nuclear ambitions.

In short, unlike yesterday's Vietnam, the Greater Middle East (including Turkey) is the central strategic arena of the 21st century, as Europe was in the 20th. This is where three continents—Europe, Asia, and Africa—are joined. So let's take a moment to think about what would happen once that last Blackhawk took off from Baghdad International.

Here is a short list. Iran advances to No. 1, completing its nuclear-arms program undeterred and unhindered.

America's cowed Sunni allies—Saudi-Arabia, Jordan, the oil-rich "Gulfies"—are drawn into the Khomeinist orbit.

You might ask: Wouldn't they converge in a mighty anti-Tehran alliance instead? Think again. The local players have never managed to establish a regional balance of power; it was always outsiders—first Britain, then the U.S.—who chastened the malfeasants and blocked anti-Western intruders like Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia.

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Now, let's look beyond the region. The Europeans will be the first to revise their romantic notions of multipolarity, or world governance by committee. For worse than an overbearing, in-your-face America is a weakened and demoralized one. Shall Vladimir Putin's Russia acquire a controlling stake? This ruthlessly revisionist power wants revenge for its post-Gorbachev humiliation, not responsibility.

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Nor has the U.S. become a "dispensable nation." That is the most remarkable truth in these trying times. Its enemies from al Qaeda to Iran—and its rivals from Russia to China—can disrupt and defy, but they cannot build and lead.

For all the damage to Washington's reputation, nothing of great import can be achieved without, let alone against, the U.S. Can Moscow and Beijing bring peace to Palestine? Or mend a global financial system battered by the subprime crisis? Where are the central banks of Russia and China?

The Bush presidency will soon be on the way out, but America is not. This truth has recently begun to sink in among the major Democratic contenders. Listen to Hillary Clinton, who would leave "residual forces" to fight terrorism. Or to Barack Obama, who would stay in Iraq with an as-yet-unspecified force. Even the most leftish of them all, John Edwards, would keep troops around to stop genocide in Iraq or to prevent violence from spilling over into the neighborhood. And no wonder, for it might be one of them who will have to deal with the bitter aftermath if the U.S. slinks out of Iraq.

These realists have it right. Withdrawal cannot serve America's interests on the day after tomorrow. Friends and foes will ask: If this superpower doesn't care about the world's central and most dangerous stage—what will it care about?

America's allies will look for insurance elsewhere. And the others will muse: If the police won't stay in this most critical of neighborhoods, why not break a few windows, or just take over? The U.S. as "Gulliver Unbound" may have stumbled during its "unipolar" moment. But as giant with feet of clay, it will do worse: and so will the rest of the world.

I think that says it pretty well from a German journalist about our commitment in Iraq, what the stakes are, what will happen if we are to, as our Democratic colleague said, precipitously withdraw from Iraq.

We all want our troops home. I want my nephew home, but not until it is in our national interest for us to draw down troops on the timeline that secures our liberty and protects our people and our place in the world. And that is what is at stake.

I want to yield to the distinguished gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE), a member of the Armed Services Committee.

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the gentleman from Tennessee for having this hour this evening where we can come and tell you what our observations are about Iraq. And also, I would like to thank his family for the service of his nephew. I know he is in our thoughts and prayers for his safe return. I would also like to thank really the hundreds of thousands of Americans who have loved ones who are serving. I would like to thank the very brave men and women who are serving around the world for us today.

□ 1830

They truly understand the threat in the world, and they understand the consequences if we were to just pull out, and I think this is one of the most overwhelming things.

When you do make a trip like ours this year, it was my third trip into Iraq, and this year was my first trip into Afghanistan, but when you arrive in these Nations, the most overwhelming feeling immediately is that every single one of the young men and women that you're looking at serving in the U.S. military have volunteered to serve our Nation, and that is an incredible feeling.

The first thing that we did on our trip, it was very early August, we went into a neighborhood north of Baghdad. There was six of us on the trip, and we had the opportunity to meet with four Iraqi sheiks, two Sunni and two Shia. Now, like most Americans, I think I was of the impression that Sunni and Shia would never even speak to each other, much less work together to rid Iraq, their neighborhood, of the enemy. Well, they were in that room together and they sat Sunni, Shia, Sunni, Shia, as they talked to us about what they've done.

And the reason for what they've done, of course, is the incredible amount of violence that is taking place in Iraq against Iraqi civilians, executions, torture, and it's brought those sheiks into a position to join together for their neighborhood, for their region and, as they told us, for Iraq, that they did what they did for Iraq. They joined with our military. They worked together for 2½ months, and when they were ready, combined with our military, these four sheiks and their citizens ridded that neighborhood of the enemy in only 4 days' time. They were so proud of themselves.

They told us repeatedly how their children could go out and play. Our military told us that this was the most dangerous street in northern Baghdad, the most IED attacks of all of Baghdad. They told us that they can go out and walk to the store now because of what's taken place.

What the incredible change that you're seeing in Iraq right now is that our military is helping local leaders to develop the capacity to govern at that very local level, the most important area, and to work on a regional level to bring that about.

Now, those sheiks are a little bit disappointed in their national government. I asked them about the Sunni members who had walked out of the government. Their answer is my favorite quote of the entire trip, and the quote was, they won't be reelected. I thought that's quick that they learned that.

They're extremely concerned about the involvement of Iran and Syria. Our military knows full well of the involvement of those two governments and weapons that are coming in and help that's being provided. They need services. Our military brought in the governor of Baghdad to look at their neighborhood and to see what could be done differently.

They also were very clear that they want their government to succeed, and they were very clear in telling us that they need our help and they want our help.

We also met with the Deputy Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister

Barham Shala, who is a Kurd. The Iraqi Government, and we don't ever talk about this, is set up, when your prime minister is the Shia, your two deputies, one's a Kurd and one's a Sunni. Your president is a Kurd, so your vice presidents are Sunni and Shia so that you bring in all three together to be able to have the involvement of all three sects within the country. It's not just one person telling you what to do.

Of course, the Deputy Prime Minister expressed a little bit of disappointment in how far the national government had come. There were meetings that were taking place even while we were there. He was very clear, and I thought this was very important, that he said their focus is to establish the institutions of government so that their government would continue, regardless of who was in power, and that no one would be able to just grab power and do something different in Iraq, but that they form a stable government just like here in the U.S.

When we had a shift in January from Republican control to Democrat control, there was no change in the way our government functions. Our courts functioned, and actually, Admiral Fallon, in addressing the Senate just recently, made the same types of comments, how important it is that we set up a rule of law, that we protect human rights.

So I was encouraged to hear him talking about that. He did stress that it was going to take time, and I asked him, because it's been very important here to us in America and our benchmarks, that there are pieces of legislation that we want the Iraqi Parliament to pass. And I asked him if it was true that he actually had the votes to pass that legislation. His answer surprised me. He said, Oh, yes. He said, I have 75 percent approval for the legislation. I reminded him that in America we pass major pieces of legislation with one vote.

But he looked at me and said something critically important. He said, if I pass this legislation with 75 percent, it means I've cut out the Sunni from the government. They would feel they had no power and they would feel they had no voice.

Now, just today in the Armed Services Committee, we received the GAO report on Iraq and the status of these 18 benchmarks. About six of the benchmarks deal with legislation that we'd like to see passed, and we failed on that, that that legislation has not passed, as we all know. But there was another benchmark that was stressed in it, that there be political involvement of minority parties and minority rights be protected. Now, we've passed on that benchmark, but I would say to the gentleman from Tennessee, to you, Mr. Speaker, that if we had passed that legislation against the wishes of an entire group of people, that we would have failed in meeting the benchmark that minority parties be included.

He talked to us about Anbar and about how it's been stabilized. Our trip was due to go there, and we weren't able to because we were detained here in Washington for that extra day. But he talked to us as well about the $10 billion that's been appropriated by the Iraq Parliament for reconstruction efforts. That joins with the 60 countries that have joined with America in our reconstruction efforts there. There is $200 million that's been appropriated to use just in Anbar province, and those contracts are now being let because the security level there will allow those construction projects to go forward.

I'd also like to add that we do have a policy in Iraq, and that's called Iraqis First. Whether you're an Iraqi company or you're an Iraqi civilian, that if you're able to be hired by us, that we want to hire Iraqi first.

The Deputy Prime Minister was clear that they are a country in transition, and he did caution us that they would not meet their benchmarks by September 15, but I would really want us to focus on not did we meet 18 benchmarks but what are the goals and what are the objectives and how do we develop a fully functioning Iraqi Government and how do those benchmarks play into that, how do they make responsible decisions there like I think they just did in not forcing legislation that would have cut an entire section of their country out.

I think that's critically important. We all support benchmarks, but we want those benchmarks to reflect achieving the goals that we've set, and we want to show where are those positive developments, and people are frustrated when they don't hear them, when American people don't hear of the progress that's being made or four sheiks coming together to stabilize their own region and asking that we not leave them and that we give them their help.

We did meet with General Petraeus. We met with Ambassador Crocker. We will receive their report on Monday. I know you have others who are here to talk. I just wanted to close by talking about the last thing we did that day.

We met with Iraqi security forces, and they were actually special ops. They were so impressive that I would have thought I was here in the U.S. watching special operation forces do a demonstration. Our military was very clear that they are very easy to train, and the good news that we haven't heard is that these Iraqi forces are able to train their new recruits that are coming in. I want you to know they were so proud of themselves.

Think of the risk to those men who are serving in Iraqi security forces. In our country, we know our men and women are in harm's way. That's painful for us as Americans, to have our men and women in harm's way defending this Nation. But in Iraq right now, anyone who joins the Iraqi security forces is in harm's way simply for joining, not in the threat of battle but simply for joining.

So I want to thank you for letting me tell you about them, tell you about what I saw on our trip to Iraq. It was critical for me to see Afghanistan for the first time because there's a lot of similarities in Afghanistan. We're doing the same thing.

We are looking at the local level now. We understand that that's the way we need to win this fight, but the change that's come about is like you have seen in Iraq, where local leaders join with us. Remember, they have to make a choice. Are they with us and their national government or are they with the Taliban in Afghanistan or with the al Qaeda in Iraq.

And they have to make the right choice, because if they make the wrong one, they're dead. And what's the message that we've sent to the world is that we're going to leave? How do you choose us if we're going to leave and you would be left there with an enemy? It's critical that we establish political, economic and security measures in Iraq so that this nation can function, can establish a government that will take them into the future and not just short term.

I did ask one question, and your article made me think about it, in armed services not long ago. We had witnesses come and talk about the National Intelligence Estimate, and my question to them was what would be the impact on America if we were to leave, if we were to have done everything that we've done but if we were to leave before that government can govern itself, secure itself and develop itself economically? What would be our standing in the world? Would we be a paper tiger? What would our allies think of us? And would anyone ever trust us in the future?

The answer to me was we haven't studied that issue. Well, I think not only do we need to study the issue. We need to make sure that Iraq has made such progress that I've seen in my three trips. We need to make sure that these people aren't the victims of the violence that will take place. The Deputy Prime Minister pointed that out to us. He told us the consequences that would happen if we were to leave. He told us that Iraq is the heart of the Middle East and that everyone is watching what we we're doing.

So thank you for letting me join you tonight and thank you for the service of your nephew.

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her service to the Commonwealth of Virginia and to this great Nation of ours on the Armed Services Committee and for going and bringing us that unique insight.

As I prepare to yield to the gentleman from Georgia, let me say I think part of the equation for the Congress in a responsible, objective way in the days ahead is to remember that this is not all about Iraq. It is about the bigger picture with the global threat of the jihadists, the most radical elements of Islam, and the way that they are spreading their influence around the world outside even of the Middle East. I think we have to really understand that to know what the stakes are associated with the precipitous withdrawal or anything that is perceived to be a retreat.

These are real problems. It's easy to say, oh, George Bush got us into this war with flawed intelligence. It's also easy to forget that over half of the Democrats in the United States Senate voted to remove Saddam Hussein by force and almost half the Democrats in the House of Representatives voted to remove Saddam Hussein by force based on the very same knowledge and understanding that the executive branch had about what the threats were, and we made that decision as Americans.

It is really unfortunate today that decisions and responsibility for those decisions now end up being peeled off as partisan issues instead of, we do these things together, we stand together, we stand behind our troops together, we stand behind their mission together.

We had Members like RALPH HALL of Texas come back and say to a person the men and women in uniform told him while he was there that we should stay and finish what we started and not leave until we can successfully complete this mission. And you say, well, what is that and when will we know? Objectively, you're getting that report and it's much more positive than it was, and the stakes for leaving are incredibly high.

If you don't believe the influence of the radical Islamists around the world, I would encourage you to read Mark Steyn's book, "America Alone," where he lays out what's happened in Europe and the influence with the global sharia, which is a call to Islamic law, and the intimidation and the threat around the world, or even this new book called "Alms for Jihad: Charity and Terrorism in the Islamic World," by J. Miller Burke. He wrote this book exposing the connection between the Saudi royal family and terrorism through these charities that they set up and funnel money.

It reminded me of the Oil-for-Food scandal at the United States where Saddam Hussein corrupted the United Nations.

□ 1845

All of the corruption that exists through this radical effort, because this book that lays all this out can't be bought today. It has vanished from all of the Amazons. It has vanished from the availability of Barnes & Noble to find the book. What happened to it?

Well, through intimidation and money, they have taken this information out of circulation so the people can't see these connections.

They literally tie him, this man, Sheikh Khalid bin Mahfouz, to the charity that he set up to fund bin Laden with Saudi royal family money, and then when they published the book, it vanished. You can't get it. You can't go buy it.

Mark Steyn lays out, this is the kind of work that the radical Wahabi sect, the al Qaeda operatives, are doing in the world. They have infiltrated and corrupted, and we are like boiling frogs if we deny any longer how this threat is overtaking the free world. America Alone's premise is they've already got Europe and frankly Australia is really the only nation standing with us like they need to.

This is a growing global imminent threat. If we pull out, it will rapidly deteriorate in the world. Our credibility will be lost for generations. We may never regain it. Those are the stakes. That's bigger than Iraq. Iraq is one chapter in this long-term generational struggle for our freedom. The sooner we realize it, the better we are.

I went and spoke to kids in schools in August, and they asked the question about, well, Afghanistan and the Taliban attacked us, but Saddam Hussein in Iraq didn't attack us. Why did we go there?

The lesson of history is Germany didn't attack us, either. Japan attacked us. Germany didn't attack us. But did we ignore the threat of Nazi Germany? No. Our men stormed the beaches of Omaha and liberated Normandy and Omaha Beach, and liberated Europe, so that our way of life could be preserved. Sometimes they forget that, but that's American leadership. This is very, very similar to that.

Are we going to exert it in a world in what this editorial calls the caldron, you know, of the worst political and religious pathology in the history of the world in the Middle East? This is the central stage. We cannot retreat from this without us really, really taking a global hit.

The next president is going to inherit the responsibility of doing this, of carrying this forward.

I want to yield to the statesman from Georgia, a physician, a healer, a man with a great heart but a strong back, also a member of the Armed Services Committee, Dr. PHIL GINGREY.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Tennessee, ZACH WAMP, for, first of all, conducting this special order hour, leadership hour on the Republican side, and for allowing me and my colleague and great friend from Virginia, THELMA DRAKE, for being part of that. DOUG LAMBORN, the gentleman from Colorado, I think, has joined us.

Mr. Speaker, I was on the trip with THELMA DRAKE from Virginia when we visited Iraq and Afghanistan, and I am not going to repeat everything that she said, but I want my colleagues to know that this was my fourth trip to Iraq, my first opportunity to go to Afghanistan.

But this was a necessity that I go this fourth time. I think some 40 or 50 Members of the Congress during the so-called August recess spent 5 to 7 days in the Middle East and the combat zone in 120-degree weather.

Those of us on the Armed Services Committee, I am sure, felt duty bound to do this, particularly as we approach the report from General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker that's going to be delivered to the House on next Monday, September 10.

I have been four times, but this was the most meaningful visit, because I came to a realization, really, actually, it emboldened my feeling that we need to give victory a chance. Again, I want to thank ZACH WAMP, the gentleman from Tennessee, for the passion that he brings to this issue. I thought he was just an expert on energy, but he is also an expert on national defense, more important, the global war on terror, as he so passionately explains this issue.

I was on the floor last night during some of our special order time, 5-minute speeches and the two sides, the Democratic majority has an hour and the Republican minority has an hour. I heard one of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, a gentleman from Maryland, talking about losing a soldier, a 22-year-old brave patriot in his district, and he talked with the mom and was trying to, of course, console her.

The gentleman said on the floor last night, you know, it was sort of ironic, the mom of the fallen soldier said, isn't it ironic, I am here planning my son's funeral and the Commander in Chief is planning a wedding.

That's not the kind of commentary that we need on the floor of this House to suggest that the Commander in Chief doesn't care, that he has got his head in the sand and that each and every one of these 3,700 or so KIAs and 18,000 of our best and bravest that have sustained, in some instances, massive injuries, if you don't think that the Commander in Chief goes to bed every night with this on his heart, then you are just flat wrong.

I think the gentleman, on more reflection, would agree with what I am saying. This President cares. This Commander in Chief cares. He wants to give victory a chance.

It's not a matter of staying the course and same old same old, the Iraq Study Group, the gentleman from Indiana, the long-serving distinguished Democrat, 37 years in this body, and

Ambassador Baker, Secretary Baker, served under three Republican Presidents, you have got two people that made some suggestions. One of the main suggestions that they made was we need a surge, we need more troops, especially in and around Baghdad, and those four provinces, where all of the violence, most of the violence, 95 percent of it, is occurring. This is exactly what the President responded to.

What did we hear from our friends on the other side of the aisle? Oh, well, you know, too little, too late.

Yet, you know, 3 or 4 years ago it was, well, you're not putting enough troops in there to do the job, you didn't listen to General Shinseki, it's a constant pulling the rug out from under the combatant commanders, and we see 435 people that want to be Commander in Chief. It just doesn't work that way.

In the Democratic special hour last night, after we talked about our experience in Iraq and these recent trips, the team on the Democratic side said, you know, we can't afford to spend this money. We've almost spent $1 trillion trying to win this global war on terror, and we need to be spending this money to repair bridges, to give more money to the gulf coast, to maybe even give more money than a 300 percent increase in the SCHIP program to cover every man, woman and child from cradle-to-grave with universal health care.

Even if I were for some of those things, I will tell you this, you spend that money on those things, and you don't protect our people from global terrorism, then you will see, in a New York minute, how quick that money would go down the toilet as these people blow up this infrastructure, just like they did 9/11, almost 6 years ago now, and killed 3,300, almost the same number, that we have lost in Iraq and Afghanistan over a 4-year period. They killed them within a period of 45 minutes.

Mr. WAMP. That reminds me, today, yet another terrorist plot coming out of Germany, preparing to attack our Air Force base in Germany and soft targets of just public places in Germany where Americans are known to hang out was foiled, thankfully. The German authorities were on top of it.

That is a major, major terrorist attack again. We see this over and over again, thankfully, you know. God has spared us, our intelligence is working, we are listening. Because of FISA, we are able to listen to foreign terrorists talk to each other. We've taken the precautions.

Then I have this theory that they don't want to strike us right now because they don't want our country to pull back together again and be resolute against this threat, so that those things, combined, have kept our country secure and safe at home while we are fighting these insurgents and these terrorists in the Middle East.

We're going to be fighting them somewhere. If it's not in Iraq, it's going to be Somalia, Northern Africa. I can go through a list of the troubling places in the world where we're going to face these kinds of problems and activities, and there are 20 countries that are at risk around the world for big-time terrorist actions like the Taliban came out of Afghanistan, and we can either basically stand against this threat today or face it globally and more at home tomorrow. That's not a threat. It's reality. In Germany today it was proven again they are trying to hit our targets wherever they are.

Mr. GINGREY. I am so glad the gentleman brought that up, because what he is talking about, and I commend to all my colleagues, read the article, these were three, in one case, I think, a citizen of Germany, maybe of Islamic descent, but a German citizen, and not only were they planning on attacking Frankfurt, where most people fly into when they go into Western Europe, certainly from this country, but also, and I know the gentleman is aware of this, their plan was to attack Ramstein Air Force Base and the Landstuhl European Army Medical Center where every one of these troops, our troops, that are injured so severely, and our great physicians on the battlefield are able to save their lives to get them through Ramstein Air Force Base to that Landstuhl Army Medical Center there just a few miles away, and that's what they were going to attack.

Mr. WAMP. The lowest of the low who would attack your wounded and injured.

Mr. GINGREY. The lowest of the low.

Of course, I know we want to yield to our friend from Colorado, and we will hear from him in just a second, but as I conclude my remarks, I just want to say, and Mrs. THELMA DRAKE, the gentlewoman from Virginia mentioned this a little earlier, we had a report today in the House Armed Services Committee, a report that was requested by Congress in our last emergency supplemental, from the Government Accountability Office, the GAO, on these benchmarks, and the Comptroller General talked about the progress. Really, he talked mainly about lack of progress, and it was ironic that even though several of those benchmarks, we had made some progress, he pretty much gave the Iraqi government a failing report card.

I think that is disappointing here, just a matter of a few days prior to General Petraeus' report.

He even suggested that while General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker are highly professional and we would get a professional report from them, we would not get an unbiased report. The only unbiased report was coming from him and from the Government Accountability Office.

I suggested to him, during that hearing, you know, you might be unbiased, but your ability to interpret what you see on the ground certainly militarily may not come even close to General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker. So let's wait for the report, let's give victory a chance. That's what I want to say to all my colleagues. Let's button our lips for the rest of this week, and let's see what the report says.

I would suggest that the President is going to listen to General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, and I would suggest that yes, indeed, the Iraqi government is making progress, that they are not making as fast of progress as we would hope, but we would continue to put pressure on them, but let's give victory a chance.

Mr. WAMP. I thank the gentleman for that commentary, especially the update on the hearing today from the GAO and Mr. Walker.

I will be a little more pointed to tell you as the ranking member of the appropriations subcommittee that funds the GAO, and funds Mr. Walker's organization, that unfortunately many times, whether it is government spending or oversight in Iraq, a lot of what happens in his office revolves around him and not us.

□ 1900

It is all about him, and again today, it's all about him. He's the only one that somehow can be unbiased, and he's the only one that can do this. And there's a little kingdom over at the GAO and he's the king. And we need to remember that and put it in perspective this week before we hear from the absolute expert on counterinsurgency in modern world history, David Petraeus, the best we can put in charge. He's the best we can offer to this situation. And let's listen to him objectively and not get caught up in an ego matter, frankly, involving Mr. Walker.

And I yield to the gentleman from Colorado, a distinguished member of our Veterans' Affairs Committee, a relatively new Member, but a very experienced and seasoned Member, DOUG LAMBORN.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, like many of my House colleagues, I traveled with a Congressional delegation to Iraq during the August recess, and I rise now to speak about the successes that I saw and experienced firsthand while in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, the members of our armed services are working tirelessly each day and night in Iraq to rebuild this country and to ensure our national security. While in Iraq, I had an opportunity in Fallujah to meet with marines from Colorado Springs who were upbeat about the progress in Iraq and were certain that their accomplishments during the surge had produced a truly positive result. They were also equally concerned that people at home in the United States did not understand how successful they have been.

After my visit to Iraq, I am pleased to say that I am even more sure than ever that their mission has not been in vain. They truly are making a difference for the Iraqi people and for the communities in which these people live.

During our visit, we met with GEN David Petraeus who had many positive things to say about the progress that has been made since the surge began. For instance, he mentioned the elimination of safe havens for militia forces and al Qaeda, continued progress in Anbar province, progress in the operation and training of the Iraqi Army and encouraging signs of tactical successes in Baghdad. I look forward, like my colleagues here who've just spoken, to reading General Petraeus' report on the surge with great scrutiny when it is released this month.

I'm also delighted to hear that some of my Democratic colleagues have realized and acknowledged that the surge is working. I plan to continue to work with all of my colleagues, as well as the military and the administration, to ensure that the sacrifice our brave men and women are making in Iraq is not abandoned before the mission is completed.

Mr. WAMP. I thank the gentleman, and at this time I want to yield to the ranking member of the Oversight Subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee, the gentleman from Missouri, TODD AKIN.

Mr. AKIN. It's a pleasure to be able to join our discussion tonight on the subject of Iraq. I approach the subject this evening from several perspectives; one, as a father of a marine who is now a captain who has been in Iraq; also as someone who has visited Iraq a number of times myself, but particularly, and more recently, as the ranking Republican on the Oversight Committee of the Armed Services Committee. That is a committee that we have been hearing now, for quite a number of weeks, of witnesses, Republicans, Democrats, all kinds of different positions and people with ideas that are supposedly experts about what we should be doing in Iraq.

Now, one of the things that has jumped out, after having to sit through hours and hours and hours of testimony, is a certain pattern. Every single witness, conservative, liberal, Republican, wacko one way, strange the other way, anybody, every single one of them, there were two things that they always said, and that was, the first one was, if we pull out rapidly, it will be, first of all, a huge blood bath of Iraqis killing Iraqis. We're talking about millions of people dying, which will, of course, all be reviewed in all the gory detail on the media. And second of all, the region will become extremely unstable. Both of those, regardless of who they were, political party, anything else, those were the two common themes.

And what emerged after weeks and weeks of listening to all these experts was, there is no gracious, easy way for us to try and tuck our tail between our legs and quit. We're like the bear that's going through the woods. We're more than halfway there.

The most logical, the most common sense, the most economic, the least loss of life course for us is to proceed forward logically and win this war. And there is even reason to believe that we can.

And the strategy is becoming more and more obvious as to how that has to happen. The first basic principle is that our troops are doing a very good job in Iraq. The second basic principle is that we've fallen into this sort of belt line, beltway mentality thinking that America's greatness all came out of Washington, DC and therefore the problems have to be solved in Baghdad, and that's just wrong. The political solution in Baghdad is not working properly. Where we are having success is the very way that America was built 300 years ago, and it's being built in local communities and local cities, local towns and various states as they built this great Nation and the same way. That's what's happening over in Iraq.

We are having very good success on the local level working with local sheiks, giving them a sense that it's their country, they can shape it, and what we need to be doing is aggressively giving those local governments authority and limiting the Baghdad authority to certain very specific items. We call that federalism in this country, and that's where we need to be going. We can win this, and it is the most inexpensive, the lowest loss of life and the very most positive results we can expect by just using the same principles that we found that built America. So I think that's where we need to be going.

The Democrats are wrong. You can't pass a constitutional amendment that says everybody's going to get along with each other. Even if you put a gun to the head of the Iraqi Baghdad Government, they couldn't do that. They couldn't succeed in that.

They're wrong in being against the surge. The surge is proving to be effective. It is helping us to build local governments. And they're wrong in the sense that everything is lost and we ought to quit. That's not true, and none of the witnesses suggested that it's wise for us to pull out precipitously.

I thank the gentleman for yielding me some time, and I appreciate the comments of my colleagues that understand the importance of this and understand terrorism.

Mr. WAMP. I thank the gentleman from Missouri and his distinguished leadership as the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee.

Let me say, before introducing the gentleman from Texas, one of the biggest changes that I see, not just in Iraq, but globally, is that finally moderate Muslims are standing up against the radicals. We're seeing that in country, we're seeing that in other parts of the world. Up until a few months ago when they saw American resolve coming forward, they literally were so afraid and intimidated and harassed, and the radicals were seizing the moment.

Now, finally, and let me tell you, because of the sheer numbers, if we're ever going to really permanently throw this threat back, the moderate people in Islam have to lead and help us, and that's beginning to happen.

A gentleman who's been to Iraq six times, Dr. BURGESS from Texas, another physician, a healer, a member of the Commerce Committee with extraordinary perspective from six separate visits to Iraq in country. I yield him such time as he may consume, hoping to get the other gentleman from Texas in at some point in the next 7 minutes.

Mr. BURGESS. And I appreciate the gentleman for yielding.

Indeed, I did take my sixth trip to Iraq in July, a weekend trip. And believe it or not, it is possible to make a weekend trip to Baghdad.

I've got to tell you, Mr. Speaker, I was concerned. The 10 months prior to my going, we've had just a litany of one bad story after another come out of Iraq, and I was concerned about what I was going to find.

The story is a mixed story. I suspect next week when we do hear the report from General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, we'll get a mixed report.

But I've just got to tell you, it was a vastly different condition on the ground that I saw than what I had been led to believe I would encounter with reading the stories in the paper.

Now, just over a year ago I was there. There's a lot that's changed in Iraq. There's a lot that's changed here at home since that year's time. Concerned about what I would find, and again, made the trip over a relatively condensed time frame, we left for Baghdad really early in the morning out of Kuwait City on a C–130.

And Mr. Speaker, you always hear people criticize us on these trips. They say, well, you just saw what they wanted you to see. They just trotted out the dog-and-pony show for you and you bought it.

But the reality is you get on a C–130, 3 or 4 or in the morning, it's already 90, 95 degrees. You're put in the back of a C–130 with troops being moved into one theater or another. And they don't pick the guys that happen to show up at the airport that morning. You go with whoever is going in or out of the country.

Now, when you're on the plane, it's just too noisy and hot and dark to talk.

But as the plane landed when we got to Baghdad and they bring the engines down and you can actually hear again, the soldiers that were around became anxious to talk to me when they found out who I was and why I was there.

Most of them, it was their second or third rotation. Their deployments had been extended to 15 months, and most of the guys that were on that plane wouldn't see home again for almost a year.

Since February, there's been a big change in how they do their job. They're placed alongside Iraqi soldiers in smaller groups, both in Baghdad and out in the provinces, and they're no longer attached to this larger and more protected military base. And clearly, they're seeing a greater amount of activity and, to a large degree, that concerned them.

The fellow that was just right across from me I actually spoke with in some depth, and he'd been reading a book all during this hot plane ride for 2 hours from Kuwait City into Baghdad.

He obviously voiced a concern. He wondered if the General Officer Corps even knew what they were up to, even knew what they were doing. He wondered if they knew what they were up against. He did complain about the long hours. He complained about the heat. He complained about being separated from his family.

Mr. Speaker, he'd been reading a book intently while we were on the plane. And I asked him about this. I said, What book are you reading? And he said it was a book about philosophy. So I naturally assumed that at the end of his deployment he'd be coming home to perhaps finish school, or maybe he had a job waiting for him, and I asked him about this. And he looked at me very strangely and said, I just signed up for five more years.

You know, it's that kind of ambiguity, it's that kind of enigma that confronts you when you're in Iraq. Things just don't add up the way you think that they might.

Now, we got off that plane and we all went our separate ways. We were taken into the town of Ramadi. And a year ago, there would have been no way to go to Ramadi. We visited with the mayor.

And again, as Mr. AKIN just alluded to, the good news story coming of out of Iraq is the building up of those institutions of local government just like we have here in this country, county governments, city governments that are doing the really hard work. They're doing reconciliation at the city level, at the provincial level. If it takes the central government a while longer to catch up with them, I've got a lot of hope based on what I saw on the ground.

But what really gives me hope is what I saw in the market in Ramadi. Look at the faces on these two young guys. We were just out there walking in the market just in an area that a year ago it had been so dangerous no one in their right mind would have taken us there.

Let me just show you this other picture that gives you some idea of the types of thing for sale in the market. Again, it looks like a typical marketplace anywhere you'd find in the Middle East, Jordan or Saudi Arabia. A lot of stuff for sale. I don't know where the stuff comes from, but a lot of stuff for sale. And again, clearly the people who were there did not look to be particularly stressed or aggrieved. They looked half curious and happy to see us. In fact, the kids were starting school in a couple of weeks and would come up to us and ask us for pens and quarters. Apparently our military had given them a good deal of coaching on the kinds of things you can get from a codel as it walks through town.

Mr. Speaker, I will conclude here and leave the remaining time to my friend from Texas. I will say I do believe it is in America's interest that we finish the job. The next 30 years will look starkly different if we're successful versus if we're a failure.

I will yield back to the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. WAMP. I'd like to yield our final minute to Mr. HENSARLING of Texas to close.

Mr. HENSARLING. I certainly thank the gentleman for yielding. I thank the gentleman from Tennessee for leading this hour. I want to thank the other members of the Republican Study Committee, the House's conservative caucus, for lending their voice here.

In the remaining time, I just want to make a couple of points, and that is, we see every night the cost of fighting this war, and it is a heavy cost. It's a heavy cost in terms of money and, much more importantly, lives. But we need to again remember the cost of losing this war and what that could mean and how serious the threat is.

I was home during the August recess, got to spend time not only with my wife and children, but with my parents. My mother reminded me of something that she said from time to time, and that is, sometimes life is full of lousy options. And yes, fighting this war is costly. But losing this war could be even costlier if Iraq becomes what Afghanistan once was, under the Taliban, a breeding ground, a training ground for terrorists that are bent on hurting our country.

And we have to remember these are people who have said they have the right to kill 4 million Americans. Two million of them are children and two of those 2 million are mine. We have to remember what the cost of defeat is.

So we finally have signs for cautious optimism. We all need to have an open mind when the report comes in.

□ 1915

MOURNING THE PASSING OF THE LATE JENNIFER DUNN, FORMER MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIRES). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. REICHERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, today I join my colleagues and friends and the entire State of Washington in mourning the loss of former Congresswoman Jennifer Dunn. She was my predecessor here in the House of Representatives, represented the Eighth District of Washington State. I'm shocked and saddened by the news of her death today, and my condolences go out to the family: her husband, Keith; her children, Bryant, Reagan, and Angus; their wives; and the grandchildren, who meant so much to her.

And today as we were on the floor voting, Mr. Speaker, the news was presented to the Members of this body by a good friend, a longtime friend of hers, Doc Hastings is his nickname, from Central Washington. He had known Jennifer for over 30 years. And as Doc Hastings announced the news of her unexpected death, you could hear the sadness. You could hear the sadness. You could hear the gasp as the air went out of this room.

Jennifer Dunn served this House for 12 years. She was a well-respected Member of this body. She was in leadership in the Republican Party, one of the first females in leadership in this House. She was one of those Members who reached across the aisle; who worked with all; who had a dedicated, compassionate drive to represent the people of the Eighth District. She served with passion and the heart of a servant.

I first met Jennifer Dunn back in 1997 as I became the first elected sheriff in King County, Seattle, Washington. And I had the opportunity to travel back and forth between Washington State and Washington, D.C. to meet with our delegation. And Jennifer Dunn was always so gracious in allowing me time as the sheriff to come in and present the issues that were facing us in King County law enforcement.

She was very proud of the fact that she helped start the school resource officer program with grant funds. She was very proud of the fact that she helped acquire funding for the so important fight against methamphetamines that really are the scourge of this Nation today. She helped plant the seed of an effort in Washington State that still goes on today in the form of the Washington State Meth Initiative, people meeting today, deciding how to spend the money the Federal Government still provides as a result of her efforts in fighting the deadly addiction that meth causes in our communities.

But one of the things that she was most proud of was her effort in passing legislation that led to the Amber Alert system that we have throughout this Nation that, as everyone knows across this country, has saved many lives, lives of our children, our most vulnerable of citizens and victims.

So I am so honored and so proud to be the person who has been given the privilege to follow in such a great lady's footsteps.

Jennifer Dunn, we will all miss you. Our prayers and thoughts go with the family.

AMERICAN PATENT LAW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, let me just note for my colleague who just finished his very, very appropriate remarks concerning the passing of Jennifer Dunn, I have three children at home, little Tristen and Anika and Christian; and as a parent, I am very grateful to Jennifer Dunn for the leadership that she provided in helping make our country safer for our children, the children that we all love so much.

And when we talk about the future and I think about my children, we have to think that whatever we do here, we are creating a better world, and it is a better world for our children because they are going to be around a lot longer than we are.

Well, Mr. Speaker, on Friday the House will consider legislation that will have a huge impact on the well-being of the American people and, yes, the well-being of America's children as they get older. Yet this bill will have a great deal to do with whether or not our children have good jobs and live in a secure country.

This bill is receiving very little attention. Very powerful interest groups are trying to sneak this one by us, and if they succeed, they will be enriched and the American people will be worse off.

So what's new? Well, what's new is that this special interest foray is not aimed at just adding an earmark or changing a clause in the tax law to help a specific company. It is a maneuver to dramatically diminish a constitutionally protected right that has served our Nation well. It is a fundamental change in a system that has been in place since our country's founding. That is a lot different than the special interest forays in the past just aimed at changing little elements of the law for their own benefit.

We are talking about fundamentally altering America's patent system. Now, if H.R. 1908, the bill in question, passes, there will be tremendous negative long-term consequences not just for America's inventors but for the country.

Now, patent law is thought to be so complicated and so esoteric that most people tune out once they realize that that is the subject of a discussion. We have probably lost people right now who are reading the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD or watching C–SPAN or our colleagues who are watching this from their offices. But the technology that we are talking about is vitally important to the well-being of our country. Patent law is not so complicated and esoteric because it is that vital to the well-being of our country. Our technological genius and the laws protecting and promoting that genius have been at the heart of America's success as a Nation.

America's technological edge has made American workers competitive with low-priced laborers overseas. It has provided the American people with the highest standard of living in the world, and it enabled our country to sail safely through the troubled waters of world wars and international threats. It is American technology that has made all the difference for our country's security and our people's quality of life.

Protecting individual rights, even for the little guy, has been the hallmark of our Nation. Patent rights, the right to one's own creation, which is what we are talking about when we talk about patent rights, have been considered a fundamental part of our system since our country's founding. In fact, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and others of our Founding Fathers were not the only people who believed in freedom and democracy. They believed in technology and progress.

Visit Monticello and see what Thomas Jefferson did with his time after he penned the words to the Declaration of Independence and after he served as President of the United States. He went back to Monticello and spent his time inventing gadgets and pieces of equipment that would lift the burden from the shoulders of labor. And, by the way, Jefferson was America's first Patent Commissioner.

And then there is Ben Franklin, the inventor of the bifocal and the potbellied stove. Before Benjamin Franklin people could only heat themselves at a fireplace and project heat in a room only from a fireplace. And Benjamin Franklin invented the potbellied stove, which started the whole concept of modern heating. This grand old man, who was present at the Declaration of Independence and the writing of our Constitution, once lamented his own death not by talking about the fear of the unknown and dying but by lamenting that he would not be able to see the great human progress that was bound to happen, the technological advances that would be the byproduct of a free people in the United States of America.

Our Founding Fathers believed that with freedom and with technology, we could increase the standard of living of all our people, not just the elite. Our founders were visionaries, not just about political structures but about a way of life for ordinary people and the future of humankind. Those patriots who laid the foundation of our country wrote into the Constitution a provision they firmly believed was a prerequisite to progress and freedom.

Now, last night after I gave a similar speech on the floor, a teacher, a so-called teacher of history, called my office to complain, "There is nothing about copyrights or patents in our Constitution." I don't know how long he has been a teacher. He said he has been teaching 20 years. But my staff member took out a copy of the Constitution and read to him article I, section 8 of the Constitution, which states in part: "Congress shall have the power to promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries." They held the right of owning one's ideas and creations and inventions as equal to the rights of speech, religion, and assembly. In fact, in the body of the Constitution before the Bill of Rights, the word "right" is only used in reference to patents and copyrights. So that shows you the priority that our Founding Fathers placed on the technological development that would create the dream of America that they felt that they were establishing here on this continent.

In short, we have had the strongest patent protection in the world, and that is why in the history of mankind there has never been a more innovative and creative people. And it has been no accident that Americans are the world's great inventors, scientists, and technologists. No, it is not just the diversity of our people, but diversity certainly plays a role and we can be proud of that and it has contributed to our capabilities. It wasn't just our natural resources, although we were blessed with vast territory and natural resources. Our innovation and progress can be traced to our law from the very beginning. It was the intent of those who wrote these protections into our fundamental law, into the Constitution in those earliest days of our Republic, and it was their vision of optimism that motivated them to write this into the law. Our history is filled with stories of technological achievement that flowed from the fact that we had established a country that thought that the rights of ownership of what you create is just as important as your right to speak or the right to worship God as you so choose.

We found people who emerged among us, Eli Whitney, for example, who not

only invented the cotton gin but who invented the interchangeable parts for manufacturing. This revolutionized industrial production and dramatically uplifted the well-being of millions of people and, yes, people who were yet to be born.

Cyrus McCormick invented the reaper. Before that the food supply for our people was limited. People went to bed hungry, large numbers. Cyrus McCormick invented a reaper that made sure that every person would have bread enough to eat, that children would be fed.

Samuel Morse invented the telegraph, which eventually led, of course, to the telephone and revolutionized a whole idea of communications throughout the world. Thomas Edison, the light bulb and so many other inventions.

Interestingly, black Americans were prolific inventors even at times when they were terribly discriminated against because patent law was one law that was justly applied to them for the most part, although there were issues of discrimination even in that area. But compared to the other areas where they were totally discriminated against, there was some leeway in our society. And black inventors emerged, as is predictable, because that was their avenue to rise up. Men like Jan Matzeliger, who invented a machine that was used in shoe manufacturing that dramatically changed the shoe industry to the point that the average person after Matzeliger's invention could afford to have more than one pair of shoes in his life.

□ 1930

Before that they were so expensive, people had one pair of shoes that they repaired for the rest of their lives.

George Washington Carver, another great black inventor, a great scholar, a world-respected scientist, and so many more like him. We are proud that our history advanced technologies because we know, as Americans, as we have always known, that through our country's history, that the inventions that we're talking about produced more wealth with less labor, thus increased the standard of living of all people and the opportunity for all people who are part of our country's brotherhood and sisterhood to share in the benefits, in the fruits of this free society.

And yes, we have had problems in the past and there was discrimination against black Americans, obviously. Slavery was a blight on our system, a sin. But as we have tried to produce more wealth, and the more wealth that has been produced and the more opportunity that's been available, the easier it's been for our society to try to correct those terrible crimes and sins of the past. And black Americans have done their share, more than their share, in producing these inventions that have helped our country.

By and large, the inventors were not part of large corporate structures. They were, by and large, little guys, people who didn't have vast companies behind them, which leads us, of course, to the Wright brothers.

We remember the Wright brothers, men with little education that worked in a bicycle shop. They owned a bicycle shop and ended up inventing something a little more than 100 years ago that they were told was impossible to invent, impossible to build by the experts. They had no huge corporate structures behind them, so thus they didn't have a board of directors that prohibited them from their research or directed them in a way that would have prevented them from being successful. They went forward, they invested their time, and they invested their limited resources. And they changed the future of humankind forever as they took mankind's feet off the ground and put us on the road to the heavens. The patent issued to the Wright brothers is perhaps one of the most significant documents in the history of all mankind.

Let us understand that it was not raw muscle nor was it just hard work that built our country. People work hard all over the world and live in abject poverty. It is not our vast territory or natural resources. It was, instead, our ingenuity, our intelligence, and yes, the legal system that was established to protect that ingenuity and the intelligence and the creativity of our people.

We treated intellectual property, the creation of new technologies, as we treated property and personal rights and political rights. They were held in the same esteem in the United States of America. And that is what America is all about, that every person's rights were to be respected and protected. As I say, we didn't always live up to that dream, but it was our standard. We held those high standards and it served us well. Now we have people trying to undermine those standards for personal gain.

Today we face a great historic challenge, and this challenge comes exactly at a time when our country faces economic threats from abroad as never before. We must prevail over our economic competitors. They are at war with the well-being of the American people. We must win, or our country and our people will lose. My children, Anika, Tristen and Christian, they will lose. Your children, all of our children will have worse lives in the future if we lose this battle, this economic battle that we are fighting today. Yes, our people will suffer.

Future generations could well see their standard of living decline, the opportunity of their young people vanish, as well as the safety and strength of our country, which all leads us to the legislation that will be considered on Friday. Very powerful corporate interests, mainly billionaires in the electronics industry and the financial industry, are on the verge of fundamentally changing the U.S. patent system, and it will have dire consequences for the American people. So our colleagues need to pay attention.

Let us be clear and specific; the legislation in question, H.R. 1908, will dramatically weaken the patent rights of ordinary Americans and make us even more vulnerable to the outright theft of American-made technology and innovative ideas.

The purpose of the legislation is to weaken the patent system. Those people in the electronics industry and the financial industry do not want to pay royalties; they do not want to be hampered by watching out for and respecting the ownership rights of our inventors anymore.

This legislation is a slow-motion destruction of the patent system. No one will be candid enough to admit it, but the real reason for this and past forays against the patent system is aimed at the destruction of the system; it is not to make it better. No one is going to admit it. They're going to say they're here trying to reform the system. It is not aimed at that; it is aimed at destroying the system. The word "reform" is being used as a cover just as it was a cover in the immigration battle. We all remember that. People talked about comprehensive immigration because the real purpose, as we all know, was amnesty in that bill that was making its way through Congress. Everybody knows that. And amnesty would have brought tens of millions more here, at least that was debatable. Well, we should have talked about it and debated that issue. Instead, we heard about comprehensive reform as if it was going to solve a problem and make the immigration influx into our country, bring it under control. No. The purpose of that bill was amnesty.

When they talk about reform of our patent system, what they're really talking about is destroying the patent system and weakening its protection. They couldn't pass it otherwise.

There are some real problems that need to be solved with our patent system. Unfortunately, the legislation making its way through the system does not correct the problems, just as the comprehensive amnesty bill or comprehensive immigration bill didn't solve the problems. The problems are being used as an excuse to act. But the proposed changes are aimed at a totally different and indefensible goal. It is a power grab, a classic power grab where we are not having an honest debate, an honest exchange of ideas with the American people.

So we readily admit, those of us who are in opposition to the bill that will come to the floor Friday, H.R. 1908, we admit that we need patent legislation,

legislation that speeds the examination and issuance of patents, helps the process, the examination process and the issuance process, provides training and compensation for patent examiners. We need legislation that does just that. We need legislation that will protect our inventors against theft, especially against foreign theft, where our own creative genius of our people is being taken and stolen by foreigners and then put into their manufacturing to outdo the United States, to put us out of business; our own creative genius used against us. Yes, we need to fix these problems with the patent.

The bill has this goal, and supposedly they talk about it. And if that was the goal, it would be welcomed. Well, it also has been a straw man to justify this revolutionary altering of our patent system, of course. What we need, of course, is to correct the problems in the current system, not to destroy the system.

This comprehensive bill that we face, interestingly enough, is similar to a bill that came up 10 years ago that we managed, with public outcry, just like the outcry that stopped the immigration bill in the Senate. We stopped a bill like this 10 years ago. I called it the "Steal American Technologies Act." Well, the same group of people, the same interest group that tried to push that is back. And so if you take a look at this bill, we might call it the "Steal American Technologies Act Part 2."

So just what does H.R. 1908 do? First and foremost, it is designed, as I say, to weaken the patent protection of American inventors. So we support real reforms, but the proposed changes in H.R. 1908 will cause the collapse of the patent system that has sustained America for the past 200 years.

The negative impact of the totality of this bill is reflected in the wide spectrum of opposition who are now mobilizing against it.

For the RECORD, I would submit this list of those who are opposing H.R. 1908, and I would ask this to be included in the RECORD at this point.

ORGANIZATIONS AND COMPANIES WHICH HAVE RAISED OBJECTIONS TO PATENT LEGISLATION (H.R. 1908)

Organizations and Companies Raising Objections to H.R. 1908, the Patent Reform Act of 2007: 3M, Abbott, Accelerated Technologies, Inc., Acorn Cardiovascular Inc., Adams Capital Management, Adroit Medical Systems, Inc., AdvaMed, Advanced Diamond Technologies, Inc., Advanced Medical Optics, Inc., Advanced Neuromodulation Systems, Inc., Aero-Marine Company, AFL–CIO, African American Republican Leadership Council, AIPLA—American Intellectual Property Law Association.

Air Liquide, Air Products, ALD NanoSolutions, Inc., ALIO Industries, Allergan, Inc., Almyra, Inc., AmberWave Systems Corporation, American Conservative Union, American Intellectual property Law, Association (AIPLA), American Seed Trade, Americans for Sovereignty.

Americans for the Preservation of Liberty, Amylin Pharmaceuticals, AngioDynamics, Inc., Applied Medical, Applied Nanotech, Inc., Argentis Pharmaceuticals, LLC, Arizona BioIndustry Association, ARYx Therapeutics, Ascenta Therapeutics, Inc., Association of University Technology Managers (AUTM).

Asthmatx, Inc., AstraZeneca, Aware, Inc., Baxa Corporation, Baxter Healthcare Corporation, BayBio, Beckman Coulter, BIO—Biotechnology Industry Organization, BioCardia, Inc., BIOCOM, Biogen Idec, Biomedical Association, BioOhio, Bioscience Institute, Biotechnology Council of New Jersey.

Blacks for Economic Security Trust Fund, BlazeTech Corporation, Boston Scientific, Bridgestone Americas Holding, Inc., Bristol-Myers Squibb, BuzzLogic, California Healthcare Institute, California Healthcare Institute (The), Canopy Ventures, Carbide Derivative Technologies, Cardiac Concepts, Inc., CardioDynamics, Cargill, Inc., Cassie-Shipherd Group (The), Caterpillar, Celgene Corporation, Cell Genesys, Inc., Center 7, Inc., Center for Small Business and the Environment, Centre for Security Policy, Cephalon, CheckFree, Christian Coalition of America.

Cincinnati Sub-Zero Products, Coalition for 21st Century Patent Reform, Coalitions for America, CogniTek Management Systems, Inc., Colorado Bioscience Association, Conceptus, Inc., CONNECT, Connecticut United for Research Excellence, Cornell University, Corning, Coronis Medical Ventures, Council for America, CropLife America, Cryptography Research, Cummins-Allison Corporation.

Cummins Inc., CVRx Inc., Dais Analytic Corporation, Dartmouth Regional Technology Center, Inc., Declaration Alliance, Deltanoid Pharmaceuticals, Digimarc Corporation, DirectPointe, Dow Chemical Company, Dupont, Dura-Line Corporation, Dynatronics Co., Eagle Forum, Eastman Chemical Company, Economic Development Center, Edwards Lifesciences, Elan Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Electronics for Imaging, Eli Lilly and Company, Ellman Innovations LLC, Enterprise Partners Venture Capital, Evalve, Inc.

Exxon Mobile Corporation, Fallbrook Technologies Inc., FarSounder, Inc. Footnote.com.

Gambro BCT, General Electric, Genomic Health, Inc., Gen-Probe Incorporated, Genzyme, Georgia Biomedical Partnership, Glacier Cross, Inc., GlaxoSmithKline, Glenview State Bank, Hawaii Science & Technology Council, HealthCare Institute of New Jersey, HeartWare, Inc., Helius, Inc., Henkel Corporation, Hoffman-LaRoche, Inc.

iBIO, Imago Scientific Instruments, Impulse Dynamics (USA), Inc., Indiana Health Industry Forum, Indiana University, Innovation Alliance, Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)–USA, InterDigital Communications Corporation, Intermolecular, Inc., International Association of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), Invitrogen Corporation, Iowa Biotechnology Association, ISTA Pharmaceuticals, Jazz Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Johnson & Johnson, KansasBio, Leadership Institute, Let Freedom Ring, Life Science Alley, LITMUS, LLC.

LSI Corporation, Lux Capital Management, Luxul Corporation, Maryland Taxpayers' Association.

Masimo Corporation, Massachusetts Biotechnology Council, Massachusetts Medical Device Industry Council, MassMEDIC, Maxygen Inc., MDMA—Medical Device Manufacturer's Association, Medical College of Wisconsin, MedImmune, Inc., Medtronic, Merck, Metabasis Therapeutics, Inc., Metabolex, Inc., Metacure (USA), Inc., MGI Pharma Inc., MichBio, Michigan Small Tech Association, Michigan State University, Millennium Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Milliken & Company, Mohr, Davidow Ventures, Monsanto Company, Motorola.

NAM—National Association of Manufacturers, NanoBioMagnetics, Inc. (NBMI), NanoBusiness Alliance, NanoInk, Inc., NanoIntegris, Inc., Nanomix, Inc., Nanophase Technologies, NanoProducts Corporation, Nanosys, Inc., Nantero, Inc., National Center for Public Policy Research, Nektar Therapeutics, Neoconix, Inc., Neuro Resource Group (NRG), Neuronetics, Inc., NeuroPace, New England Innovation Alliance, New Hampshire Biotechnology Council, New Hampshire Department of Economic Development, New Mexico Biotechnical and Biomedical Association, New York Biotechnology Association.

Norseman Group, North Carolina Biosciences Organization, North Carolina State University, North Dakota State University, Northrop Grumman Corporation, Northwestern University, Novartis, Novartis Corporation, Novasys Medical Inc., NovoNordisk, NUCRYST Pharmaceuticals, Inc. NuVasive, Inc., Nuvelo, Inc., Ohio State University, OpenCEL, LLC.

Palmetto Biotechnology Alliance, Patent Café.com, Inc., Patent Office Professional Association, Pennsylvania Bio, Pennsylvania State University, PepsiCo, Inc., Pfizer, PhRMA—Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, Physical Sciences Inc., PointeCast Corporation, Power Innovations International, PowerMetal Technologies, Inc., Preformed Line Products, Procter & Gamble, Professional Inventors' Alliance, ProRhythm, Inc., Purdue University, Pure Plushy Inc., QUALCOMM Inc.

QuantumSphere, Inc., QuesTek Innovations LLC, Radiant Medical, Inc., Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Research Triangle Park, NC, Retractable Technologies, Inc., RightMarch.com, S & C Electric Company, Salix Pharmaceuticals, Inc., SanDisk Corporation, Sangamo Biosciences, Inc., Semprius, Inc., Small Business Association of Michigan—Economic Development Center, Small Business Exporters Association of the United States.

Small Business Technology Council, Smart Bomb Interactive, Smile Reminder, SmoothShapes, Inc., Solera Networks, South Dakota Biotech Association, Southern California Biomedical Council, Spiration, Inc., St. Louis University, Standup Bed Company (The), State of New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development, Stella Group, Ltd., StemCells, SurgiQuest, Inc.

Symyx Technologies, Inc., Tech Council of Maryland/MdBio, Technology Patents & Licensing, Tennessee Biotechnology Association, Tessera, Inc., Texas A&M, Texas Healthcare, Texas Instruments, Three Arch Partners.

United Technologies, University of California System, University of Illinois, University of Iowa, University of Maryland, University of Michigan, University of Minnesota, University of New Hampshire, University of North Carolina System, University of Rochester, University of Utah, University of Wisconsin-Madison, US Business and Industry Council, US Council for International Business.

USGI Medical, USW—United Steelworkers, Vanderbilt University and Medical Center,

Virent Energy Systems, Inc., Virginia Biotechnology Association, Visidyne, Inc., VisionCare Opthamalogic Technologies, Inc., Washington Biotechnology & Biomedical Association, Washington University, WaveRx, Inc.

Wayne State University, Wescor, Inc., Weyerhaeuser, Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati, Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF), Wisconsin Biotechnology and Medical Device Association, Wyeth.

This list includes biotech industries, the pharmaceutical industry, small businesses, labor unions, universities, patent examiners, and of course inventors. And that's just a very small part of the list, as you will see with those people reading the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

And why are so many of these people, why are such a large number of people opposed to it? Perhaps the easiest to understand of why people are against this bill is the issue of disclosure. In this bill, disclosure is called "publication." From the time of the founding of our country until recent years it was mandated by our law that every patent application would be held confidential until the patent was issued. In fact, if a patent examiner left out some information about a patent application, they could end up in jail. It was a felony. Well, this bill is going to change all of that.

We have had a system that's been dramatically different from the rest of the world in this confidentiality, and it was this element that has been a major success for us. Yet in the legislation, H.R. 1908, as well as the legislation we beat 10 years ago, that's one of the first things they're trying to do is end the confidentiality. In fact, this bill, H.R. 1908, at this point eliminates the right of confidentiality for American inventors. H.R. 1908 would mandate the publication of all patent applications 18 months after the patent is applied for, whether or not the patent has been granted. Is everybody getting that? This bill will mandate that the people of India and China and Korea and elsewhere will have all of the details of our patent applications, our most cutting-edge secrets, before the patent is issued. It will be on the Internet.

Now, let's look at the numbers. 89,000 American patents were issued by the Patent Office last year; 32 percent of them went to small business or those companies who employ less than 500 employees. Twenty percent of U.S. origin patents, 20 percent of the patents chose to opt for the current provision of law that will prevent their application from being published before the patent is issued. So right now they have a right to opt for that because if people that apply for international patents, their patent is published after 18 months. But we have 20 percent of the U.S. origin patents opted not to permit their patent application to be published after 18 months. Last year, that means 20,000 inventors, about two-thirds of all small business inventors, chose to keep their patent secret and keep it away from the prying eyes of China, Japan, Korea, India and others who would steal their new innovations.

And you don't have to take my word that these countries want the bill passed for sinister purposes. Just look at this quote from the Economic Times of India dated July 23, 2007. Listen to this, and I quote, "A crucial bill making its way through the U.S. Congress is set to give new inexpensive options for the Indian drug makers to attack the patents that give monopoly rights to the top-selling multinational corporation brands in the largest pharmaceutical market." Did you get that? That means they're waiting so that our pharmaceutical companies can invest hundreds of millions of dollars to try to develop a new drug, and they know they're going to get it. The Indians already are saying it's an inexpensive option for the Indian drug makers because they're going to be able to take that information and get more drugs on the market there before our own people are able to get those drugs, and the hundreds of millions of dollars of research of our companies will be just stolen.

That's why the pharmaceutical industry is against this bill. It is estimated that already at this time the U.S. economy loses $250 billion a year from global intellectual property theft. This bill would double or triple that loss, and in the long run, equip our economic adversaries with what they need to compete with us and to drive Americans out of business. Got that? Our own technology being used to destroy American jobs.

It's our technology and our technological advancement that has let American workers compete with low-price workers overseas. Now they're going to change our laws because certain elements in our high-tech industries, meaning the electronics industry and the financial industry, do not want to pay royalties to our inventors; that we're going to provide this information to the rest of the world so they can steal it and use it against us. Doesn't sound like anybody's watching out for the interests of the American people.

Well, it should be easy for everyone to understand that part of the bill. And, in fact, the authors of the bill, even though they stuck to this, they put it in the bill originally. And 10 years ago they tried to push this same thing. They now say they're going to try to amend the bill so that provision isn't as tough.

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Well, what about the other provisions of the bill? Even if this provision comes out, because they know it is just too easy to understand how horrible that would be for America, the other provisions are just as bad. It is just that they are harder to understand.

So if the publication requirement comes out, people should understand that that, too, is part of a strategy to get the rest of the bill in which would undermine America's inventors. Those pushing H.R. 1908 want China, Japan, Korea and India and others to know every detail of developing technologies and our creative ideas, even before the patents have been issued. So we understand, this will facilitate that. That is pretty easy to see when you are talking about giving them all the information.

Just as bad, however, this bill opens up new avenues of attack for those foreign and domestic business predators who would purposely infringe on the inventor's patent rights. So, what we are doing, the rest of these provisions, that is easy to understand, this publication, you know, anyone can see, that is asking everybody around the world to steal our ideas and use them against us. Well, these other ideas are just as damaging. They basically would help foreign and domestic predators against our inventors.

H.R. 1908 would open up new doors of attack both before a patent is issued and after it is issued. Before, in expanded, what they call inter partes examination which, in effect, gives the infringers of a patent another opportunity to challenge every patent that they are infringing upon.

Once at the Patent and Trademark Office, and if unsuccessfully, if they fail the first time, they can try again in a court after the patent has been issued. So even if they had challenged the issuance of a patent beforehand in the current process, this bill allows them then to again challenge it after the patent has been issued in court, which dramatically increases the cost for the inventor, freezing out the little guys. It allows powerful corporate third parties to sit in and state their case while someone is trying to get their patent.

Yet again, this is an avenue given to the large corporate interests. And what does it do? It punishes the little guy. Then afterwards, we have a whole new postgrant review. Now that is in the beginning. They have a right to sit in on the process and to basically try to disrupt the patent process in the very beginning stages so the little guy has a tough time getting it granted. But then afterwards, there is a whole new postgrant review. This means that after the patent has been issued, we make it easier for the big guys to keep coming back and attacking the right of the person who developed this new technology. The new postgrant review lowers the bar of proving that a patent is invalid. Thus, we have actually changed the standard that has protected our inventors against aggressive and unjustified attacks by people challenging them.

Currently, the patent challenger must prove a patent's invalidity, prove

that a patent is invalid by clear and convincing evidence. That is a quote, "by clear and convincing evidence." They are going to change that to the "preponderance of evidence." How will that affect the patent system? What we have here is an attempt to change that wording and change the standard in a way that weakens the foundation that a patent holder relies upon in terms of all of the legal defenses that he has to make. We end up with a situation where investors are going to hesitate to get involved with any small inventors because we now have changed the basic rules that have protected the small inventors against unjustified attacks.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, as with the immigration bill, this is not a fix. None of this is a fix. It will just make it worse. The corporate elite tells us that this will reduce lawsuits. Well, Mr. Speaker, I am confused, because the system that is now being used in Europe which is the system that they are proposing that we now put into our system, the same postgrant review system, they are trying to change our rules to make the same rules as they do in Europe. Well, Europe has three times the number of lawsuits that are filed in attempts to steal the patent rights of the inventor through lawsuits than we have in the United States.

So what is this going to do? It is going to flood our system with lawsuits. Of course, lawsuits are expensive. The little guy loses. In fact, Japan dropped this element from their system because it produced too many lawsuits. They dropped it in 2004. So while we are strengthening the chance of the big guy to attack the little guy even after the patent has been granted, they found it to be a disaster in Japan. They discarded it. In Europe, it causes three times the number of lawsuits.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the right path to take. It is not reform. It will make things worse.

I am going to yield to my good friend, MARCY KAPTUR, in one moment. But let me just note one other element here before we do. We hear about the widespread problem with patent lawsuits. This is something we hear about all the time. This is why we have to pass this legislation. Well, there are horror stories concerning some companies that have been tied up, very few, but some have been tied up and eventually having to relent to trial lawyers because of delays in the patent system. We also know about the examiners who are overworked. We know that our patent examiners are underpaid. They aren't getting the training they need and the proper education they need. Yes, we need to fix that.

In reality, patent lawsuits, of course, do not stem from these problems. Lawsuits are not a major problem. In fact, between 1993 and 2005, the number of patent lawsuits versus the number of patents granted has held steady. So although we have problems in the system, that is not what is resulting in a higher number of lawsuits. In fact, in 2006, there were only 102 cases that actually went to trial.

Mr. Speaker, this number is far below the average number of cases that that one District Court judge sees annually. And it is far fewer than what they have over in Europe. Of course, there is room for improvement, and I readily admit that. But this is not a crisis that demands us to dramatically change the fundamental nature of the system.

Mr. Speaker, as we get into more of a discussion of this, my friend, MARCY KAPTUR, who has stood beside me in this fight for the last 10 years trying to protect the little guy, realizing that unless we protect the American inventor and American technology, that American workers and the standard of living of our people are going to decline, and that countries like Japan, India and others will steal our technology and use it to put our people out of work, this is a champion of the working people of our country. And we have a Republican-Democrat coalition here, as we will see on Friday.

I would now yield whatever time she may consume to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I would thank the fine gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) for securing the special order time this evening and join him in his special order concerning the patent bill that will be coming up later in the week.

I share his concern that this bill is not reform, and with what is happening across our country with the outsourcing of jobs, now is not the time to weaken U.S. patent protection, which is a constitutional protection going back to the founding of our Republic.

Congressman ROHRABACHER has gone through a lot of the technicalities of what is involved in this bill that is coming before us. Let me just say that there was a magazine article published back in June by Manufacturing and Technology News in their June 29, 2007 issue. Viewers can go to www.manufacturingnews.com and pick it up. It was written by Dr. Pat Choate. What I find particularly compelling about this article is it gets into who actually is driving this bill and why is this bill coming at us, a bill that will weaken protections for U.S. inventors, or those that file in our country, at a time when we were hemorrhaging jobs, certainly in the manufacturing sector, but not just that sector, and at a time when our trade deficit is now close to $1 trillion a year, a time when our budget deficit and our trade deficit is so high that the Federal Reserve a week ago had to resort to creating money, printing money and shoving it into our financial system to try to prop it up.

What is happening? Why would this bill be coming up now? We know that the forces that are driving this bill are very large corporations, transnational corporations, the very ones that are moving our jobs offshore. And what they are about is that sometimes those very big companies get sued because they infringe on other people's patents. They then go to court and lose, and they are forced to pay fines. In response, because they don't like that, they are financing an expensive lobbying propaganda and legal campaign to weaken our patent laws.

They are using the wrong measure. What they should do is stop infringing on other people's patents and not try to change the whole patent system as a solution to their predicament. Let me just place a number on the record that is quoted in this article. And I don't know that the gentleman has done this yet this evening, but between 1993 and 2005, four of these big companies paid out more than $3.5 billion in patent settlements. But in the same period, their earnings were more than $1.4 trillion, making their patent settlements only about one-quarter of 1 percent of their revenues. Now they wish to reduce even those costs, not by changing their obviously unfair and often illegal business practices, but by persuading Congress and also the Supreme Court to weaken U.S. patent protections which have been guaranteed since the founding of the Republic. They have tried to convince Congress that there is some type of litigation crisis. As the gentleman has just properly outlined, there is no litigation crisis in the courts relating to patents.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. There are 102 cases over a year, which is basically what one judge sees. There is no litigation crisis. But again, as you are aware, what we have here is they are trying to use that as cover to try to do something else, because the bill is not aimed at correcting that. The bill is aimed at permitting these large companies to take, at will, from America's inventors.

Ms. KAPTUR. We know how much they have been taking in other ways, taking health benefits away from our people, taking good wages away from our people, literally taking jobs and transporting them someplace else. And our patent system has been at the basis of the creativity of this country. It is a great, great system

By the way, I will say for the record, there is a website one can go to, www.uscourts.gov/caseload2006. contents.html. And on that site, you can look at these various cases to see that the courts aren't overloaded. The courts aren't saying they are overloaded in terms of suits relating to patents. But one of the parts of the bill that truly, truly concerns me, and why I shall vote against it, is that these very large transnational corporations

want to change the longstanding practice of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office of granting a patent to the person who actually invented it. We call it "first to invent." They want to change it to "first to file." In other words, if they get the system they want, which means that an inventor takes their brilliant idea to the Patent and Trademark Office, even before it is approved, it has to be posted on a Web site, and somebody in China or somebody in Tokyo can take that, file it in their country, and they say, "grant the patent to the first to file." Not the first to invent.

We protect individuals in this country. We protect that intellectual capital. To even suggest that we should go to a system that the gentleman has said that exists in Europe, for example, that is not the American system. Before the American system of economics got captured by these globalists who are controlling Wall Street and some of these big decisions that are hollowing out communities across this country, we had a country that respected the Constitution and the right of the inventor. You. The person who actually created the idea, whether you are a musician, whether you are an electronics expert, whether you are an automotive expert, whether you make a decent paper towel hanger for your kitchen, if you have a better idea, our legal system protects you against the large companies and the small.

□ 2000

Ms. KAPTUR. You have a right to your idea.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. The fundamental rules that were laid down 200 years ago on the very subject, for example, not just the confidentiality, which they are trying to destroy, but the subject that you brought up is first to file, versus the concept that we had in our system for over 200 years, which is that we respect the person who is the first to invent.

Inventors have told me over and over again that if we change our system, and, by the way, in Europe and Japan that is the way their systems are, and, of course, they don't protect the little guy. Their systems were designed at a time when they weren't talking about individual rights, but were trying to protect corporate interest in their country.

But first to file would flood our system with patent applications day after day after day. The large corporations who can afford to make a new filing every time there is a little step forward, you would end up flooding the system, as compared to what it is today. Talk about delays in the patent system. It would have a horrible impact.

In fact, some of the other things that they are suggesting also in terms of these, on June 7th, 2007, a letter to Congress from Chief Judge Paul Michael of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the U.S. Federal Circuit Court warned Congress that the learning curve for all of these changes that they are talking about, especially the first to file and the various changes in the standards, will result in additional court delays that would be severe and would add additional attorneys fees and costs.

So that is what we have. In the name of trying to prevent a glut, which they say now is flooding our courts, when there are only 102 cases, they are going to create changes that will flood our courts and add dramatically to the cost for an individual inventor.

Ms. KAPTUR. If the gentleman would be kind enough to yield to me again, it would force our inventors to defend themselves in a way that they don't have to today to go through all these additional bureaucratic hurdles, because under the current system we protect your idea, we protect your right as an inventor, no matter how small you are.

In fact, if you look at the patents filed every day, which I look at as the seed capital of the future of this economy, a third of those patent applications are from very small inventors. They are from universities. We see every day major counterfeiters around the world taking our ideas and doing knockoffs. They actually come to your district, Congressman ROHRABACHER, before they come to mine, because you have got that port down there in Southern California.

But we know how counterfeiting occurs and what the potential is in other places to cheat, and we have protections for our people against that.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. If I might add, the protections we have had, there are penalties that companies will pay, and you mentioned that those large corporations paid $2 billion, or I forget the exact figure you used, in terms of damages. Well, this bill would reduce the amount of damages that can be collected from a patent owner, an inventor who has been violated by an infringer.

If a company steals someone's nice idea and does not pay them for it and starts using it, especially foreign companies, this bill actually reduces the amount of money that can be expected by changing the criteria of how you can assess damages. What you will end up with is it won't be worthwhile for the inventor to have to pay the lawyers and go after these infringers, and our inventors will be high and dry, the technology that they do invent will go overseas, so they will cease to invent.

Who is going to be worse off? Everybody is going to be worse off.

Ms. KAPTUR. It would seem to me that at this point in our country we would be wanting to encourage innovation here in the United States. We want to be rewarding those people who are creating the future, whether it is in agriculture, whether it is in transportation, whether it is in medical care.

We have all seen the companies in our district where jobs are growing, and they begin with invention, they begin with creativity guaranteed by our Constitution. Why would we make it more difficult for them in the courts? Why would we make it easier for those who want to take their idea or get a sneak preview of their idea before their patent is granted? Why would we want to give them greater advantage in this struggle for jobs in America? It is beyond me. But I understand power and I understand the power of these companies.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. It is easy to understand why it is going on, because the bill that is coming forward on Friday, H.R. 1908, that bill is designed not to help American competitiveness. That bill is not designed to protect the property rights of inventors. That bill is totally designed for the purpose of weakening the system for the American inventor and protecting the ability of the big guys, the guys who are shipping the jobs to China already, that is how much they care about us, to protect their ability to use technology and to steal it without having to pay for it. That is the purpose. It weakens it. The whole bill is designed to weaken the patent system.

As I have used the example of the immigration bill before, where people didn't want to talk about amnesty, everybody knows that was the real purpose. They used the word "comprehensive" to cover up that and not to debate amnesty.

This bill, the "comprehensive reform bill," is designed to weaken the system, but they are using "reform" as a word to make it sound like they are trying to improve things.

Let us note the reason. If you ask these big companies and the people proposing this why we have to do it, they are not going to tell you we are doing it for the big guys. We are doing it because the financial industry and the electronics industry, they don't want to pay royalties, and they do their manufacturing overseas, so they don't care about the American worker anyway. They are not going to say that. What they are going to say is we need to harmonize all of our laws dealing with economics. We need to get up with the rest of the world. It is called harmonization. We heard that 10 years ago. We have to harmonize our law with the rest of the world.

We have had the strongest protection for patent rights of any country in the world since our country's founding, and it has served us well. Now they want to harmonize it with the rest of the world by lowering our standards, by lowering our protection.

If we did that with other freedoms, the freedom of religion, the freedom of

speech, there would be a revolution in our country, because if we want to push for all countries to have one standard, well, they should be increasing their standards to meet our level of protection of rights, not having us lower the protection that we have for our individual citizens.

Ms. KAPTUR. Yes. And you know at this time in this country, where it is hard to find a good paying job, it is really very hard, some of these companies that are trying to weaken our patent system actually pay their staffs less than companies that are in communities like I represent, where people earn a living wage.

These companies also outsource a lot of jobs related to component manufacture and so forth. I find it interesting that they have so much power and they have so much influence that now they are trying to, in a way, take away the potential for districts like mine to reinvent themselves by protecting those who are creating new ideas. In fact, they want to get rid of this opt-out provision, where if you are a small inventor and you file as first-to-invent at the Patent Office, you have a choice whether you want foreign entities to be able to see that invention now. They have this opt-out provision, where you protect yourself before you are able to get the approval and try to get the money to manufacture or provide the service that you want to provide.

This will make it very difficult. About half of the inventions that we have come from small businesses, universities and independent inventors who select that opt-out provision.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Right, because they don't want the foreign interests to have all that information even before they get issued the patent.

Ms. KAPTUR. Absolutely. I don't think the average American understands how hard it is to get the money to start up your company. Once you have filed and gotten the patent itself, it is not easy if you are a small inventor. Why would you want to reveal that abroad?

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Clearly, when we are talking about harmonizing our laws with the rest of the world, this is not an excuse to dramatically bring down the rights that have been enjoyed, the protections our people have enjoyed, and which have assured America's prosperity and the security of our people.

In fact, let's take a look at these huge electronics corporations and huge financial interests that are pushing H.R. 1908. These are the same companies that build their manufacturing units in China and have built up the economy of China so they can outcompete Americans. These are the same companies that have actually worked with a despotic gangster regime in Beijing so that their computers can be used to help track down political dissidents.

They tell us, well, we have to improve the economy of China in order to have them evolve into a more peaceful and more Democratic country. That is baloney. What they are doing over there is getting a quick profit. They are sitting over there getting their blood money at a 25 percent profit a year, when if they would have the same projects and have the same manufacturing in the United States, perhaps they would only make a 5 or 10 percent profit.

What it is, they have no loyalty to American ideals and they don't have a loyalty to the American worker. Without American working people standing up for these principles, these big companies would have nothing. We would live in a world that would be awash with tyrants, if it wasn't for the American people who defend liberty and justice throughout the world.

But yet these corporations take all of them for granted, just like they take for granted these small inventors. They look at them as nerds. These big executives, who will live in gated communities and go to the country clubs, they look at these inventors as nerds. The creative types are just the creative types. We have seen it over and over again.

That is the way they treat the American people as well, with arrogance and with a total lack of consideration. They go over and they invest in China, when they should be giving jobs, decent paying jobs, to the American people. But their profit margin would be a little less.

By the way, that profit margin that we are talking about, this isn't a profit margin that goes just to their stockholders. We are talking about big corporate billionaires who give themselves huge corporate salaries. And what are they doing? They are putting American workers out of work and sending it over to China.

This bill is their bill. H.R. 1908 will permit them to not only take the jobs to China, but to take the technology that is invented in our country to China to outcompete the workers here that are left.

Ms. KAPTUR. As a member of the Defense Subcommittee, the gentleman might be surprised to learn that today I spent part of my day learning that the U.S. Department of Defense main contract for procurement of tires for our vehicles, defense vehicles, is from a foreign company. And we have very few tire manufacturers left in the United States of America.

I couldn't believe it. The company that is favored, Michelin, is building a facility in China to manufacture tires. I thought, wait a minute. What about Akron, Ohio? What about North Carolina? What about Kansas? What about other places where we make tires in this country? How is it possible that the Department of Defense signs a contract for tires with a foreign company? I have got nothing against Michelin, but what about American jobs and technology?

Mr. ROHRABACHER. The gentlewoman is right on target. What you have to do to understand how evil that is is realize that the Chinese couldn't have built that tire company because they did not have the equipment to do it. We have a major corporation from the United States sending our technology and our equipment over there, where American workers in the past would be able to outproduce low-paid Chinese workers because we had the technology. Our corporate leaders now have sent jobs over there by giving them the technology they need to outcompete American workers.

I will have to say we have a little disagreement on trade in terms of democratic countries, because I don't see anything wrong with trading with democratic countries. What we are referring to right now is something we both totally agree on, how can we have free trade with despotic regimes like China and other dictatorships around the world, where they keep their own people in abject poverty, and we are going to let our corporations take our technology over there, take even our investment there? A lot of times it is done with government-guaranteed loans from our government.

So this is all part of an overall problem, not a problem, but a threat to the American people, and this is a new wrinkle. In H.R. 1908, this is just the part where they are going to take the technology that is invented here immediately over and let their companies overseas steal it and use if, and then say to the inventors, go ahead and sue us. Try to get it.

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Ms. KAPTUR. I share the gentleman's value of free trade among free people, and I also believe it should be a two-way street. So when the United States has a trade imbalance with any country of over $10 billion each of three consecutive years, I think we should go back and see what is wrong with that agreement. I think it ought to be assessed by the administration. I think we should find out what is going wrong.

We are not doing that anywhere on the globe. Whether it is China or whether it is Mexico, we are falling into deeper and deeper debt.

I think the measure is a real measure, not just political, but also the bottom line. Are we winning or losing in that trade relationship? If we are losing in that trade relationship, we ought to fix it.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. One thing we know is that today's corporations are far different than in the past. We have corporations that are basically multinational corporations. Yeah, American citizens may lead up these corporations, but they consider themselves to

be the head of a huge multinational organization, and their loyalty isn't to the people of the United States, it is to, supposedly, the corporate structure which, of course, could mean that they put thousands of Americans out of work and not give it even a second thought.

We cannot rely on these corporate elites to make the policy that will determine the future of our country. And that is what is happening here. The corporate elite, basically the high-tech billionaires, have come around and written H.R. 1908, and it will be a disaster for the American people if we let this go by because in the long term it will eliminate our technological edge over our competitors.

Ms. KAPTUR. The gentleman was talking about the cheating that is done by many companies globally, and one of the reasons I don't care for the bill that is going to be brought before us is right now there are at least 15 different factors that a court can weigh in assessing fines on companies that cheat, that infringe on someone else's patent. What happens under this bill is these 15 factors that the courts like because it helps them make a judgment in whatever the particulars of the case might be, are reduced to one and the other 14 factors don't really have to be weighed. So there is a significant change in this legislation that would heavily impact on what the courts can do and how they look at a given case.

I will submit this article for the RECORD that talks about Bose's port tube technology being infringed on by JBL as an example of what is happening.

[From Manufacturing & Technology News, June 29, 2007]

COVERING INNOVATION, GLOBALIZATION AND INDUSTRIAL COMPETITIVENESS

PATENT "REFORM" IS ANYTHING BUT

(By Pat Choate)

Ironically, Congress is now threatening China with harsh remedies if it does not quickly stiffen its patent protections, even as Congress marks up legislation that will dramatically weaken U.S. patent protections. This bill is the Patent Reform Act of 2007.

This schizophrenic policy is being driven by a group of "Big Tech" transnational corporations that repeatedly infringe the patents of others, get sued, lose in court and are then forced to pay billions of dollars in penalties. Now, in response, they are financing an expensive lobbying, propaganda and legal campaign to weaken U.S. patent laws by passing this Patent "Reform" Act. They cleverly call themselves The Coalition for Patent Fairness (CPF); included are large transnational corporations such as Adobe, Microsoft, Cisco, Intel, eBay, Lenovo, Dell and Oracle.

During the period 1993-2005, four of the CPF companies paid out more than $3.5 billion in patent settlements. In the same period, their combined revenues were $1.4 trillion, making their patent settlements only about one-quarter of one percent of their revenues. Now, they wish to reduce even those costs, not by changing their obviously unfair, and often illegal, business practices, but by persuading Congress, and also the Supreme Court, to weaken U.S. patent protections.

These corporations have convinced many members of Congress and many editorial writers that the U.S. patent system is badly broken and that it requires a major legislative overhaul. Supposedly, they say, the U.S. is in the midst of a "litigation crisis" where responsible corporations (CPF members) are being penalized by unworthy lawsuits. And, also supposedly, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) is issuing massive numbers of unworthy patents that are being used in lawsuits against innovative companies (again, CPF members).

The "litigation crisis" and "unworthy patents" allegations simply do not hold up under examination.

The real facts of the so-called litigation crisis are that for the past two decades the number of patent lawsuits commenced annually has been about 1.5 percent of all patents granted. In 2006, it was 1.47 percent. This is business as usual. Most patent lawsuits, moreover, settle before trial. In 1979, some 79 percent of patent cases settled before trial, while in 2004 almost 86 percent did. Matters are actually improving.

Also, the U.S. has few patent trials: For instance, in 2001 only 76 patent lawsuits were tried and only 102 went to trial in 2006. By no measure can 102 patent trials be considered a national litigation crisis. The annual report of Federal Judicial Caseload Statistics, which is on the Internet, provides the factual antidote to false claims of a litigation crisis (www.uscourts.gov/caseload2006/contents .html).

As to the massive numbers of "unworthy patents" argument, the real-world test is how many patents are challenged and the outcome of those challenges. Between 1981 and 2006 the USPTO issued more than 3.1 million patents. In that period, 8,600 were challenged at the Patent Office through *inter partes* and *ex parte reexaminations*. The number challenged amounts to less than three-tenths of one percent. Of those challenged, about 74 percent resulted in claims narrowed or cancelled. In addition, almost 60 percent of the relatively few patents challenged in a court trial are sustained.

My point is that the USPTO's work is certainly not perfect, but the Patent Office is also not pouring out a stream of bad patents.

If there are no patent "litigation crisis" and no patent "quality crisis," what is the real purpose of the Patent Reform Act of 2007 legislation before Congress?

A main goal is to legislate changes that will reduce penalties paid by infringers. Under existing law, a patent holder who is infringed upon is entitled to damages adequate to compensate for infringement, but in no event less than a reasonable royalty. The courts now consider a list of 15 factors in that calculation, including apportioning the part of the realizable profit created by the infringed invention versus other factors such as the manufacturing process, promotion, sales or other patents owned by the infringer.

Under this bill, however, Congress mandates that the court "ensure that a reasonable royalty is applied only to the economic value properly attributable to the patent's special contribution over the prior art" while only allowing the consideration of the other 14 factors. The bill goes on to require that the court subtract from the analysis "the economic value properly attributable to the prior art, and other features or improvements, whether or not patented that contribute economic value to the infringing product or service." Think of this as a big finger on the scales of justice that favors the infringer.

Often, the infringed component is only one of dozens of parts and contributions that make up the product, but that component may be the very thing that makes the product sell.

JBL infringed Bose's patented port tube technology, for instance, which gives Bose speakers their distinctive clarity. Bose's technology vastly improved the sound of the JBL speakers and drove JBL's sales. Bose sued and won. JBL wanted the royalty determination based on the small value of a cheaply made, plastic port tube. The federal court, however, determined that Bose's technology is what drove JBL's sales and set the damages on the value of the entire speaker system. If the damages were apportioned only to the cost of making the port tube, Bose would have received a tiny fraction of what its invention was worth. If JBL were allowed to subtract the value of all prior art in the damage calculation, which this legislation would allow, Bose would likely have gotten almost zero.

Cutting the damages paid by infringers is the goal of the many serial infringers supporting this provision.

Chief Judge Paul R. Michel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit advised Congress in a letter dated June 7, 2007, that the current law on apportionment is stable, works well and is understood by litigators and judges, and that the new proposal would be a radical change that would cause great chaos in the legal system. He noted that this change would require a massive damage trial in every case and a new kind of costly macroeconomic analysis. "Resulting additional court delays would be severe," he wrote, "as would additional attorneys' fees and costs." I think that we can mark him down as opposed.

One other pernicious result is this "primary factor" apportionment provision would actually encourage more infringement. Rather than negotiate with a patent owner and pay for use of an innovation, many infringers would simply go ahead and use it, pay nothing and, if caught and proceeded against, then pay a small royalty payment eventually set by a federal judge.

If Congress enacts this provision, it is sanctioning the "taking" of a patent owner's property and drastically reducing the price, if anything, an infringer must pay. Think of it as "self-licensing" someone else's patent. During the life of a patent, copyright or trademark, there is no difference between real property and intellectual property. A patent belongs to someone. Often it has great value. The owners should decide how it is used and the terms of that use, not the infringers.

A second goal of the proposed legislation is to force the USPTO to publish on the Internet all patent applications 18 months after the date they are filed. Since most patent applications now take an average 31 months to process, the Big Tech corporations that are sponsoring this legislation would get an advanced peek at an applicant's secrets more than a year before the inventor has patent protection, that is, if the patent is even granted, which for half of all applications, it is not. If an infringer took those secrets to China or India or anywhere where patent protection is lax, as many would, the inventor's only recourse would be to go to those countries and file a lawsuit. Few small companies, universities and inventors can afford this.

Foreign pirates find this mandatory publication provision particularly useful. For China, South Korea and many other nations, the USPTO's computer in Arlington, Va., is their primary source of R&D. Many foreign corporations and governments fill a room with computers, engineers and fast Internet connections and then task them with finding new technologies in unprotected U.S. patent applications. The U.S. isn't the only country with this problem; the Japanese Patent Office reports their computers get 17,000 hits per day from China and 55,000 hits per day from South Korea.

When Congress first enacted this 18-month publication requirement in 1999 it also created a loophole. Inventors can opt-out of having their applications published if they agree not to file for any foreign patents. About half of all applications from small businesses, universities and independent inventors select to opt-out. The proposed bill would eliminate this opt-out choice.

The Big Tech corporations also want Congress to change the long-standing practice of the U.S. Patent Office of granting a patent to the first-person-to-invent to the practice used in Europe, Japan, China and elsewhere where the patent goes to the first-person-to-file the patent application.

A firt-to-file system strongly favors big corporations, who have the resources to track every aspect of an invention and file boxes and boxes of materials to support their claims, over small businesses, independent inventors and universities, who do not.

Equally important, this change of systems would create chaos at the USPTO and greatly contribute to the slowing of U.S. innovation. The USPTO would have to create numerous new forms and procedures and retrain its thousands of patent examiners and administrative people, even as it works down a backlog of 750,000 applications. All inventors, companies, patent lawyers and federal judges in the U.S. would be forced to learn this new system, its procedures and rules.

The turmoil created by this shift in the already beleaguered USPTO would guarantee a logjam there—one far greater than the passport backlog fiasco now underway at the State Department.

Incongruously, this legislation also proposes to solve America's supposed patent "litigation crisis" by creating a new forum for more litigation. This proposed "post grant" opposition process provides an infringer a lowcost means to challenge the very patent it is infringing and allows it to do so over the entire 20 year life of the patent at a lower burden of proof than required in a federal court.

Europe has the very system that Congress is being asked to copy. It is a litigation heaven for the patent bar. The annual European Patent Office (EPO) challenge rate was 5.4 percent of granted patents in 2005. The combination of all USPTO ex parte and inter partes challenges, all interference cases, plus all patent lawsuits commenced calculated as per the number of patents granted produces a comparable U.S. challenge rate of 1.8 percent. The EOP challenge rate is three times that of the United States and that does not count any patent lawsuits in Europe.

Japan dropped this system in 2004 because it created too many lawsuits. Of the many bad ideas in this legislation, this post grant litigation process is probably the worst.

The principal victims of these and other Patent Reform Act of 2007 proposals will be small entity inventors—small businesses, individual inventors, universities and nonprofit research organizations. Their patents are often the greatest, if not only, assets they hold. Most often, they need ownership of an unchallenged patent in order to get financing to actually develop it. And, when their patent secrets are stolen and used by larger infringers, they are generally unable to finance a lawsuit, particularly if the infringer operates outside the United States.

Yet, it is small entity inventors who file almost 30 percent of all U.S.-origin patent applications and receive 31 percent of all patents granted. Unlike the Big Tech companies, most of these innovators keep their R&D and production in the U.S. They are vital to America's future. But they are fragile. Special consideration of their situation and needs is in the nation's best interest.

Fortunately, many U.S. groups and organizations oppose the Patent Reform Act of 2007. Included are the National Association of Manufacturers, the U.S. Business and Industrial Council, more than 450 venture capital firms, the Big Ten universities, plus dozens of other organizations. The Department of Commerce and the USPTO have written Congress that they do not support eliminating the 18-month opt-out rule, changing to a first-to-file system, altering the apportionment provision or creating a new litigation forum. Unfortunately, all this opposition has mattered little so far and this dangerous legislation is still moving forth in the House and Senate Judiciary Committees.

Each Member of Congress needs to closely examine the Patent Reform Act of 2007 for it will deeply affect every state, every community and every congressional district. We face a historic economic challenge in the global economy. Now is the time for Congress to strengthen U.S. patent protections rather than weaken them.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. People need to know that H.R. 1908 will be coming to the floor on Friday. I call it the "Steal America's Technology Act," and we need to defeat this bill. We need to have the support of the public and of our colleagues, and we are asking for that support today.

I would like to close with one story. It is a story of a statue of a man downstairs. If someone is going through the Capitol, he needs to look at the statue. There are many statues here, but it is a statue of a man named Philo Farnsworth. He was the personification of an individual inventor. He discovered, with his creative genius, the picture tube, the secret that created the picture tube for television. RCA had spent hundreds of millions of dollars trying to find that secret. Philo Farnsworth made the mistake of trusting David Sarnoff, the head of RCA, with the secret, thinking we are going to work together to develop this for all humankind.

Sarnoff immediately cut off all communications with this man and tried to steal this invention, claiming credit for RCA itself. For 20 years, poor Philo Farnsworth, the personification of the little guy, was being beaten down by David Sarnoff because he didn't want to pay the royalties or give the credit to this one little guy, this one lone American.

That case went all the way to the Supreme Court, and the Supreme Court, God bless America, sided with the little guy, sided with Philo Farnsworth and reaffirmed that we are talking about rights that are guaranteed by our Constitution for all our citizens, the big guys and the little guys.

This bill, H.R. 1908, is a big guys' bill designed by the big guys to steal from the little guys and in the long run it will hurt all Americans.

I proudly stand by MARCY KAPTUR and Mr. MANZULLO and others who will be leading, helping us fight this back on Friday. We need everyone's support. We need all constituents to talk to their Congressman on this issue.

Ms. KAPTUR. I thank the gentleman for yielding me time this evening, and I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on the patent bill coming up on Friday. Don't weaken U.S. patent protections that are based on our Constitution. Give our inventors and their creativity a chance to flourish for the next generation.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALZ of Minnesota). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

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AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WALZ of Minnesota) at 9 o'clock and 18 minutes p.m.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of travel problems.

Mr. PLATTS (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of attending a funeral for a soldier killed in action in Afghanistan.

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of illness.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCGOVERN, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. LIPINSKI, for 5 minutes, today.
Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, for 5 minutes, today.
(The following Members (at the request of Mr. LATOURETTE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)
Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, September 12.
Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, September 12.
Mr. REICHERT, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, and pursuant to House Resolution 632, the House stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honorable PAUL E. GILLMOR.
There was no objection.
Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 19 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, September 6, 2007, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

3110. A letter from the Secretary of the Air Force, Department of Defense, transmitting Notice of the decision to conduct a standard competition of the Precision Measurement Equipment Laboratory function at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina, and Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2461; to the Committee on Armed Services.

3111. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Reserve Affairs, Department of Defense, transmitting the National Guard ChalleNGe Program Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2006, pursuant to 32 U.S.C. 509(k); to the Committee on Armed Services.

3112. A letter from the Comptroller, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's quarterly report as of June 30, 2007, entitled, "Acceptance of contributions for defense programs, projects and activities; Defense Cooperation Account," pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2608; to the Committee on Armed Services.

3113. A letter from the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting authorization of the enclosed list of officers to wear the insignia of the grade of major general accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

3114. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, certification regarding the proposed technical assistance agreement for the export of technical data, defense services, and defense articles to the Government of Singapore (Transmittal No. DDTC 008-07); to the Committee on Armed Services.

3115. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting a copy of proposed legislation entitled the Native American and Native Hawaiian Housing Reauthorization and Improvements Act of 2007; to the Committee on Financial Services.

3116. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting a copy of proposed legislation entitled the Voucher and Rent Simplification Act of 2007; to the Committee on Financial Services.

3117. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-103, "Closing of a Public Alley in Square 28, S.O. 04-13414, and Closing Clarification in Square 739, S.O. 06-221, Amendment Act of 2007," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3118. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-94, "Retail Class Exemption Clarification Temporary Act of 2007," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3119. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-93, "Bank Charter Modernization Temporary Amendment Act of 2007," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3120. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-91, "Non-Resident Taxi Drivers Registration Temporary Amendment Act of 2007," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3121. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-92, "Unfoldment, Inc., Equitable Real Property Tax Relief Clarification Temporary Amendment Act of 2007," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3122. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-85, "Ballpark Parking Completion Amendment Act of 2007," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3123. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-84, "Ballpark Hard and Soft Costs Cap Act of 2007," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3124. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-86, "One-Time Relocation of Licensees Displaced by the Ballpark and Skyland Development Project Act of 2007," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3125. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-87, "District of Columbia Sentencing and Criminal Code Revision Commission Amendment Act of 2007," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3126. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-88, "Election Date Amendment Act of 2007," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3127. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-89, "Capitol Riverfront Business Improvement District Amendment Act of 2007," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3128. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-95, "Heat Wave Safety Temporary Amendment Act of 2007," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3129. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-96, "District of Columbia Consumer Protection Fund Temporary Amendment Act of 2007," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3130. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-97, "District of Columbia Regional Airports Authority Clarification Temporary Amendment Act of 2007," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3131. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-98, "Calvin Woodland Sr. Place Designation Act of 2007," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3132. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-99, "Adams Alley Designation Act of 2007," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3133. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-100, "Joe Pozell Square Designation Act of 2007," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3134. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-101, "Senior Driver Empowerment Amendment Act of 2007," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3135. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-102, "Historic Preservation Tax Credit Partnership and Limited Liability Company Clarification Amendment Act of 2007," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3136. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-90, "Eastern Market and Georgetown Public Library Disaster Relief Temporary Act of 2007," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3137. A letter from the Acting Assistant Administrator for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, transmitting a report on the Administration's category rating system covering the period from November 23, 2005 through November 22, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3319(d); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3138. A letter from the Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2007 through 2012; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3139. A letter from the Executive Director for Operations, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting pursuant to the provisions of the Federal Activities Inventory Reform (FAIR) Act of 1998 (Pub. L. 105-270) and

OMB Circular A-76, Performance of Commercial Activities, the Commission's FY 2006 inventory of Commercial Activities and Inherently Governmental Functions; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3140. A letter from the Interim Director, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting Pursuant to Title II, Section 203, of the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002, the Corporation's Supplemental Report for Fiscal Years 2004, 2005, and 2006; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3141. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Migratory Bird Permits; Regulations for Managing Resident Canada Goose Populations (RIN: 1018-AV15) received August 28, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

3142. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Migratory Bird Hunting; Final Frameworks for Early-Season Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations (RIN: 1018-AV12) received August 28, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

3143. A letter from the Acting Deputy Director, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Final Rule to Remove the Idaho Springsnail (Pyrgulopsis(=Fontelicella) idahoensis) from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife (RIN: 1018-AU66) received August 23, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

3144. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for Catesbaea melanocarpa (RIN: 1018-AU76) received August 23, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

3145. A letter from the Chief, Division of Management Authority, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Revision of Regulations Implementing the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (RIN: 1018-AD87) received August 22, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

3146. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Regulations To Implement the Captive Wildlife Safety Act (RIN: 1018-AT69) received August 22, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

3147. A letter from the Chief, Division of Management Authority, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Revision of Regulations Implementing the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (RIN: 1018-AD87) received August 20, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

3148. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for the Hine's Emerald Dragonfly (RIN: 1018-AU74) received August 23, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

3149. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Provisions; Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Extension of Emergency Fishery Closure Due to the Presence of the Toxin that Causes Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning [Docket No. 050613158-5262-03; I.D. 090105A] (RIN: 0648-AT48) received August 14, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

3150. A letter from the Director Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch in the Western Aleutian District of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No. 070213033-7033-01] (RIN: 0648-XB58) received August 14, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

3151. A letter from the Acting Director Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch and Rougheye Rockfish in the Western Aleutian District of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No. 070213033-7033-01] (RIN: 0648-XB45) received August 14, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

3152. A letter from the Acting Director Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch in the West Yakutat District of the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No. 070213032-7032-01] (RIN: 0648-XB43) received August 14, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

3153. A letter from the Chief Justice, Supreme Court of the United States, transmitting a copy of the Report of the Proceedings of the Judicial Conference of the United States for the March 2007 session, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 331; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

3154. A letter from the General Counsel, Department of Commerce, transmitting a copy of a draft bill entitled, "the Hague Agreement Implementation Act"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

3155. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's determination on a petition on behalf of a class of workers from the Rocky Flats Plant in Golden, Colorado be added to the Special Exposure Cohort (SEC), pursuant to the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000 (EEOICPA); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

3156. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's determination on a petition on behalf of a class of workers from the Rocky Flats Plant in Golden, Colorado be added to the Special Exposure Cohort (SEC), pursuant to the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000 (EEOICPA); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

3157. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's determination on a petition on behalf of a class of workers from the Rocky Flats Plant in Golden, Colorado be added to the Special Exposure Cohort (SEC), pursuant to the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000 (EEOICPA); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

3158. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Twenty-Third Annual Report of Accomplishments Under the Airport Improvement Program for Fiscal Year 2006; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3159. A letter from the United States Trade Representative, Executive Office of the President, transmitting consistent with section 2105(a)(1)(B) of the Trade Act of 2002, a description of the change to an existing law that would be required to bring the United States into compliance with the United States-Panama Free Trade Agreement; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3160. A letter from the United States Trade Representative, Executive Office of the President, transmitting consistent with section 2105(a)(1)(B) of the Trade Act of 2002, a description of the change to an existing law that would be required to bring the United States into compliance with the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. MCGOVERN: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 633. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2786) to reauthorize the programs for housing assistance for Native Americans (Rept. 110–316). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. BISHOP of Utah:

H.R. 3473. A bill to provide for a land exchange with the City of Bountiful, Utah, involving National Forest System land in the Wasatch-Cache National Forest and to further land ownership consolidation in that national forest, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. MCNERNEY:

H.R. 3474. A bill to expand the Safe Streets Program, to establish a National Gang Activity Database, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CAPUANO:

H.R. 3475. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the estate and gift tax unified credit to an exclusion equivalent of $5,000,000, to adjust such amount for inflation, to repeal the 1-year termination of the estate tax, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. DUNCAN:

H.R. 3476. A bill to convey the parcel of real property known as the John Sevier Range in Knox County, Tennessee, to the

State of Tennessee; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. FERGUSON (for himself and Mr. TOWNS):

H.R. 3477. A bill to amend the Consumer Product Safety Act to require third-party verification of compliance of children's products with consumer product safety standards promulgated by the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. HILL:

H.R. 3478. A bill to prohibit the closure or relocation of the field office of the Farm Service Agency in Clark County, Indiana; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. KELLER:

H.R. 3479. A bill to amend title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to require, as a precondition to commencing a civil action with respect to a place of public accomodation or a commercial facility, that an opportunity be provided to correct alleged violations; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. KIRK (for himself and Mr. ANDREWS):

H. Con. Res. 203. Concurrent resolution condemning the persecution of labor rights advocates in Iran; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. MARCHANT:

H. Con. Res. 204. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress that States and local political subdivisions are not preempted from the enactment and enforcement of immigration-related laws and ordinances that do not directly conflict with Federal immigration laws; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. REGULA:

H. Res. 632. A resolution expressing the condolences of the House of Representatives on the death of the Honorable Paul E. Gillmor, a Representative of the State of Ohio; considered and agreed to.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mr. SHUSTER, Ms. FALLIN, Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN, Mr. KAGEN, Mr. ALTMIRE, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. SHULER, Mr. TANNER, Mr. HILL, Mr. BOYD of Florida, Mr. ROSS, Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. MAHONEY of Florida, Mr. WALZ of Minnesota, Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky, Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. ELLSWORTH, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. BOREN, Mr. MATHESON, Mr. MELANCON, Mr. GORDON, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas, Mr. WILSON of Ohio, Mr. CHANDLER, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. PATRICK MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. BARROW, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. WELCH of Vermont, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. HODES, Mr. ARCURI, Mr. HINCHEY, and Mr. CROWLEY):

H. Res. 634. A resolution encouraging participation in hunting and fishing, and supporting the goals and ideals of National Hunting and Fishing Day and the efforts of hunters and fishermen toward the scientific management of wildlife and conservation of the natural environment; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas (for herself, Mr. MEEKS of New York, and Mr. ELLISON):

H. Res. 635. A resolution recognizing the commencement of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting and spiritual renewal, and commending Muslims in the United States and throughout the world for their faith; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 21: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 74: Mr. GILCHREST and Mr. VAN HOLLEN.

H.R. 160: Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, and Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 241: Mr. NEUGEBAUER.

H.R. 278: Mr. KUHL of New York.

H.R. 303: Mr. RUSH, Mr. SESSIONS, and Mr. GRAVES.

H.R. 370: Mr. GRAVES.

H.R. 405: Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas and Mr. PEARCE.

H.R. 507: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 538: Mr. GONZALEZ.

H.R. 690: Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia.

H.R. 704: Mr. BARROW.

H.R. 715: Mr. STARK.

H.R. 725: Mr. PICKERING.

H.R. 743: Mrs. CUBIN.

H.R. 758: Mr. ISSA and Mr. ABERCROMBIE.

H.R. 772: Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN.

H.R. 881: Mr. ANDREWS.

H.R. 954: Mr. RUSH.

H.R. 997: Mr. MCCOTTER.

H.R. 1023: Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. CHANDLER, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Ms. FOXX, Mr. LAMPSON, Mr. GINGREY, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, and Mr. ROYCE.

H.R. 1043: Mr. MICHAUD and Mr. VAN HOLLEN.

H.R. 1071: Mr. WEINER.

H.R. 1091: Mr. GILCHREST.

H.R. 1092: Mr. ROSKAM.

H.R. 1110: Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. HAYES, Mr. WELCH of Vermont, and Mr. SALI.

H.R. 1125: Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. HOLT, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. BOSWELL, and Mr. SALAZAR.

H.R. 1154: Mr. KING of New York, Mr. HOLT, Mr. YOUNG of Florida, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. MITCHELL, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. ALTMIRE, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. CROWLEY, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. OBEY, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. HONDA, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. DENT, Mr. HELLER, Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. PICKERING, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. WAMP, Mr. WICKER, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. KIND, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Mr. RAMSTAD.

H.R. 1192: Mr. JINDAL and Mr. BACA.

H.R. 1223: Mr. BOUCHER.

H.R. 1236: Mr. BOOZMAN.

H.R. 1273: Mr. RODRIGUEZ.

H.R. 1303: Mr. WAMP, Mr. DOGGETT, and Mr. EMANUEL.

H.R. 1342: Mr. STEARNS.

H.R. 1346: Mr. RUSH.

H.R. 1394: Mr. RYAN of Ohio.

H.R. 1409: Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 1422: Mr. WYNN, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, and Mr. FILNER.

H.R. 1424: Mr. WOLF.

H.R. 1436: Mr. SESSIONS.

H.R. 1440: Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania, and Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.

H.R. 1461: Mr. PAYNE.

H.R. 1514: Mrs. DRAKE, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, and Mr. RODRIGUEZ.

H.R. 1518: Mrs. DRAKE and Mr. STUPAK.

H.R. 1532: Mr. DOGGETT.

H.R. 1537: Mr. DICKS.

H.R. 1553: Mr. LOBIONDO.

H.R. 1576: Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. WOLF, Mr. BONNER, Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia, and Mr. FORBES.

H.R. 1588: Mr. BOUCHER.

H.R. 1596: Mr. SAXTON and Mr. WAMP.

H.R. 1621: Ms. SCHWARTZ, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN, and Mr. MORAN of Kansas.

H.R. 1644: Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. WALZ of Minnesota, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. WILSON of Ohio, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. COHEN, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. LOEBSACK, and Mr. SCHIFF.

H.R. 1649: Mr. FORTUÑO.

H.R. 1650: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.

H.R. 1665: Mr. UPTON, Mr. OLVER, and Mr. BOUCHER.

H.R. 1687: Mr. STARK.

H.R. 1707: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.

H.R. 1713: Mr. SNYDER and Ms. BALDWIN.

H.R. 1732: Mr. JEFFERSON.

H.R. 1755: Mr. COHEN and Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 1771: Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida.

H.R. 1808: Mr. BROUN of Georgia.

H.R. 1823: Mr. LAMPSON.

H.R. 1876: Mr. TURNER, Mr. DAVIS of Alabama, Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. WYNN, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, and Mr. BACHUS.

H.R. 1907: Mr. INSLEE.

H.R. 1924: Mr. SMITH of Washington.

H.R. 1983: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 1992: Mr. PASTOR, Mr. HARE, and Mr. NADLER.

H.R. 2003: Mr. FILNER and Mrs. DAVIS of California.

H.R. 2015: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. KUCINICH, and Mr. COSTA.

H.R. 2045: Mrs. CAPPS and Mr. DOYLE.

H.R. 2061: Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. WYNN, and Ms. KAPTUR.

H.R. 2063: Mr. RODRIGUEZ and Mrs. BLACKBURN.

H.R. 2064: Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. WYNN, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mr. BOUCHER, and Mrs. NAPOLITANO.

H.R. 2073: Mr. BOUCHER.

H.R. 2075: Mr. WU.

H.R. 2095: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. CLEAVER, and Mr. WATT.

H.R. 2108: Mr. SESTAK.

H.R. 2116: Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. BONNER, and Mr. PORTER.

H.R. 2123: Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. MEEK of Florida, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, and Mr. ABERCROMBIE.

H.R. 2188: Mr. DOGGETT and Mr. KENNEDY.

H.R. 2236: Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California.

H.R. 2244: Mr. ALLEN and Mr. JINDAL.

H.R. 2290: Mr. LANGEVIN.

H.R. 2343: Mr. CONYERS, Ms. HOOLEY, and Mr. CUMMINGS.

H.R. 2353: Mr. ENGEL and Mr. LAMPSON.

H.R. 2417: Mr. WAXMAN and Mr. FILNER.

H.R. 2452: Mr. PLATTS.

H.R. 2478: Mr. PALLONE and Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California.

H.R. 2488: Mr. YARMUTH.

H.R. 2495: Mr. JINDAL and Mr. BOUCHER.

H.R. 2514: Mr. GORDON, Mr. PAUL, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. RUSH, Mr. GUTIERREZ, and Ms. SUTTON.

H.R. 2550: Mr. ROSS, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mr. BONNER, Mr. JINDAL, Mr. WAMP, Mr. SAXTON, and Mr. COOPER.

H.R. 2596: Mr. LEVIN, Mr. ISRAEL, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, and Mr. OLVER.

H.R. 2605: Mr. STARK.

H.R. 2606: Mr. BUTTERFIELD and Mr. CLAY.

H.R. 2666: Mr. FATTAH and Mr. WYNN.

H.R. 2677: Mr. ARCURI and Ms. BALDWIN.

H.R. 2734: Mr. HERGER and Mr. SHUSTER.

H.R. 2743: Mr. ROSS.
H.R. 2744: Mr. LEVIN, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
H.R. 2761: Mr. ROTHMAN.
H.R. 2814: Mr. GOODLATTE.
H.R. 2819: Mr. KUCINICH.
H.R. 2827: Mr. MARSHALL and Mr. MORAN of Kansas.
H.R. 2881: Mr. BACA.
H.R. 2894: Mr. FORBES.
H.R. 2911: Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
H.R. 2916: Mr. PAUL and Mr. PLATTS.
H.R. 2943: Mr. BOUCHER.
H.R. 2954: Mr. PLATTS, Mr. BACHUS, and Mr. BARTON of Texas.
H.R. 2958: Ms. CARSON.
H.R. 2997: Mr. SESTAK.
H.R. 3001: Ms. KAPTUR and Mr. BOUCHER.
H.R. 3026: Mr. SPRATT and Mr. WAMP.
H.R. 3046: Mr. SESTAK.
H.R. 3054: Mr. MCCOTTER.
H.R. 3084: Mr. CASTLE.
H.R. 3090: Mr. LAMPSON, Mr. WAMP, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. PAUL, Ms. PRYCE of Ohio, Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. MORAN of Kansas, Ms. KAPTUR, and Mr. BACHUS.
H.R. 3099: Ms. DELAURO.
H.R. 3140: Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, and Mr. GOODE.
H.R. 3144: Mr. LAMPSON.
H.R. 3145: Mr. FORBES and Mrs. MYRICK.
H.R. 3149: Mrs. MUSGRAVE.
H.R. 3150: Mr. GERLACH.
H.R. 3197: Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. MICHAUD, Ms. BORDALLO, and Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 3249: Mr. RODRIGUEZ and Mr. PORTER.
H.R. 3257: Mr. SMITH of Washington.
H.R. 3283: Ms. WATSON.
H.R. 3298: Ms. MATSUI, Mr. ANDREWS, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. COOPER, and Mr. FARR.
H.R. 3300: Mr. SHIMKUS.
H.R. 3320: Mr. WOLF, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. COHEN, and Mr. HASTINGS of Florida.
H.R. 3327: Mr. GONZALEZ and Mr. YOUNG of Florida.
H.R. 3339: Mr. BERMAN.
H.R. 3402: Mr. MORAN of Virginia and Mr. HINCHEY.
H.R. 3431: Mr. CROWLEY.
H.R. 3432: Mr. BERMAN and Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 3452: Mr. WELDON of Florida.
H.R. 3463: Ms. DELAURO, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. KIND, Ms. BORDALLO, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. SARBANES, and Mr. HILL.
H.J. Res. 6: Mr. FORBES.
H.J. Res. 40: Mr. UDALL of New Mexico and Mr. POMEROY.
H. Con. Res. 75: Mr. DOYLE.
H. Con. Res. 137: Mr. CAMPBELL of California and Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky.
H. Con. Res. 176: Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. CARNEY, and Mr. SPRATT.
H. Con. Res. 183: Mr. WELLER.
H. Con. Res. 193: Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina.
H. Res. 68: Mr. COHEN.
H. Res. 71: Ms. CLARKE.
H. Res. 185: Mr. COHEN.
H. Res. 209: Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts.
H. Res. 212: Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. EMANUEL, Mr. HARE, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. LANTOS, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, and Mr. TOWNS.
H. Res. 303: Mr. LAMPSON.
H. Res. 443: Mr. SPRATT.
H. Res. 472: Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. CARSON, Mr. MORAN of Kansas, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, and Mr. DAVIS of Illinois.
H. Res. 536: Mr. FATTAH.
H. Res. 554: Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. CLAY, Mr. FARR, Mr. PORTER, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
H. Res. 563: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. RUSH, Mr. COHEN, and Mr. CLEAVER.
H. Res. 616: Mr. SERRANO and Mr. KING of New York.
H. Res. 618: Mr. STARK.
H. Res. 629: Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Ms. LEE.
H. Res. 631: Mr. BISHOP of Utah and Mr. CANNON.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, OR LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Under clause 9 of rule XXI, lists or statements on congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits were submitted as follows:

The manager's amendment to be offered by Representative Conyers or a designee to H.R. 1908, the "Patent Reform Act," does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(d), 9(e), or 9(f) of Rule XXI.

AMENDMENTS

Under clause 8 of rule XVIII, proposed amendments were submitted as follows:

H.R. 811

OFFERED BY: MR. CONAWAY

AMENDMENT NO. 1: In section 252(b)(2)(B) of the Help America Vote Act of 2002, as proposed to be amended by section 2(d)(2) of the bill, strike the period and insert the following: ", but does not include any precinct which the chief executive of the State designates as a designated rural precinct under section 301(d)(2)(C) with respect to any election held in 2008.".

In section 252(b)(2)(C) of the Help America Vote Act of 2002, as proposed to be amended by section 2(d)(2) of the bill, strike the period and insert the following: ", but does not include any precinct which the chief executive of the State designates as a designated rural precinct under section 301(d)(2)(C) with respect to any election held in 2008.".

In section 301(d)(2)(A) of the Help America Vote Act of 2002, as proposed to be amended by section 2(e) of the bill, strike "subparagraph (B)" and insert "subparagraphs (B) and (C)".

Add at the end of section 301(d)(2) of the Help America Vote Act of 2002, as proposed to be amended by section 2(e) of the bill, the following:

"(C) WAIVER FOR CERTAIN RURAL PRECINCTS.—

"(i) WAIVER.—The requirements of this section which are first imposed on a State and jurisdiction pursuant to the amendments made by section 2 of the Voter Confidence and Increased Accessibility Act of 2007 shall not apply with respect to an election for Federal office in any precinct which the chief executive of the State involved designates as a designated rural precinct for purposes of this subparagraph with respect to the election (in accordance with clause (ii)).

"(ii) DESIGNATION OF PRECINCTS.—The chief executive of a State may designate a precinct as a designated rural precinct for purposes of this subparagraph with respect to an election if the precinct is located in a county classified as a nonmetropolitan county by the Secretary of Agriculture in the most recent classification issued by the Secretary prior to the date of the election.".

In section 321(a) of the Help America Vote Act of 2002, as proposed to be added by section 4(a) of the bill, add at the end the following:

"(3) EXCEPTION FOR DESIGNATED RURAL PRECINCTS.—A State shall not be required to administer an audit of the results of an election for Federal office in any precinct which the chief executive of the State involved designates as a designated rural precinct with respect to the election under section 301(d)(2)(C).".

H.R. 811

OFFERED BY: MR. CONAWAY

AMENDMENT NO. 2: In section 301(d)(2)(A) of the Help America Vote Act of 2002, as proposed to be amended by section 2(e) of the bill, strike "subparagraph (B)" and insert "subparagraphs (B) and (C)".

Add at the end of section 301(d)(2) of the Help America Vote Act of 2002, as proposed to be amended by section 2(e) of the bill, the following:

"(C) DELAY FOR CERTAIN RURAL PRECINCTS.—

"(i) DELAY.—This paragraph shall apply with respect to the designated rural precincts located within a State—

"(I) as if the reference in subparagraph (A) to 'November 2008' were a reference to 'November 2010'; and

"(II) as if the reference in subparagraph (B)(i) to '2012' were a reference to '2014'.

"(ii) DESIGNATED RURAL PRECINCT DEFINED.—In this subparagraph, a 'designated rural precinct' means, with respect to a State, a precinct which is—

"(I) located in a county classified as a nonmetropolitan county by the Secretary of Agriculture in the most recent classification issued by the Secretary prior to January 1, 2008; and

"(II) designated by the chief executive of the State as a designated rural precinct for purposes of this subparagraph.".

In section 328 of the Help America Vote Act of 2002, as proposed to be added by section 4(a) of the bill, strike "November 2008" and insert the following: "November 2008, except that a State shall not be required to administer any hand counts under this subtitle in any designated rural precinct (as defined in section 301(d)(2)(C)) with respect to any election prior to the regularly scheduled general elections held in November 2010".

H.R. 2786

OFFERED BY: MR. KING OF IOWA

AMENDMENT NO. 1: Page 18, strike lines 1 through 6.

H.R. 2786

OFFERED BY: MR. KING OF IOWA

AMENDMENT NO. 2: At the end of the bill, add the following new section:

SEC. 9. LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS.

No amounts made available pursuant to any authorization of appropriations under this Act, or under the amendments made by this Act, may be used to employ workers described in section 274A(h)(3)) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1324a(h)(3)).

H.R. 2786

OFFERED BY: MR. PEARCE

AMENDMENT NO. 3: At the end of the bill, add the following new section:

SEC. 9. DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM FOR GUARANTEED LOANS TO FINANCE TRIBAL COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.

(a) AUTHORITY.—To the extent or in such amounts as are provided in appropriation Acts, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (in this section referred to as the "Secretary") may, subject to the limitations of this section and upon such terms and conditions as the Secretary may prescribe, guarantee and make commitments to guarantee, the notes and obligations issued by Indian tribes or tribally designated housing entities (as such term is defined in section 4 of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (25 U.S.C. 4103)) with tribal approval, for the purposes of financing activities, carried out on Indian reservations and in other Indian areas, that under the first sentence of section 108(a) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 are eligible for financing with notes and other obligations guaranteed pursuant to such section 108.

(b) LOW-INCOME BENEFIT REQUIREMENT.—Not less than 70 percent of the aggregate funds received by an Indian tribe or tribally designated housing entity as a result of a guarantee under this section shall be used for the support of activities that benefit low-income Indian families (as such term is defined for purposes of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996) on Indian reservations and other Indian areas.

(c) FINANCIAL SOUNDNESS.—The Secretary shall establish underwriting criteria for guarantees under this section, including fees for such guarantees, as may be necessary to ensure that the program under this section for such guarantees is financially sound. Such fees shall be established in amounts that are sufficient, but do not exceed the minimum amounts necessary, to maintain a negative credit subsidy for such program, as determined based upon risk to the Federal Government under such underwriting requirements.

(d) TERMS OF OBLIGATIONS.—Notes or other obligations guaranteed pursuant to this section shall be in such form and denominations, have such maturities, and be subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by regulations issued by the Secretary. The Secretary may not deny a guarantee under this section on the basis of the proposed repayment period for the note or other obligation, unless the period is more than 20 years or the Secretary determines that the period causes the guarantee to constitute an unacceptable financial risk.

(e) LIMITATION ON PERCENTAGE.—A guarantee made under this section shall guarantee repayment of 95 percent of the unpaid principal and interest due on the notes or other obligations guaranteed.

(f) SECURITY AND REPAYMENT.—

(1) REQUIREMENTS ON ISSUER.—To ensure the repayment of notes or other obligations and charges incurred under this section and as a condition for receiving such guarantees, the Secretary shall require the Indian tribe or housing entity issuing such notes or obligations to—

(A) enter into a contract, in a form acceptable to the Secretary, for repayment of notes or other obligations guaranteed under this section;

(B) demonstrate that the extent of such issuance and guarantee under this section is within the financial capacity of the tribe; and

(C) furnish, at the discretion of the Secretary, such security as may be deemed appropriate by the Secretary in making such guarantees, including increments in local tax receipts generated by the activities assisted by a guarantee under this section or disposition proceeds from the sale of land or rehabilitated property, except that such security may not include any grant amounts received or for which the issuer may be eligible under title I of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996.

(2) FULL FAITH AND CREDIT.—The full faith and credit of the United States is pledged to the payment of all guarantees made under this section. Any such guarantee made by the Secretary shall be conclusive evidence of the eligibility of the obligations for such guarantee with respect to principal and interest, and the validity of any such guarantee so made shall be incontestable in the hands of a holder of the guaranteed obligations.

(g) TRAINING AND INFORMATION.—The Secretary, in cooperation with Indian tribes and tribally designated housing entities, shall carry out training and information activities with respect to the guarantee program under this section.

(h) LIMITATIONS ON AMOUNT OF GUARANTEES.—

(1) AGGREGATE FISCAL YEAR LIMITATION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law and subject only to the absence of qualified applicants or proposed activities and to the authority provided in this section, to the extent approved or provided in appropriations Acts, the Secretary may enter into commitments to guarantee notes and obligations under this section with an aggregate principal amount not to exceed $200,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2012.

(2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR CREDIT SUBSIDY.—There are authorized to be appropriated to cover the costs (as such term is defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974) of guarantees under this section such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2012.

(3) AGGREGATE OUTSTANDING LIMITATION.—The total amount of outstanding obligations guaranteed on a cumulative basis by the Secretary pursuant to this section shall not at any time exceed $1,000,000,000 or such higher amount as may be authorized to be appropriated for this section for any fiscal year.

(4) FISCAL YEAR LIMITATIONS ON TRIBES.—The Secretary shall monitor the use of guarantees under this section by Indian tribes. If the Secretary finds that 50 percent of the aggregate guarantee authority under paragraph (3) has been committed, the Secretary may—

(A) impose limitations on the amount of guarantees pursuant to this section that any one Indian tribe may receive in any fiscal year of $25,000,000; or

(B) request the enactment of legislation increasing the aggregate outstanding limitation on guarantees under this section.

(i) REPORT.—Not later than the expiration of the 4-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit a report to the Congress regarding the utilization of the authority under this section by Indian tribes and tribally designated housing entities, identifying the extent of such utilization and the types of projects and activities financed using such authority and analyzing the effectiveness of such utilization in carrying out the purposes of this section.

(j) TERMINATION.—The authority of the Secretary under this section to make new guarantees for notes and obligations shall terminate on October 1, 2012.

H.R. 2786

OFFERED BY: MR. PRICE OF GEORGIA

AMENDMENT NO. 4: At the end of the bill, add the following new section:

SEC. 9. ACCEPTABLE IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENT FOR OCCUPANCY OR ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Any assistance provided with any amounts made available pursuant to any authorization of appropriations under this Act, or under the amendments made by this Act, including occupancy in housing assisted with such amounts, may not be made available to, or on behalf of, any individual or household unless the individual provides, or, in the case of a household, all adult members of the household provide, valid personal identification in one of the following forms:

(1) SOCIAL SECURITY CARD WITH PHOTO IDENTIFICATION CARD OR REAL ID ACT IDENTIFICATION.—

(A) A social security card accompanied by a photo identification card issued by the Federal Government or a State Government; or

(B) A driver's license or identification card issued by a State in the case of a State that is in compliance with title II of the REAL ID Act of 2005 (title II of division B of Public Law 109-13; 49 U.S.C. 30301 note).

(2) PASSPORT.—A passport issued by the United States or a foreign government.

(3) USCIS PHOTO IDENTIFICATION CARD.—A photo identification card issued by the Secretary of Homeland Security (acting through the Director of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services).

(b) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall, by regulation, require that each tribally designated housing entity and other recipient of amounts described in subsection (a) take such actions as the Secretary considers necessary to ensure compliance with the requirements of subsection (a).

H.R. 2786

OFFERED BY: MR. PRICE OF GEORGIA

AMENDMENT NO. 5: At the end of the bill, add the following new section:

SEC. 9. REQUIREMENT OF OFFSETS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—No authorization of appropriations made by this Act, or by the amendments made by this Act, or any other provision of this Act that results in costs to the Federal Government, shall be effective except to the extent that this Act, or the amendments made by this Act, provide for offsetting decreases in spending of the Federal Government, such that the net effect of this Act and such amendments does not either increase the Federal deficit or reduce the Federal surplus.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection, the terms "deficit" and "surplus" have the meanings given such terms in the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 621 et seq.).

H.R. 2786

OFFERED BY: MR. WATT

AMENDMENT NO. 6: Page 3, line 9, strike the quotation marks and the last period.

Page 3, after line 9, insert the following:

"(1) LIMITATION ON USE FOR CHEROKEE NATION.—No funds authorized under this Act, or

the amendments made by this Act, or appropriated pursuant to an authorization under this Act or such amendments, shall be expended for the benefit of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma until the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma is in full compliance with the Treaty of 1866 and fully recognizes all Cherokee Freedmen and their descendants as citizens of the Cherokee Nation.".

H.R. 2786

OFFERED BY: MR. WESTMORELAND

AMENDMENT NO. 7: Page 18, strike lines 1 through 6.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CONGRATULATING MS. MADELINE ADAIR

HON. THOMAS G. TANCREDO

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. TANCREDO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of my constituents Ms. Madeline Adair of Littleton, Colorado, who will attend a People to People World Leadership Forum in 2008. Her outstanding academic merits and communal involvement have laid a solid foundation of individual integrity and dedication: both characteristics of a qualified leader. I am honored to represent such a promising young woman.

Created in 1956, the People to People Program is an educational travel program dedicated to fostering leadership potential in youth worldwide. People to People has helped more than 200,000 students and professionals develop their leadership skills based upon Dwight D. Eisenhower's belief that "people can make a difference where governments cannot." This unique interaction and exposure will enable Ms. Adair to gain a greater understanding and insider's perspective of Washington, DC.

Madam Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to acknowledge one of Colorado's own. Please join me in congratulating Ms. Adair and wishing her the best in her future endeavors.

HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF GREATER COLEMAN TEMPLE COGIC

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, today I would like to pay tribute to the Greater Coleman Temple Church of God in Christ as the pastor and congregation celebrate their 50th anniversary. A celebration will be held on September 9 in Saginaw, Michigan, in recognition of this momentous occasion. Bishop Roger L. Jones, pastor of Greater Holy Temple Church of God in Christ and prelate of the Southeast Michigan Jurisdiction will be the featured speaker and the theme is "Celebrating a Glorious Past, Embracing a Promising Future!"

Dr. Hurley J. Coleman and Dr. Martha W. Coleman founded the Greater Coleman Temple on September 7, 1957, under the name of Johnson Street Mission Church of God in Christ. Services were held in the garage attached to Pastor Coleman's home. Inspired by God, Pastor Coleman worked to fulfill the vision of building a church. In June 1961, with less than 30 members, a groundbreaking ceremony was held and the Johnson Street Mission became the Liberty Park Church of God in Christ.

The first mortgage was burned is 1972 ahead of its maturity date. April 1975 saw the groundbreaking for Phase II. When that mortgage was paid ahead of schedule, the congregation looked to expand and held the groundbreaking for Phase III in August 1989. Blessed with a congregation that continues to grow, the church has now moved to its third location at the World Outreach Campus.

In 1997 both Pastor and Mother Coleman received their Doctorates in Ministry. Martha Coleman passed away on December 14, 1999, and Pastor Coleman was called to the Lord on July 2, 2001. Their son, Superintendent Hurley J. Coleman, Jr., and his wife, Evangelist Sandra Coleman, assumed the leadership mantle of Greater Coleman Temple Church of God in Christ and continue to invigorate the congregation.

Madam Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in congratulating Greater Coleman Temple on 50 years of worship, prayer and evangelism. May the clergy, staff and congregation continue to thrive doing the work of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

IN RECOGNITION OF REVEREND JOHN J. BRYK

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Reverend John J. Bryk, on the occasion of his retirement as pastor of St. Hedwig's Parish in Lakewood, Ohio. Father John has devoted his entire life to the work of the church, and Cleveland has been blessed with Father John's commitment to living the gospel imperative of service to and love of others.

Since his ordination in 1953, Father John has been a faithful servant to the Cleveland community. As a parish priest, Father John has been responsible for the spiritual well-being of a whole community, a responsibility he took very seriously and fulfilled with enthusiasm and total commitment to his congregation. As an educator, Father John imparted to Cleveland's youth the wisdom to be well-rounded, upstanding adults committed to serving all humans. As a former student of Father John at Saint John Cantius in Cleveland, I have firsthand experience of Father John's ability to affect the lives of those around him.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honoring Reverend John J. Bryk's 54 years of ministry to the city of Cleveland. I am grateful for his dedication to the spiritual and communal needs of Cleveland. May his simple and abundant love of his congregation and Cleveland serve as an example for us all.

RECOGNIZING EDWARD JOHN DEML III FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Edward John Deml III, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 900, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Edward has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the many years Edward has been involved with Scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Edward John Deml III for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

DYAN WADE ALLEN MAKES HIS MARK ON THE WORLD

HON. BOB ETHERIDGE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Matt and Jennifer Allen on the birth of their child, Dyan Wade Allen. Dyan was born on Tuesday, August 7, 2007, and weighed 6 pounds and 12 ounces. My wife Faye joins me in wishing Matt and Jennifer great happiness upon this new addition to their family.

As the father of 3, I know the joy and pride that Matt and Jennifer feel at this special time. Children remind us of the incredible miracle of life, and they keep us young-at-heart. Every day, they show us a new way to view the world. I know the Allens look forward to the changes and challenges that their new son will bring to their lives while taking pleasure in the many rewards they are sure to receive as they watch him grow.

I welcome young Dyan into the world and wish Matt and Jennifer all the best as they raise him.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

RECOGNIZING THE HEPATITIS B FOUNDATION

HON. PATRICK J. MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the Hepatitis B Foundation and its founders for their many accomplishments in Hepatitis B advocacy. The foundation, which this year celebrated its 15-year anniversary, also recently unveiled the Pennsylvania Biotechnology Center right here in Bucks County. The Hepatitis B Foundation started in 1991 around a kitchen, as an effort to help a local family suffering from Hepatitis B. Today it is a one-of-a-kind, world-renowned organization.

Over 2 billion people are infected with Hepatitis B world-wide, including 12 million people in the United States. The disease causes liver infections, leads to cancer, and is particularly dangerous for children. Hepatitis B is 100 times more infectious than HIV, but safe and reliable vaccines are available, Because Hepatitis B can be prevented and treated, the Foundation has always believed that education is just as important as research.

The Hepatitis B Foundation is the only nonprofit organization solely dedicated to Hepatitis B education, research, and advocacy. The Foundation's O'Liver the mascot, hotlines and multilingual literature all promote awareness and understanding of Hepatitis B. Partnerships with government officials helped Pennsylvania become one of the first states to require student vaccinations. Madam Speaker, because of the efforts of ongoing Hepatitis education, there are now 47 States that have Hepatitis B vaccine requirements.

The new Biotechnology Center opened in October of 2006 as a result of a partnership between the Hepatitis B Foundation and Delaware Valley College. Their scientists conduct research in molecular biology, drug discovery, and early detection of cancer in order to find treatment options and a cure.

Madam Speaker, I would like to individually recognize Founders and Board Members Paul and Janine Witte, Timothy and Joan Block, and Executive Director Molly Conti for their dedication to Hepatitis B awareness and medical achievements. I thank them on behalf of the countless people who have learned and benefited from the Foundation. Their compassion for one family truly became a desire to change the world for the better.

CONGRATULATING MR. JOSHUA BARNHILL

HON. THOMAS G. TANCREDO

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. TANCREDO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of my constituents Mr. Joshua Barnhill of Aurora, Colorado, who will attend a People to People World Leadership Forum in 2008. His outstanding academic merits and communal involvement have laid a solid foundation of individual integrity and dedication: both characteristics of a qualified leader. I am honored to represent such a promising young man.

Created in 1956, the People to People Program is an educational travel program dedicated to fostering leadership potential in youth worldwide. People to People has helped more than 200,000 students and professionals develop their leadership skills based upon Dwight D. Eisenhower's belief that "people can make a difference where governments cannot." This unique interaction and exposure will enable Mr. Barnhill to gain a greater understanding and insider's perspective of Washington, DC.

Madam Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to acknowledge one of Colorado's own. Please join me in congratulating Mr. Barnhill and wishing him the best in his future endeavors.

KINGWOOD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, outside of Houston in 1969 a group of developers set out to create a suburban paradise hidden amongst the trees. From these humble beginnings, Kingwood has grown into a viable economic and residential force in southeast Texas. Now known as the "livable forest," locals work together daily so they may progress successfully into the future while at the same time preserving their unique surroundings.

Spearheading this progress is the Kingwood Chamber of Commerce. Founded in 2003, this group strives to meet the needs of the local community and encourage local trade. Since its inception, these fine Texans have participated in numerous business and community service projects. Sparky Nolan currently serves as the president of this organization, and has been an inspirational community leader from the start. Kingwood Chamber members recognize the importance of their consumer's quality of life in correlation with economic growth.

Last January the group organized "Travis McCormick Kleenwood Day." Members of the chamber worked together in teams with other local residents to help make their community more visually appealing. At the end of the event, hundreds of pounds of litter near sidewalks, greenbelt trails, and curbs were properly disposed of.

The Kingwood Chamber of Commerce also supports projects such as the Wildflower Project 2007, another demonstration of their commitment to bettering surrounding neighborhoods. In April the chamber organized the planting of wildflowers throughout the Kingwood area. The pride these Kingwood residents take in their community is certainly commendable, and is demonstrated not only in sponsorships like the Wildflower Project but in their support for local business and community organizations.

In addition to business growth, the Kingwood Chamber supports the entire community and stands for patriotism at its finest. Their support of local organizations like the Blue Star Mothers shows the chamber's concern and support for families with children who have served in the United States Armed Forces.

It gives me great pride to recognize the Kingwood Chamber for all they do. By working to better the community, Kingwood Chamber members understand the fundamental aspects of being Texan and I congratulate them on a job well done.

And that's just the way it is.

HONORING MR. T. VANCE LITTLE

HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, please join me in recognizing the contributions of an outstanding member of our Williamson County community, Mr. T. Vance Little. A descendent of pioneer settlers, graduate of Vanderbilt Law School, and member of several historic, preservation, and patriotic organizations, Mr. Little has dedicated himself to providing leadership in his community.

This distinguished citizen is a noted author, journalist, and host of local historic television programs. He is the historian for the city of Brentwood, chairman of the Friends of the Williamson County Museum, secretary of the Williamson County Records Commission, and a member of Brentwood United Methodist Church. He has also sponsored a monthly program on local history at the Martin Center for the past 10 years.

Mr. Little has received many honors including the Heritage Foundation "Patron of the Year," the Williamson County Historical Society "Volunteer of the Year," the Brentwood Chamber of Commerce "Citizen of the Year," and the Leadership Brentwood "Civic Award." Recently, in 2006, he received the prestigious "Living Legend" award from the Williamson County Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Little has reminded us that we have no more important obligation to our children and to ourselves than preserving our history. We appreciate all that he has done and thank him for the exceptional example that he has provided for others. I ask that you please join me in honoring Mr. T. Vance Little.

HONORING JAMES VASSAL

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to James Vassal in honor of his 100th birthday. A celebration was held at United Bethel Methodist Church on his birthday in my hometown of Flint, Michigan.

James Vassal was born on August 18, 1907, in Amory, MS, the middle of 5 children. He worked for Frisco Railroad in Memphis for 25 years. During these years he met President

Franklin D. Roosevelt twice. In 1945 he moved to Flint and went to work at the Chevrolet V–8 Engine Plant in Flint for 26½ years. He retired in 1971 and is a member of UAW Local 659.

He is a devoted member of United Bethel Methodist Church. He started attending services in 1946 in the basement of its future church on 12th Street. He worked as an usher and sang in the church gospel choir. James credits his grandfather for providing the foundation for his future devotion to United Bethel Methodist Church. He attends the 11 a.m. worship services every Sunday and is still a member of United Methodist Men and the Bible Study Group. In June, William Kornegay presented him with a certificate from the United Methodist Men's national office recognizing Vassal's "outstanding achievement" in the church. He was honored by the church's senior adult ministry at a luncheon on August 16. On his birthday, a dinner was held in his honor and attended by over 200 people. Many of James's relatives from Tennessee, Mississippi, Texas, Indiana, and Kentucky traveled to Michigan to join in the celebration. Sunday's worship centered on his contributions and featured remarks by Reverend Russell, McReynolds, Reverend Alonzo Vincent, Reverend Tara Sutton, and James's great-great grandnephews and nieces.

James married Mae Berta Carter on July 16, 1927. They had 1 son, Charles, and 1 granddaughter, Reverend Delphine Vassal, an African Methodist Episcopal minister in Dallas. Devoted to each other until the end, James was by Mae's side when she passed away in 1996.

Madam Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in congratulating James Vassal and wishing him the best for the coming year.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF R. JOHN HERRINGTON

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of R. John Herrington, and to celebrate all his contributions to Cleveland. John passed away July 24, but he will live on in the hearts of everyone he touched.

As a soldier in the U.S. Army, John worked the night desk for the Associated Press in Tokyo, as well as with Stars and Stripes. After completing his service to our country, John worked in California, Missouri, and even London, England. By the time he arrived in Cleveland in 1968, John was already a seasoned and well-traveled reporter. And for the next 25 years, Cleveland had the fortune of benefiting from all that experience. After 3 years at WKBF, John joined the team at WKYC Channel 3, and was even the anchorman for Cleveland's first 10 p.m. newscast. In 1995, the Cleveland Regional chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences recognized John's contributions by inducting him into their Silver Circle.

John stayed just as active in retirement, acting in community theater and serving in various capacities in his church community.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in remembering R. John Herrington, a mainstay of Cleveland broadcasting for over 25 years. John is survived by his wife of 27 years, Carol Ann, and my thoughts go out to her and their whole family. May John's spirit and live on in the lives of those who were fortunate enough to know him.

RECOGNIZING MICHAEL A. FILARDO FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, proudly pause to recognize Michael A. Filardo, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 900, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Michael has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the many years Michael has been involved with Scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Michael A. Filardo for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

CONGRATULATING MS. BROOKE ARNOLD

HON. THOMAS G. TANCREDO

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. TANCREDO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of my constituents Ms. Brooke Arnold of Centennial, Colorado, who will attend a People to People World Leadership Forum in 2008. Her outstanding academic merits and communal involvement have laid a solid foundation of individual integrity and dedication: Both characteristics of a qualified leader. I am honored to represent such a promising young woman.

Created in 1956, the People to People Program is an educational travel program dedicated to fostering leadership potential in youth worldwide. People to People has helped more than 200,000 students and professionals develop their leadership skills based upon Dwight D. Eisenhower's belief that "people can make a difference where governments cannot." This unique interaction and exposure will enable Ms. Arnold to gain a greater understanding and insider's perspective of Washington, DC.

Madam Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to acknowledge one of Colorado's own. Please join me in congratulating Ms. Arnold and wishing her the best in her future endeavors.

MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE'S 250TH BIRTHDAY

HON. BOB ETHERIDGE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the 250th birthday of Marquis de Lafayette. Fayetteville, NC, was named for Lafayette in 1783. It was the first town in America to be named for him and the only one visited by him on his tour of the United States in 1825.

Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de La Fayette, was born in Auvergne, France, on September 6, 1757. Although an aristocrat, Gilbert Lafayette became enamored of the American fight for independence. In 1777, at the age of 19, flaunting convention and royal edicts, he used his own funds to purchase and outfit a ship and sailed to America. He joined the American forces and became a lifelong friend of General George Washington. His enthusiasm for the cause of liberty and his courage in battle won him the admiration and friendship of soldiers, officers, and statesmen.

The youngest major general in the American army, Lafayette made a significant contribution to the defeat of the British forces under General Lord Charles Cornwallis at the Battle of Yorktown, VA, in 1781. Lafayette also accomplished much as a diplomat, persuading the Governors of independent colonies to provide food and supplies to a poorly clothed and starving Continental Army. He lobbied vigorously with the French court for more troops and ships for the American cause. The commitments he secured from France ultimately forced England to sue for peace.

Lafayette returned to France and continued his campaign for liberty. His involvement in the French Revolution caused his persecution by radicals on both sides. Imprisoned for 5 years in Prussia and Austria, his fame brought worldwide pressure for his release. As Lafayette's popularity grew, his views on liberty, religious tolerance, and the abolition of slavery became widespread.

Lafayette's popularity in America culminated with President Monroe issuing an invitation in 1824 for the general to visit the young country and witness the development of this experiment in democracy. His status as one of the last surviving members of the revolutionary leadership gave communities a reason to host elaborate receptions, dances, and ceremonies in his honor.

Madam Speaker, in 1825, the citizens of Fayetteville, NC, were honored by a 2-day visit from the famous French proponent of liberty, Marquis de Lafayette. In a speech of welcome, Judge John D. Toomer proclaimed, "Never, never can we forget the youthful stranger who, in the darkest hour of adversity, so generously flew to our succour, and so gallantly fought the battle of freedom." Marquis de Lafayette was a man who fought for our great Nation and left his mark on North Carolina, America, and the world.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO SUSANNE McKEON

HON. PATRICK J. MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to pay tribute to Susanne McKeon, the Lower Southampton Township manager and the president of the Playwicki Farm Foundation. I share the grief felt by the entire community in the wake of Sue's passing, but it is important that in these trying moments we remember the tremendous legacy she leaves behind. Madam Speaker, Sue's work earned her the utmost admiration and respect from those she served, the goal of any public servant.

Sue became part of the Lower Southampton Board of Supervisors in 1984 and worked tirelessly to better the community. Serving as chairman and vice president, her leadership led the way for lasting successes for the township. She was a supervisor when in 1994 the Township finalized the purchase of the property from the estate of Elizabeth Snodgrass that preserved the last large area of open space in Lower Southampton. In September 1996, the Board of Supervisors established the Playwicki Farm Foundation and at its first meeting, Sue was elected president. She served in that capacity ever since. Her work was selfless as she strived to improve her township. She was extremely dedicated to her various roles in the community which has benefited greatly thanks to her efforts.

Her strong leadership started long before the Board of Supervisors. In the 1970s, she started the story hour at the Southampton Township library and served as a member of the library board. She was also a founding member of the "Friends of Lower Southampton Library" and the 2007 chairperson of the Bucks County Planning Commission. Sue's commitment to hard work and public service earned her the high esteem of those around her.

Sue was an advocate for her community, inspiring others to become leaders and devote time to their community in the way that she did. Sue is owed a debt of gratitude for her many years of service.

Madam Speaker, Susanne McKeon's legacy as a community leader is one her husband, children and grandchildren can be proud to carry on. Sue will be remembered for her devotion, selflessness and commitment to the residents of Lower Southampton Township in Bucks County, PA.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, due to other congressional business, I unfortunately missed recorded votes on the House floor on Tuesday, September 4, 2007.

Had I been able to vote that day, I would have voted "no" on rollcall vote No. 847 and "yes" on rollcall vote No. 848 and "yes" on rollcall vote No. 849.

HONORING ELIZABETH NORWORTH

HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, it is a privilege for me to rise today and honor Mrs. Elizabeth Norworth. Mrs. Norworth, better known as "Betty," has been a dedicated federal employee with the Memphis Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation for the last 60 years. Her tenure with the FBI is the second longest in the 100-year history of the Bureau.

When Mrs. Norworth first joined the FBI in 1947, Harry S. Truman was our President, the CIA had just been created and the cold war was well under way. Like our Nation, Mrs. Norworth rose to the challenge of the times and met each day as a public servant through the embodiment of her beloved agency: fidelity, bravery and integrity. Thirteen years later, Mrs. Norworth would accept her current position as secretary to Special Agent in Charge where she received numerous accolades for her exceptional job performance. Throughout her years of service Mrs. Norworth has not only become a highly respected employee at the Bureau but she has become the embodiment of what a public servant should be.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me today in thanking "Betty" Norworth for her 60 years of service, sacrifice, and continued commitment to the United States.

TRIBUTE TO THE 50TH JUBILEE OF SISTER JOANNE CHIAVERINI

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Sister Joanne Chiaverini as she celebrates her 50th Jubilee as a Sister Servant of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. A celebration will be held on Sunday, September 9, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Flint, Michigan.

Sister Joanne Chiaverini began her work with the Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary as an educator and worked in that capacity for 15 years, earning her Masters of Education in Theology from Marygrove College during this time. Her work involved preparing children for the sacraments. Often she would teach the parents as well as the children. With a desire to work with the poor and disadvantaged, Sister Joanne developed her talent for inner city ministry working during the 1960s at St. Agnes Parish in the heart of Detroit and she worked with Father Bill Cunningham when he founded Focus Hope after the 1967 riots.

Sister Joanne became a certified social worker in 1973. Working in the Flint area she has counseled parents and children caught in the nightmare of substance abuse, worked as a volunteer probation officer, worked coordinating the religious education of parents, catechists, and students. She was a pioneering member of the Flint Interfaith Alliance and brought the Project ARAB to parishes throughout the Diocese of Lansing.

After spending 30 days on an Ignatian retreat, Sister Joanne was inspired to co-found the St. Francis Prayer Center with Father Phil Schmitter. The Center is dedicated to providing a place of quiet and contemplation. The Center has moved 3 times to better serve the poor and at risk population. Her work on behalf of the disadvantaged has earned Sister Joanne numerous awards including: Woman of the Year by the Beta Sigma Phi Sorority, the Groundwork "Christian Discipleship" Award from the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Center for Environmental Justice Award from the Flint Chapter of the NAACP. Along with Father Schmitter, she has also received the Citizens Participation Award for 20 years of ministry in public housing, and the Dr. Albert Wheeler "Seeker of Justice" Award from the Diocese of Lansing.

Madam Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in congratulating Sister Joanne Chiaverini as she celebrates her Golden Jubilee as a Sister Servant of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and wish her the best in the coming years.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF VIVIAN CANTRELL

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to remember Vivian Cantrell, and to celebrate her tireless devotion to her community, her faith, and to justice. Vivian passed away after a battle with cancer, but her spirit will live on in the people and organizations fortunate enough to have known her.

Vivian never passed up an opportunity to challenge the status quo. She was an outspoken civil rights advocate, and frequently could be found advocating for equal treatment for all school children or lending her voice to community organizations. Vivian was an engaged citizen; not only was she active in political campaigns, but she demanded accountability from those candidates to ensure that the community got the attention it deserved.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in remembering Vivian Cantrell, for a life spent in service to the community. May Vivian's humor, strength, and zeal for justice live on in all those who knew her.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, on September 5, 2007, I

was unavoidably detained from the House Chamber.

Had I been present I would have voted: "nay" on rollcall 849, On Motion to Instruct Conferees, College Cost Reduction Act of 2007; "yea" on rollcall 848, On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended, Microloan Amendments and Modernization Act; "yea" on rollcall 847, On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended, Minority Serving Institution Digital and Wireless Technology Opportunity Act.

IN RECOGNITION OF NINEL SEGAL

HON. MICHAEL R. McNULTY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. McNULTY. Madam Speaker, I am most pleased to recognize the outstanding contributions of a beloved constituent of mine, Ninel Segal, and to insert in the RECORD the testimonial presented to Ninel by Rabbi Paul B. Silton of Temple Israel in Albany, New York:

On this Shabbat Korach, Rosh Kodesh Tammuz, the 30th of Sivan 5767, corresponding to the 16th of June 2007, we, the friends of Ninel Segal, are privileged to join together at Temple Israel of Albany, New York to honor her as she prepares to celebrate her 28th wedding anniversary with her beloved Charles.

To you, Leah bat Alter v'Braina, we say: Thank you for the inspiring example you have created for all of us; the example of love and devotion to the Jewish people and to the leaders and citizens of our great country. As a teacher you devoted yourself to the education of your students at the Sholem Aleichem Folkschule in Mount Vernon, New York. You served as director of the Speakers Bureau and as a program associate for the National Committee for Labor Israel. You served as a volunteer for Congressman MICHAEL R. MCNULTY for 16 years and received Congressional Recognition for your indefatigable efforts to help so many people in the community. While working for Congressman MCNULTY, you had the opportunity to meet presidents of many countries.

A Zionist for years, you have supported Israel with devotion and loyalty. Your concern for the perpetuation of your Jewish heritage has been constant and consistent.

In the years to come, may God continue to bless you and your beloved Charles with vigor of body and mind so that you can work in His vineyard, performing deeds of loving kindness for all who are privileged to meet you. May God crown your life with honor and achievement. May He fill your heart with love of neighbor and concern for the welfare of all people. May He grant you a satisfying religious life in this sanctuary of the House of Israel.

On behalf of the entire Temple Israel family, Mazel Tov.

MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS FOR FRED FISKE ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 60TH ANNIVERSARY ON THE WASHINGTON AIRWAVES—30 YEARS ON WAMU 88.5

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, as the Representative of the 8th District of Maryland, I am delighted to have as one of my constituents Fred Fiske, the senior commentator for WAMU 88.5. On September 27, 2007, Fred Fiske will celebrate 60 years on Washington radio—30 of those years at public radio station WAMU. It is my great pleasure to congratulate Fred on the occasion of his anniversary and on his long and very distinguished career on the Washington airwaves.

A New York City native, Fred Fiske got his start in radio as a child actor in the 1930s. While in high school, he performed in radio plays for The Magic of Speech on NBC, and in such dramas as "The Farmer Takes a Wife" with William Holden and "Green Goddesses" with Ronald Coleman. During the summer season, he worked the "Borscht Belt" in the Catskills with up-and-coming actors Danny Kaye and Betty Garrett.

After graduating from Brooklyn College with a bachelor's degree in speech and drama, Fred put his radio career on hold and enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps. During World War II, he served as an aerial gunner and a radio operator in the 8th Air Force. Fiske flew 30 missions over France and Germany as part of a B–24 crew, and brought home a Distinguished Flying Cross and 4 Air Medals. His squadron leader was Colonel Jimmy Stewart.

After the war, Fred was discharged on September 20, 1945, and returned to New York, where he taught high school and earned a master's degree in speech and education at Columbia University. After teaching high school speech and drama for a year, he resumed his radio career as a free-lance actor on soap operas, plays, and nighttime shows. In 1947, he moved to Washington, DC and on September 27, 1947, he landed a job with WOL radio, then part of the Mutual Broadcasting System. The station later became WWDC.

Fred provided live coverage of the presidential inaugurations of Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower, and he also covered political conventions, state funerals, elections and other historic events. During the 1950s, he hosted a midday radio music program featuring the pop music of the day—he became Washington's highest rated radio music host. And, in the 1960s, he hosted a morning show on WWDC and wrote a weekly music column for Washington's Daily News called "Fiske's Discs."

In 1970, Fred became host of Empathy, a call-in talk show on WWDC, which later became The Fred Fiske Show. For 7 years, it was the only talk radio program in Washington. When WWDC changed formats in 1977, Fiske brought his program to the public radio audience at WAMU, where he kept lively and interesting conversation going for the next 10 years. In 1987, he retired from the rigors of hosting 5 nights a week and moved the show to Saturday mornings, where it became Fred Fiske Saturday. Since 1995, Fiske has served as WAMU's senior commentator, and he can still be heard every week on Metro Connection.

On a personal note, I want to thank Fred Fiske for his thoughtful and trenchant political analysis and commentary. His refreshing insights always challenge our community and our country to constantly improve and be the best we can be.

On behalf of the residents of my District, I extend my congratulations to Fred and send him my best wishes as he continues his outstanding career in radio.

CONGRATULATING MS. ELIZABETH ARNOLD

HON. THOMAS G. TANCREDO

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. TANCREDO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of my constituents Ms. Elizabeth Arnold of Castle Rock, Colorado, who will attend a People to People World Leadership Forum in 2008. Her outstanding academic merits and communal involvement have laid a solid foundation of individual integrity and dedication: both characteristics of a qualified leader. I am honored to represent such a promising young woman.

Created in 1956, the People to People Program is an educational travel program dedicated to fostering leadership potential in youth worldwide. People to People has helped more than 200,000 students and professionals develop their leadership skills based upon Dwight D. Eisenhower's belief that "people can make a difference where governments cannot." This unique interaction and exposure will enable Ms. Arnold to gain a greater understanding and insider's perspective of Washington, DC.

Madam Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to acknowledge one of Colorado's own. Please join me in congratulating Ms. Arnold and wishing her the best in her future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 849, the motion to instruct conferees on H.R. 2669, the College Cost Reduction Act of 2007, I was unavoidably detained and unable to vote.

Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

REMEMBERING JOHN JAY GEDDIE

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I want to bring to the attention of the House the recent passing of a former Senate staffer and reporter, John Jay Geddie, of Sterling, Virginia, in my congressional district. I knew John for more than 15 years and always enjoyed reading his weekly columns. He died August 22, 2007, at Inova Fairfax Hospital of kidney failure and pneumonia related to the treatment of cancer. He is survived by his wife of 44 years, Shannon LaNelle Geddie of Sterling; a son, John L. Geddie of Reston, and a brother Michael Geddie of Kilgore, Texas.

Below is an excerpt of remarks read at his funeral last week in Leesburg. Written by his son, these words truly capture who John was and what was important to him.

Certainly, most of the people here are most familiar with dad through his work here at the Loudoun Independent. The man could write well and he was always quick with a story or a good one-liner. He never felt that professionalism could be glossed over simply because it was a local paper covering mostly local news.

My grandmother told a story about dad that I think says a lot. The boys were obliged to work during summers. One summer, my grandfather had gotten him a job hauling pulp wood. Apparently, the heavy labor under the summer Texas sun did not sit well with him. Dad came home exhausted and covered in sweat and told his mother that it was his intention to get a job where "I have to wear a suit every day." Apparently, no one expects you to sweat when you're in a suit.

That reporters wear suits must have played some part in his calculations. While his mother wanted him to be a preacher, he managed to avoid this while still maintaining her love and support. Dad graduated from Marshall High School and went on to earn his journalism degree at East Texas State University. ETSU is now affiliated with Texas A&M University and known as Texas A&M-Commerce. That my dad retroactively became an Aggie is an irony that only Texans will understand.

After graduation, he went off to work at the San Angelo Standard-Times as a reporter. During this period, dad was drafted into the army. His active duty lasted for 18 months, where he served as a specialist at Fort Knox, Fort Hood, and Fort Carson. As a 'soldier-of my acquaintance' recalled it, the closest he ever came to combat was throwing a stick at a passing helicopter.

Dad stayed at the San Angelo Standard-Times for several years. During this time, he started dating another reporter at the paper—Shannon LaNelle Harris. The pair married and the marriage lasted for 44 years. Not long after they were married, the young couple adopted their first needlenose dog. As regular readers know, it was the first of many.

From 1962–1972, dad worked for the Dallas Morning News. He was among the reporters to cover the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald. Later, he covered the appeals process of Jack Ruby. Originally a believer in the Warren Report and the single bullet theory, he was less certain as time went on. When asked about a conspiracy, he said 'I just don't know.'

In 1972, he became the Washington Bureau Chief for the Dallas Morning News, covering both state and national news until 1981. During this period, Dad covered the political scene in depth, being among the very first to break the story of President Richard Nixon's resignation. He covered both the Democratic and Republican conventions of 1976 and 1980, as well as the campaign trips of President George H.W. Bush and Howard Baker.

After leaving the Dallas Morning News, he became administrative assistant to Congressman Abraham 'Chick' Kazen (D-TX) and later served as a speechwriter for the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, serving closely with Senator Lloyd Bentsen (D-TX). During this time, dad also began working as the Editor of the Loudoun Easterner, a small direct-mail newspaper in Loudoun County. He eventually retired from Washington to pursue this full-time. Very few people are able to do what they love for so long.

Under his stewardship, the Loudoun Easterner gained a loyal following in Sterling and the surrounding areas. His unique perspective and humor made him a fixture in the county. Working with Publisher Beth Miller was a great experience for dad. The pair of them could be seen lunching every day and it is difficult to imagine closer friends. Her death was hard on everyone, but dad took it especially hard. Wounds heal though, and his relationship with Beth's daughters Amy and Allyson grew even stronger.

In 2005, he and Amy Burns started up a new paper, the Loudoun Independent. Dad proved that he still had the skill to produce a first rate paper.

My dad was diagnosed with skin cancer in March. By the time of the diagnosis, the cancer had already spread in the area of his neck and lymph nodes. While not immediately life threatening, treatment required a combination of radiation and chemotherapy. At no time was he in pain and dad went into work at the paper every day until almost the very end. Eventually the treatment weakened him enough so that his kidneys failed and the extra stress on his body made it impossible for him to recover from pneumonia and septic shock.

Ever since I was a boy and my dad started working at the Easterner—and later the Loudoun Independent, we knew that he was not to be bothered on Mondays and Tuesdays. The paper goes to the printer on Wednesday morning, so you have to work until everything is done. My dad died on a Wednesday morning. I don't go much for symbolism in life, but I wonder at it. Tuesday is over and your labors are complete. On Wednesday, you can sleep in and rest—then get ready to start all over again.

In retrospect I do feel blessed to have had John Geddie in my life for so long. More than that, I'm thankful for those last months we had together. Having been designated as his driver/companion for all medical trips, I was able to spend almost every day with him for the last three months. As people get older, sometimes they forget why they love their parents. Those last three months reminded me.

Dad had something of a mantra when the conversation turned to his health or potential dangers. He'd raise his hand, tilt his head and say, "Don't worry about me. I've had a good life." He said it in a light way, but something in his tone inevitably ended the conversation. While incredibly frustrating at the time, it's a comfort to us now.

IN RECOGNITION OF FIRST LIEUTENANT JONATHAN W. EDDS

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, 1Lt. Jonathan W. Edds of White Pigeon, MI, was killed during an IED attack in Baghdad, Iraq, on August 17, 2007. Jonathan was assigned to the Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 69th Armored Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division based in Fort Benning, GA. First Lieutenant Edds and his wife Laura resided in Phenix City, AL.

Words cannot express the sense of sadness we have for his family and the gratitude our country feels for his service. First Lieutenant Edds, like other brave men and women who have served in uniform, died serving not just the United States, but the entire cause of liberty. Indeed, like those who have served before him, he was a true American.

We will forever hold him closely in our hearts, and remember his sacrifice and that of his family as a remembrance of his bravery and willingness to serve our Nation. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the House's remembrance at this mournful occasion.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I would like to state for the record my position on the following votes I missed due to reasons beyond my control.

On Monday, September 4, 2007, I was tending to personal matters and thus missed rollcall votes 847, 848, 849. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on all votes.

TRIBUTE TO MR. MYRON K. KUNKA

HON. ROSCOE G. BARTLETT

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of Mr. Myron K. Kunka. Having served his country for 32 years, he retired from the Federal service on September 1, 2007. His record of achievement during this period reflects great credit upon himself and upon the organizations with which he has served.

Mr. Kunka began his Federal career as a budget analyst at Letterkenny Army Depot, Chambersburg, PA, on August 1975 after receiving a master's degree in public administration from the University of Pittsburgh. He has

served in successive financial management positions within the Department of Defense. These assignments include: 7th Signal Command, Ft Richie, MD; Headquarters United States Army, Telecommunications Center, The Pentagon; Headquarters Army Material Command, Alexandria, VA; On-Site Inspection Agency Dulles, VA; and Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), Ft Belvoir, VA.

Mr. Kunka joined the ranks of the Senior Executive Service on November 7, 1999, when he was appointed to serve as the Comptroller, Director of Resource Management, and finally the Associate Director of the Business Enterprise for DTRA.

Mr. Kunka received numerous awards and decorations for his outstanding public service. The significant awards include: the Director's Award for Achievement in Equal Employment Opportunity, 1997; On-Site Inspection Agency Exceptional Civilian Service Medal, 1998; the Department of Defense Meritorious Civilian Service Medal, 2000; and the Presidential Rank Award—Meritorious Executive, 2003.

As Mr. Kunka brings closure to this chapter of his Federal career as a public servant, he begins a new chapter serving the public as the associate dean of the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mr. Myron K. Kunka on his retirement from Federal service. He epitomizes the dedication and professionalism that makes our Federal Government a model all over the world.

IN MEMORY OF JOHN BOETHING

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. GALLEGLY. Madam Speaker, I rise in memory of my friend John Boething, who died August 11 at 89 years young.

It would be easier to list what J.B. didn't accomplish in his life than to list what he did. A college student at age 16, J.B. bicycled across Europe and explored South America as part of his master's thesis; was a U.S. Army captain during World War II, serving in the Pacific Theater; wrote a sports column; and was a freelance cartoonist for the New Yorker and other publications.

But it was as one of the founding fathers of the wholesale horticulture industry that J.B. made his public mark. He founded Boething Treeland Farms as a retail operation on 35 acres in Woodland Hills, CA, in 1952, and grew it into one of the largest and most successful wholesale nurseries in California. Today, Boething Treeland Farms grows trees and shrubs on about 800 acres across the State.

Not bad, considering J.B. knew little about the tree business when he started on money he borrowed from his father.

J.B.'s success can be ascribed to him being the epitome of a people person. He had a wonderful sense of humor and, for all his successes, still lived in the house he built in Woodland Hills and added onto as his family grew. Having sought the advice of other nurserymen when starting Boething Treeland Farms, he freely gave advice later to others in the business—including those who started with him and went on to be competitors.

While personable and fair, J.B. also maintained high standards and expected the best from his employees. With his motivation and example, they rarely disappointed.

J.B. also supported the American Red Cross, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Doctors Without Borders, and Pepperdine University. He served on the Board of Directors of Sunset Magazine and for many years sponsored a lecture through the Center for Conservation Biology at Stanford University.

Madam Speaker, I know my colleagues will join me in remembering J.B. and his contributions to horticulture and to all who knew him, and in offering our condolences to his wife of 54 years, Susan; their daughters, Sally Painter, Haydi Danielson, Cathy Pherson, and Marji Boething; their 6 grandchildren; and his extended family and wealth of friends.

CONGRATULATING MR. EVAN BALOGH

HON. THOMAS G. TANCREDO

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. TANCREDO.. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of my constituents Mr. Evan Balogh of Morrison, Colorado, who will attend a People to People World Leadership Forum in 2008. His outstanding academic merits and communal involvement have laid a solid foundation of individual integrity and dedication: both characteristics of a qualified leader. I am honored to represent such a promising young man.

Created in 1956, the People to People Program is an educational travel program dedicated to fostering leadership potential in youth worldwide. People to People has helped more than 200,000 students and professionals develop their leadership skills based upon Dwight D. Eisenhower's belief that "people can make a difference where governments cannot." This unique interaction and exposure will enable Mr. Balogh to gain a greater understanding and insider's perspective of Washington, DC.

Madam Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to acknowledge one of Colorado's own. Please join me in congratulating Mr. Balogh and wishing him the best in his future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING THE ISMAILI GOLDEN JUBILEE

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend the Dallas Shia Imami Nizari Ismaili Muslim Community for reaching a Golden Jubilee landmark on July 11, 2007.

As a prominent community, the Ismailis have contributed largely to the cultural diversity and economic development in Texas. Under the guidance of His Highness the Aga Khan, the Ismailis are represented in the fields of engineering, science, medicine, education, and entrepreneurship.

In 1967, the first international non-profit institution ofthe Ismailis was established by the Aga Khan in Europe. Since then the Aga Khan Development Network has grown into 9 agencies, globally representing the fields of micro finance, education, economic development, health, and cultural preservation.

These agencies have created 300 schools in the world, educating 62,000 students and employing 5,000 staff. It has opened 200 health centers, caring for nearly 2 million and employing nearly 10,000 staff It has also opened a university in Central Asia, transformed a park in Egypt, and continues to raise funds for the poor through an annual worldwide Partnership Walk.

The Ismailis are devoted to improving the circumstances and opportunities for the poor around the world. The Aga Khan Development Network serves as a catalyst for these endeavors. Their mandates range ITom education and health to structural design, disaster reduction, development, and renewal of historic cities.

On behalf of the 30th Congressional District of Texas, I am honored to congratulate the *Ismaili Community on their Golden Jubilee*. Their efforts towards global humanitarianism make them an invaluable member of the Dallas area.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Madam Speaker, unfortunately last night, September 4, 2007, I was unable to cast my votes on H.R. 694, H.R. 3020, and the Motion to Instruct Conferees on H.R. 2669 and wish the record to reflect my intentions had I been able to vote.

Had I been present for rollcall No. 847 on suspending the rules and passing H.R. 694, the Minority Serving Institution Digital and Wireless Technology Opportunity Act, I would have voted "aye".

Had I been present for rollcall No. 848 on suspending the rules and passing H.R. 3020, the Microloan Amendments and Modernization Act, I would have voted "aye".

Had I been present for rollcall No. 849 on the Motion to Instruct Conferees on H.R. 2669, the College Cost Reduction Act of 2007, I would have voted "aye".

ARMY SERGENT GARRETT I. McLEAD, SOUTH TEXAN LOST IN IRAQ

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Speaker, since this House last met, another South Texan from the Coastal Bend area has fallen in battle in Iraq, and I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring this life lost in the service of our nation.

Army SGT Garrett I. McLead, 23, from Rockport, Texas, was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, Schofield Barracks, in Hawaii. While many people across the nation were starting school, enjoying vacation, or just taking advantage of the last weeks before Labor Day, Sgt. McLead was killed on August 22, 2007, in a Black Hawk helicopter crash during a night mission 180 miles north of Baghdad, in Multaka, Iraq, near the city of Kirkuk.

Sergeant McLead is survived by his parents, Patrick and Patty, and by the larger family of Aransas Pass and San Patricio County in South Texas.

Madam Speaker, each time we lose a soldier—a member of our American family—we lose a little piece of ourselves. Each time, it is just unbearable. Let me tell you more about this noble patriot who gave the last full measure of devotion to the nation he loved.

Sergeant McLead drew his strength from his faith, and was a natural athlete, excelling in surfing, tennis and soccer while he was in high school. He also played the saxophone in his high school band. He had a winning smile and a talent for life.

He was an adventure seeker, tempered by the national shock of 9–11. The searing pain of the attack moved him from happy-go-lucky teenager to a determined warrior at warp speed. He deferred a dream of modeling or acting when our nation was attacked on 9–11, and the country called all patriots for service in the U.S. military.

Rather than opting for Hollywood, his handsome face was assigned to Afghanistan in service of finding and tracking down the terrorists who attacked the United States. Iraq was soon opened as a second war, and he served the nation in uniform in Iraq as well. He was close to coming home, but his tour was extended.

Everyone in the greater South Texas community will miss him, but nobody will miss him like his family. We mourn with this family; we lift up our broken hearts in gratitude to his family, and we all want to see our soldiers come home from these wars.

Madam Speaker, I ask the House to join me in honoring Army Sergeant McLead and his service on behalf of the United States, and to offer our thanks and our deepest sympathy to the family of this warrior, who gave the last full measure of devotion to our nation and the United States Army.

TRIBUTE TO MITRE CORPORATION IN HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

HON. ROBERT E. (BUD) CRAMER, JR.

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. CRAMER. Madam Speaker, 5 years ago I rose to thank the MITRE Corporation for nearly two decades of outstanding work in Huntsville, Alabama. Today, I proudly rise once again to congratulate its employees on their 25th anniversary in our community.

MITRE operates federally funded research and development centers that provide government agencies with systems engineering, research and development, and information technology support. MITRE first opened its office in Huntsville in 1982 with only one employee, but has steadily grown to 56 employees.

MITRE has provided objective expertise, analysis, and support to the Army's Aviation and Missile Defense Command, the Missile Defense Agency, NASA, and other programs at Redstone Arsenal and throughout North Alabama. MITRE's Huntsville site is the Corporation's primary center of expertise for the Department of Defense's Battle Management Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence (BM/C3I) program.

On Monday, August 13, 2007, the employees of MITRE gathered to celebrate their 25th anniversary in North Alabama. I rise today to join in their celebration and wish them many more years of success.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GENE TAYLOR

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, yesterday, on September 4, 2007, I was unavoidably detained in my congressional district as a result of a mechanical problem which prevented the departure of my scheduled flight from Gulfport, MS. Unfortunately, I missed rollcall votes 847, 848 and 849. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on each of the rollcall votes.

RECOGNIZING MAYOR FRANK ORTIS OF PEMBROKE PINES, FLORIDA

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, public service is among the most noble and demanding of professions; and excellence in the delivery of public service helps to keep the City of Pembroke Pines, Florida strong and prosperous and a wonderful place in which to live and work.

At the helm of this city is Mayor Frank Ortis, a man who has a long history of public service since moving to the community in 1977. He was elected to the Pembroke Pines City Commission in 1996, served as Vice Mayor in 1998 and 2002, and was elected Mayor in 2004.

Mayor Ortis has also been elected President of the Broward League of Cities for the 2005–2006 term of office, appointed to the National League of Cities Information Technologies Steering Committee in 1999 and, as of November 2005, serves as Chair on that committee. He was elected to serve on the United States Conference of Mayors Advisory Board in June 2006.

Other community involvement includes his 2002 election to the Florida League of Cities Florida Municipal Insurance Trust Board, a 2003 appointment to serve on the Florida League of Cities Resolutions Committee, and service on the Florida League of Cities Federal Action Strike Team (FAST). In 2006 he was elected First Vice President of the Florida League of Cities after serving as the League's Second Vice President in 2005. In August 2007 he was installed as President of the Florida League of Cities and served as Chair of the Florida League of Cities' Resolutions Committee at the 2007 FLC Annual Conference. He garnered recognition from the Florida League of Cities by receiving the Cities of Excellence Mayor of the Year Award in 2006.

Other civic involvement includes his 1994, appointment by Governor Chiles to the Broward Community College Board of Trustees where he served as Chairman, his service as President of the Florida State Council of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, President of the Broward County AFL–CIO, Secretary/Treasurer on the Broward County Workforce One Development Board, service on the Executive Board of the Broward County Red Cross, the United Way of Broward County and the Executive Board for the Special Olympics of Broward.

Clearly this is a man who is committed to a community, ensuring its residents have a high quality of life. With that said Madam Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to mayor Frank Ortis, for his immeasurable dedication to the City of Pembroke Pines.

COMMENDING DR. GARRY A. NEIL, 2007 DISCOVERY AWARDEE FOR THE AMERICAN GERIATRICS SOCIETY

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend Dr. Garry A. Neil, group president of Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical Research & Development, for his extraordinary contributions to advancing the health and well-being of American seniors.

Dr. Neil has had a long and distinguished career in medical research. After graduating from the University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine, he performed his post-graduate training in internal medicine and gastroenterology at the University of Toronto and performed a postdoctoral fellowship in immunology at the Research Institute of Scripps Clinic.

Prior to joining Johnson & Johnson in 2002, he worked as Vice President of Clinical Research for AstraZeneca, Vice President for Medical and Scientific Affairs at AstraPharmaceuticals, Director of Clinical Research for Gastroenterology and Executive Director for Medical Sciences at Astra Merck, and Vice President and global head of clinical research and development with Merck KGaA and its U.S. subsidiary EMD Pharmaceuticals.

Since coming to Johnson & Johnson, Dr. Neil has worked in several roles to help develop their research program. In fact, he played a substantial role in development of INVEGA, a new medicine for schizophrenia approved in December 2006, as well as many other important drugs. He also a member of the Board of the J&J Development Corporation and Vice Chair of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers Association (PhRMA) Science and Regulatory Committee, as well as a member of the PhRMA Foundation Board.

Dr. Neil also has a distinguished career in medical academia, currently serving as a member of the Board of Trustees for the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. He has held a number of academic posts at the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research in Toronto, the University of Iowa College of Medicine, and the University of Pennsylvania. Furthermore, he has written more than 50 scholarly articles and book chapters.

On October 17th, at the 2007 Lifetime of Caring Gala, the American Geriatrics Society will present Dr. Neil with the 2007 Discovery Award for "his outstanding business, civic and philanthropic leadership, and for Johnson & Johnson's commitment to the well-being of older adults, their families and the communities in which they live." The American Geriatrics Society is an organization of more than 6,700 health professionals devoted to improving the health, independence, and quality of life for people as they age. I join them as they honor a fellow medical professional for his lifetime of work helping seniors and, indeed, people of all ages, live longer, healthier lives.

TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH BECKMAN

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Madam Speaker, it is with pleasure that I stand before you today to recognize and congratulate Mr. Joseph Beckman as he celebrates an extraordinary milestone, the 100th anniversary of his company, Home Lumber Company, headquartered in Crown Point, Indiana. To commemorate this special occasion, an anniversary celebration took place on Friday, August 24, 2007, at the Avalon Manor in Merrillville, Indiana.

A fifth-generation family-owned business, Home Lumber Company was co-founded by Joe's great-grandfather in 1907. After graduating from Indiana University in 1971, Joe worked outside the company for a brief period before returning to the company in 1973 as a manager in manufacturing, a position he would hold for 8 years. It was during that time that Joe, highly regarded within the company and his community, was elected president of Home Lumber Company in 1979. From there, Joe went on to purchase the company from his father and other stockholders in 1982.

As president and chief executive officer of Home Lumber Company, Joe has been responsible for an overwhelming expansion of the business. While Joe is quick to credit his outstanding staff for the company's success, it is undoubtedly Joe's leadership, as well as his knowledge of, passion for, and commitment to his trade, that has been the catalyst for such improvements. Since taking over the reins, Joe has spearheaded several major expansions, including the addition of a new lumberyard in Stevensville, Michigan, the relocation of its main facility from Dyer, Indiana, to Crown Point, Indiana, which is where Joe now resides, and a new manufacturing facility in Michigan City, Indiana. However, these expansions, while quite impressive, do not appear to be the end of the company's growth. These new additions, paired with Home Lumber Company, have now become the Lumberplus Companies. Throughout his tenure, Joe has not lost sight of the goals of his father and grandfather, as he has continued to build and improve northwest Indiana by developing over 1,000 commercial and industrial properties throughout Lake County.

Aside from his business, Joe has always made it a point to give back to the community through his involvement with various service organizations, including: The Crown Point Community Foundation, Habitat for Humanity, and the Carmelite Home for Girls. Not only has he been active in these endeavors, but he has also taken a leadership role, serving on several of their executive committees and advisory boards. Furthermore, Joe has been active in the economic and educational development of his community through his service in several capacities, including: President of the Dyer Chamber of Commerce, treasurer of the Dyer Economic Development Steering Committee, president of the Dyer Economic Development Committee, treasurer of the Lake Central Multi-District School Building Corporation, and as a member of the Purdue University Calumet Chancellor's Advisory Committee.

For his service and his commitment to improving northwest Indiana, both economically and socially, Joe has received many accolades throughout the years. Joe was the recipient of the 2005 NLBMA Award for Excellence in Human Resources and the 2006 Business Investment Award by the Michigan City Economic Development Corporation. Quite an impressive accomplishment, in 2001, Joe was also named the Northwest Indiana Small Business Person of the Year and Indiana Small Business Person of the Year, a distinction that earned him recognition from President George W. Bush at a White House reception.

Madam Speaker, at this time, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring and congratulating Joseph Beckman and his team on the 100th anniversary of Home Lumber Company. Joseph and the entire staff at Home Lumber Company are to be commended for their dedication to improving northwest Indiana.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. GALLEGLY. Madam Speaker, I was unable to make the following roll call votes on September 4, 2007:

H.R. 694, the Minority Serving Institution Digital and Wireless Technology Opportunity Act. On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, a Amended, I would have voted "nay."

H.R. 3020, the Microloan Amendments and Modernization Act. On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended, I would have voted "aye."

H.R. 2669, the College Cost Reduction Act of 2007. On Motion to Instruct Conferees, I would have voted "aye."

IN HONOR OF JIMMIE WHITE

HON. MARILYN N. MUSGRAVE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mrs. MUSGRAVE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a true American hero, Jimmie White from Yuma, Colorado. Jimmie volunteered to serve in the United States Military in the late 1960's. He was part of the MCB 10 Construction Battalion of the Seabees. He served two tours in Vietnam. The first tour (1968) was in Quang Tri during the Tet Offensive. His second tour (1968–1969) was at Camp Haines with detachments to Dan Nang, Dong Ha, An Lo, LZ Sally, Phong dien, Phu Bai (all close to the DMZ), and he supported efforts at Hill 937 (Hamburger Hill). During his time of service, Jimmie received the following commendations and medals: Good Conduct, Marine Commendation, Vietnam Service Medal, 2 Stars and a Presidential Citation from the late President Lyndon Johnson.

Jimmie came home, married and started a business. He and his wife Carol raised 4 children, Michelle Hewitt, Jeannine White, Tony White and Dawn Chancellor, and he never forgot his brothers and sisters who served and died for this nation. Jimmie has served as Veterans of Foreign Wars Commander for VFW Post 3378 in Yuma for a number of years. During his time as active Commander he has seen the establishment of a Color Guard that serves those who have died and reminds the living of the sacrifice of our military men and women around the globe at all times. Jimmie also gave a great amount of time and effort to draw attention to the healthcare needs of the Veterans living in northeast Colorado. A Community Based Outpatient Veteran's Clinic has now been approved with plans to open this fall in Burlington, Colorado. It serves as a reminder of what one man's persistence can accomplish. Some of the proudest moments of Jimmie's service with the VFW have come from his work with Roger Lair and Tom Valle. Together they have seen the beginnings of a Young Marines Chapter in Yuma, they have helped handicapped Veterans attend community events, and they have participated in a

Veteran's Day meeting at the local middle school for Yuma area Veterans. One of Jimmie's crowning achievements, with the combined efforts of many, was the completion of a new Veteran's Memorial built at Veteran's Park in Yuma, Colorado. Fully paid for with private donations, it was dedicated this past July 4, 2007 to a large crowd of proud American citizens.

Jimmie White comes from the heartland of America and when the time came for him to serve, he volunteered. When time came for him to sacrifice, he did so without question. When the call came for him to hoist the colors of this nation, not on the battlefield around the globe, but in the heart and soul of his community, Jimmie White served Yuma County and the State of Colorado well. Our precious veterans are heroes who have left their homes to defend our nation, and then returned to be valued members of their communities, showing their children and grandchildren how to live meaningful lives of service. I want to take this brief moment to honor Jimmie White for the sacrifices that he made and his continued commitment to all of those who serve our great nation in the profession of arms. I applaud Jimmie for his courage and selfless dedication to duty. Jimmie truly is the embodiment of all the values that have molded America into the great nation it is today. May God bless Jimmie and his family, may God bless our precious veterans, and may God bless America.

CY HO

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a great man, a businessman, a leader, and a great corporate citizen in our South Texas community: CY Ho, who is currently CEO and Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of AMFELS, a major international corporation, and an enormous component of the Port of Brownsville in South Texas.

He will be leaving South Texas shortly, and we will miss him very much.

CY Ho is a highly respected entrepreneur who is very much a part of the South Texas community through his contributions to worthy causes. He is the picture of international free trade and corporate diplomat.

CY was born and raised in Singapore as that nation was emerging onto the world stage as a major player in the international economy. He was educated in the United Kingdom in naval architecture, later earning his MBA at UK's Brunel University as a chartered engineer.

Widely regarded as a global expert on naval and marine architecture and engineering, CY is a man of extraordinary vision and understanding of global business.

In 1981, he began with Far East Levingston Shipbuilding, Ltd. (FELS) as manager of the engineering department, then moved to Corporate Development Manager by 1994. By 1996, he was the Assistant General Manager of Keppel FELS Ltd.

In August 2001, CY left Singapore Keppel FELS Ltd. to come to Brownsville, Texas, to serve as President of the American division of the company, AMFELS. Just 3 months later, he was also serving as CEO and Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors.

Keppel AMFELS designs, builds and repairs ships, barges, and offshore drilling rigs; they also fabricate steel pressure vessels, all of which represents a dynamic and important component of the industrial complex at the Port of Brownsville, located at the front door of North American trade.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, I ask you to join me in wishing CY Ho the very best as he moves on, leaving many good friends here in South Texas as he continues his work back in Singapore.

THE PASSING OF CONGRESSMAN CHARLES VANIK

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, just before Congress returned to session this week, our Nation lost a gentleman who served with distinction in this body for 26 years and whose name became forever associated with the human rights struggle in the former Soviet Union.

Congressman Charles Vanik served his constituents of the Cleveland, OH, area from 1955 to 1981. In 1968, he voluntarily gave up his seat in a district that had become primarily African-American to allow my good friend and our former colleague, Mr. Louis Stokes, an opportunity to serve in the Congress. It says something for Mr. Vanik's reputation as a conscientious and hard-working Member that he could switch to a nearby district, defeat a longtime incumbent of the other major party, and return to Congress.

I did not know Mr. Vanik personally, but as Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I am particularly familiar with his contribution to the struggle to allow Soviet Jews to leave the Soviet Union and emigrate to Israel.

In the early 1970s, Soviet Jews who wished to emigrate to Israel faced government harassment and even prison terms in one of the many labor camps stretched along the eleven time zones of the Soviet Union. This issue became especially acute in 1972 when the Soviet government announced it would level an onerous "education tax" on Soviet Jews who wished to emigrate. As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Trade of the House Ways and Means Committee, Mr. Vanik stepped up to sponsor an amendment to the Trade Reform Bill of 1974 introduced by Senator Henry Jackson of Washington State. This amendment linked awarding Most Favored Nation trade status to a nation's record on unhindered emigration for its citizens. President Nixon and Mr. Kissinger didn't like it, but it was a law whose time had come.

In the years that followed its passage, through détente and the tense days of United States-Soviet relations in the early 1980s, the Jackson-Vanik Amendment became a powerful symbol of the Congress' determination to see that the Soviet Union lived up to the Helsinki Accords.

Today, Madam Speaker, the Cold War is over, the Soviet Union is happily no more, Jewish citizens of Russia, the successor state to the Soviet Union, are free to emigrate to Israel or any other nation that will grant an entry visa.

Ironically, Congress has not yet fully "graduated" Russia from the provisions of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. I do hope that, regardless of the many difficulties in relations with Russia that we are now experiencing, we will be able to do so in the near future. I am sure Chairman Vanik would agree with me.

Madam Speaker, although I was not acquainted with Chairman Vanik, I know that he left a legacy of deep respect when he retired from this august body. May we all serve our constituents, our Nation, and all those with whom we share this planet as conscientiously as he did.

FY08 DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS EXPLANATIONS

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Speaker, in accordance with House earmark reforms, I would like to place into the RECORD a listing of congressionally directed projects in my home State of Idaho that are contained within the report to the fiscal year 2008 Defense appropriations bill.

I'd like to take just a few minutes to describe why I supported these projects and why they are valuable to the Nation and its taxpayers.

The report contains $3 million for a technology entitled Vacuum Sampling Pathogen Collection and Concentration. Developed by Microbial-Vac Systems in Jerome, ID, the advanced "Vacuum Pathogen" collection and concentration systems are critical to continued advancement of the Department of Defense's applications for manual and robotic sample acquisition and traceability of biothreat agents in food safety and environmental settings. Expansion and centralization of facilities, manufacturing, distribution, and infrastructure support capabilities will provide improved and more economically feasible commercial production capacities, emergency supply storage and expanded quality control capabilities. These measures are critically needed to supply sufficient numbers of the sterilely packaged pathogen collection and rapid processing technology to fill military and civilian emergency immediate and long-term needs during pandemic outbreaks, hostile attacks and post-incident remediation/decontamination monitoring and verification procedures. Improved national defense and food security will be realized by initial second-generation technology development of precise sample location and traceability, robotic field collection and automated rapid processing interfacing capability development. This project has received Federal funding in previous fiscal years.

This project was requested by MicrobialVac Systems in Jerome, ID.

The report contains $2 million for the Idaho Accelerator Center, IAC, at Idaho State University's, ISU's, Small Accelerators and Detection Systems for Defense Applications program. Ongoing work at IAC suggests that transportable accelerators can now be developed to actively identify suspected nuclear materials/packages in the field, neutralize biological/chemical agents when discovered, decontaminate areas where bio/chem agents may have been released, and detect explosives and contraband in a variety of challenging circumstances. The IAC and the ISU academic community, in collaboration with scientists and engineers from the private sector and national laboratories, has been involved in developing technology for the remote detection of hazardous materials and contraband for more than 15 years. Through these associations the IAC has devised non-intrusive means to identify the contents of containers of various kinds that may contain fissionable material, radioactive material, explosives, hazardous material—biological or chemical—and contraband—FREHC—for homeland and national security applications. This project has received Federal funding in previous fiscal years.

This project was requested by Idaho State University in Pocatello, ID.

The report contains $2 million for a program entitled Systematic Hierarchical Approach to Radiation Hardened Electronics, SHARE. Lack of consistent reliable performance of integrated circuits, IC, used in space communication, surveillance, and guidance systems continues to be a potentially debilitating problem for the military services. The problem has been aggravated by the rapid and unsettling contraction of the industrial base needed to design and produce the specialized electronics that must perform in applications requiring high reliability in a challenging radiation-charged environment. As one of the principal users of radiation hardened, RadHard, electronics, the U.S. Air Force is pursuing domestically fabricated technologies that will ensure a ready and economical capability for producing radiation hardened microelectronics using advanced commercial processes. SHARE has been identified by the Air Force as a critical capability that will enable collaboration among circuit designers, simulation software vendors, and foundries under the direction of SEAMS Center AFRL at Kirtland AFB, NM. This project has received Federal funding in previous fiscal years.

This project was requested by American Semiconductor in Boise, ID.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide a list of congressionally directed projects in my region and an explanation of my support for them.

(1) $3 million for Vacuum Sampling Pathogen Collection and Concentration; MicrobialVac Systems.

(2) $2 million for Small Accelerators and Detection Systems for Defense Applications; ISU.

(3) $2 million for Systematic Hierarchical Approach to Radiation Hardened Electronics, SHARE; ASI.

TRIBUTE TO MR. GEORGE O. JACKSON DE LLANO

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. CUELLAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. George O. Jackson de Llano, a noted photographer who is well-regarded for his excellent photographic exhibits of cultural life in Mexico.

Mr. Jackson de Llano was born on October 2, 1941 in Houston, Texas. He has a heritage rich in Mexican culture as a descendant of Manuel Maria de Llano, who was Mayor of Monterrey and later Governor of the Mexican state of Nuevo Leon. Mr. Jackson de Llano spent much of his youth in Laredo, Texas, when his great-grandfather, Ruben Villarreal, a silver miner in northern Mexico, relocated his family there during the Mexican Revolution. He attended The University of Texas at Austin and graduated in 1961.

Mr. Jackson de Llano did not directly set out on his photography career; he first was an entrepreneur as a successful restaurant owner. In 1971, Mr. Jackson became the associate director of a Houston art gallery that featured prominent American artists of the 19th and 20th centuries. He made the decision to explore his life through his love of photography in 1977 by making consecutive trips to Mexico. He became a full-time photographer in 1984 and was increasingly fascinated by folk culture in Mexico, particularly their festival celebrations which are prominently featured in his photography. He created The Essence of Mexico Project, which was a historical collection of photography featuring Mexican indigenous folk culture that spanned the last ten years of the 20th century. This collection of photographs is featured at the Smithsonian in Washington, DC.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to have had this time to recognize the wonderful creativity and dedication Mr. George O. Jackson de Llano has shown in his photography. He has contributed a great deal to the preservation of indigenous folk culture in Mexico through his photography. I thank you for this time.

HONORING ETHIOPIAN COMMUNITY SERVICES AND THE ETHIOPIAN COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL CENTER

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor San Jose-based Ethiopian Community Services and Oakland, California-based Ethiopian Community & Cultural Center for their joint efforts in organizing a celebration of the Ethiopian New Year and Millennium.

During this celebration, the community will share its centuries-old traditions and culture including its alphabet, calendar, music, arts, food and coffee. In addition it will give others an opportunity to experience this rich and diverse historical event and explore and make new friends.

The celebration of the Ethiopian New Year and Millennium is occurring in my congressional district at the Guadalupe River Park in Downtown San Jose, CA. Because of the rich diversity of San Jose, it is a special honor to further emphasize the open minds and warm hearts of the constituents I represent. I commend both organizations for their hard work in this glorious event and extend my warmest wishes for many more years of cooperation and success.

HONORING DAVID A. SIEGEL

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate and honor David Siegel, a lawyer in Memphis, Tennessee. Recently, the American Bar Association awarded Mr. Siegel its Edmund S. Muskie Pro Bono Service Award for his dedication to justice and public service. Mr. Siegel has been a strong and committed advocate for children's rights, devoting numerous pro bono hours to parental rights and child custody matters.

Mr. Siegel's representation of the parents of Anna Mae He in a child custody lawsuit, during which he successfully convinced the Tennessee Supreme Court to restore their parental rights, particularly highlights his commitment to pro bono work. Mr. Siegel devoted an extraordinary number of hours to the case, representing the Hes for free from trial through the Tennessee Supreme Court appeal and sacrificing what precious little free time he had. Such dedication to pro bono work is almost unparalleled. Mr. Siegel richly deserves the recognition that the ABA has bestowed on him.

I would also like to recognize Mr. Siegel's law firm, Nahon, Saharovich & Trotz, PLC, for supporting his pro bono work. Mr. Siegel's commitment to pro bono representation would have been far more difficult to fulfill without his firm's equal commitment to such representation. As demonstrated by the He case, Mr. Siegel and his firm represent the highest and noblest ideals of the legal profession, and I commend them both.

TRIBUTE TO THE LAREDO HEAT

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. CUELLAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the players, coaches, owners and staff of the Laredo Heat Soccer Club in their stunning 4–3 victory rematch against the Michigan Bucks in the 2007 Premier Development League soccer final.

The story of the Laredo Heat Soccer Club is of a team that fought against the odds to receive the PDL Championship. The pivotal moment came when the Laredo Heat played

against the Michigan Bucks, a team that they had lost a game to the previous year. The excitement of the crowd exploded when goalkeeper Ryan Cooper registered 2 saves as the game went into the sixth round of penalty kicks and finished 4–3 in favor of the Heat. Coopers' efforts would gamer the PDL Championship MVP honors.

In the final seconds of the game, 16-year-old Laredoan Felix Garcia became the star of the night as he buried the winning spot kick in the sixth round, thus ensuring the U.S. PDL Championship for the Laredo Heat. Theirs was a story that echoed the classic underdog against the presumptive winner, but due to remarkable coaching by Coach Collazo and his coaching staff, hard work by staff and owners, Shashi and Priya Vaswani, and of course the determination of these talented and hard working players to win, they came out on top. I am very proud that these remarkable players have won the PDL Championship, and that they are from Laredo in my congressional district.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to recognize the Laredo Heat Soccer Club team, and I thank you for this time.

HONORING MR. DENNIS KENNEDY

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor Mr. Dennis Kennedy who has served the City of Morgan Hill in various capacities for the past 30 years.

Since 1977, one year after Mr. Kennedy moved to Morgan Hill, he has been involved in various roles within the City of Morgan Hill's local government. He served three terms on the Planning Commission and two terms on the General Plan Update Committee.

In 1990, he stood for election and won a seat on the City Council. He has served 4 terms as the Mayor of the City of Morgan Hill. He was appointed to his first term in 1992. In 1996, he became the first directly elected mayor and was re-elected in 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2004.

He is past chairman of the South County Regional Wastewater Authority, has served two terms on the Board of Directors of the Valley Transportation Authority and is a past-president of the Santa Clara Cities Association.

Mr. Kennedy has always been mindful of his commitment to the Santa Clara Valley and, although he was born in Nebraska, he has acted like a true local when community interests were at stake. Mr. Kennedy moved to San Jose, California during his high school years and attended Bellarmine College Preparatory School in San Jose. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from Santa Clara University and served as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army.

Professionally, it has been a pleasure to work with Mr. Kennedy because he sincerely cares about the residents of the City of Morgan Hill and their interests. I know I stand with many other thankful constituents in congratulating Mr. Kennedy on his years of service and wishing him the very best for his retirement.

TRIBUTE ON THE PASSING OF FORMER REPRESENTATIVE JENNIFER DUNN

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I am deeply saddened at the passing of a good friend and public servant Jennifer Dunn of Washington State.

Throughout her 12 years in the House of Representatives, Jennifer served with distinction and earned the respect and admiration of her colleagues. She sought to strengthen traditional family values by fighting for reforms in our Tax Code—in particular the elimination of the estate tax. Jennifer believed in recognizing and protecting the contributions and sacrifices made by homemakers, families, and small businesses.

Before coming to Congress, she held the position of chairwoman of the Washington State Republican Party and twice served as delegate to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. As the first woman ever to run for the position of House Majority Leader, Jennifer well understood the immense duty that comes with public office, and it was a tremendous honor to serve with her.

Upon my election in a special election December 18, 2001, Jennifer was one of the first Members to welcome me and provide guidance. Her enthusiasm for service was obvious to all who met her.

My thoughts and prayers are with the friends and family of Jennifer during this difficult time.

TRIBUTE TO HOUSTON'S ENTERPRISE CATERING SERVICE

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Mr. CLYBURN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding minority-owned business in my hometown of Columbia, SC, that has earned a reputation for excellence. Houston's Enterprise Catering Service is deservedly being honored by the Southeast Minority Business Development Agency with the Southeastern Regional Director's Award. This is the highest honor bestowed by the regional MBDA organization in recognition of a minority business's outstanding achievements.

Chef Frank Houston and his wife, Millie, are the power behind Houston's Enterprise Catering Service. Frank began cooking when he was a young boy growing up in Charleston, SC. His mother believed in the African-American tradition of teaching all children to cook. Young Frank soon became adept at preparing family favorites like shrimp and grits, homemade butter pound cake, fruitcake, and lima beans with rice.

Cooking was a passion that he learned early in life and was a skill he parlayed into a career. At age 16, he became a bus boy at the Francis Marion Hotel but quickly rose to become a waiter. Frank Houston's ambition and desire to learn everything about the restaurant business precipitated his climb through management and he ultimately became the dining room manager for the hotel.

Yet Frank knew his first love was in preparing food, and left his food service work to study culinary arts at Cornell University. After completing his studies, Frank used his background to launch a restaurant with partner Bob Funderburk. The 2 men successfully ran Funderburk Restaurant, but Frank knew he ultimately wanted to venture out on his own.

Starting his own catering company proved to be a challenge even for the successful entrepreneur. Frank moved to Columbia, and opened his own catering business in 1987. However, as the sole employee of the business, banks were wary of lending him start-up capital and he had to rely on his own financing. The first year was difficult. Houston's Catering sales reached only $50,000, but he didn't give up.

Fate intervened when Frank met his wife, Millie, in 1994. She was completing her degree in hotel, restaurant and tourism management at the University of South Carolina. The combination of their talents led to the creation of Houston's Enterprise Catering Service with Frank serving as chef and Millie managing the operations. The Houstons still received no financial backing and struggled to build their business on word of mouth. Their attention to detail and exquisite execution of upscale menus drew a new customer base solely founded on the company's reputation. By 2001, sales reached nearly $280,000, and Houston's counted among its clientele major corporations, community-based organizations, State agencies as well as private clients.

With the company's growing success, the Houstons believed they should continue to build their business while giving back to the community that had supported them. As they began to hire new employees, they made a commitment to hire those who were disadvantaged and in need of work. They created a secretarial position for single mothers, hired disabled workers and mentored youth during the summer.

The business has been challenged by the opening of the Columbia Convention Center in 2004, which provides special event services for clients who are required to use their food service vendor. Today, Houston's Enterprise Catering Service has a new contract to provide service for the convention center that once was his competition. This new contract in partnership with the Ovations Company is projected to double the Houston's sales figures to exceed $500,000 this fiscal year.

The company still remains committed to the community and giving back. Each year, Houston's contributes to AIDS benefits, the Oliver Gospel Mission, Harvest Hope Food Bank, and various women's shelters. They also participate in youth development programs like DARE, Buffalo Soldiers, and continue to mentor young people. The Houstons were instrumental in creating the "Chef & Child Program," an initiative of Midlands Chef Association. They have received numerous commendations for their community service including awards from the American Culinary Federation.

The Houstons are grounded by their faith, and Frank currently serves as an associate minister at St. Peter Baptist Church in Irmo, SC. The couple has received citations for their outstanding support of their church.

Madam Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me today in commending Houston's Enterprise Catering Service for its extraordinary accomplishments and its recognition as the recipient of the MBDA's Southeastern Regional Director's Award. I know firsthand of the wonderful food and service the Houstons provide, and I cannot think of another couple more deserving of the rewards they are reaping after years of hard work and community service. They are truly an example of the American dream, and I applaud their tremendous accomplishments.

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 3062—SOUTH PACIFIC ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2007

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3062, the South Pacific Economic and Educational Development Act of 2007, and take this opportunity to highlight its value for the strengthening of United States diplomacy in Oceania.

I have the distinct privilege and honor of representing the people of Guam in this House. My constituents remain keenly aware and are especially appreciative of the United States foreign policy programs most relevant and important to our neighboring islands in the greater Pacific Basin. Indeed, the provision of United States technical and financial assistance to Pacific Island states is cause for associated growth and development in, and international recognition of, the neighboring Pacific Island territories of the United States.

Our island territories, including Guam, the Northern Marianas, an American Samoa, together with the State of Hawaii, serve as logical bridges and links to our friends and allies in the greater Pacific Basin. Commerce, trade, communication, and transportation flow between and through our Pacific Island territories and the Pacific Island nation-states. Heads of state and government officials frequently convene in the Pacific Island territories for meetings and summits on issues of relevance and interest to the region and to the United States. H.R. 3062 is predicated in the historic relationship and responsibility the United States has developed with the Pacific Island nation-states.

The introduction and consideration of H.R. 3062 is timely in that it follows the eighth meeting of the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders, an organization that was founded in 1980 with the support of the East-West Center. The eighth meeting convened in Washington, D.C., this past May, and marked the first high-level gathering of Pacific Island political leaders in the Nation's capital in the Conference's history. Twenty separate heads of states and leaders from Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia, participated in that meeting, at which partnerships between the islands and the United States were renewed. A commitment to re-engage in the shared needs and interests of our countries was forged at this recent meeting.

H.R. 3062 would help fulfill a part of the United States commitment to re-engage in the Pacific Region. The bill would authorize the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to provide technical and other assistance to Pacific Island nation-states. The bill would also require the Department of State to take certain steps to ensure the participation of students from the Pacific Island nation-states in the distinguished and highly-recognized J. Fulbright Educational Exchange Program.

I am confident that the provision of such assistance and the participation of Pacific Island students in the Fulbright Program will serve to strengthen United States-Pacific Island relations. H.R. 3062 would also serve to support the advancement of efforts to strengthen regional cooperation, especially in the areas of trade, tourism, the environment, education, and defense and security.

I commend our colleague from American Samoa, Congressman ENI FALEOMAVAEGA, a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Chairman of its Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment, for sponsoring this legislation and for his leadership in buttressing United States assistance in the greater Pacific Basin. I urge my colleagues' support for H.R. 3062.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate on February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled, and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, September 6, 2007 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

SEPTEMBER 7

9 a.m.

Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine a report of the Government Accountability Office's assessment of 18 Iraq benchmarks, with the possibility of a closed session in SR-222 immediately following the open session.

SH-216

SEPTEMBER 10

9:30 a.m.

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine confronting the terrorist threat to the Homeland, six years after 9/11.

SD-342

SEPTEMBER 11

9:30 a.m.

Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine Iraq, focusing on the Crocker-Petraeus report.

SH-216

10 a.m.

Budget

To hold hearings to examine health care and the federal budget, focusing on options for achieving universal health coverage.

SD-608

Finance

To hold hearings to examine the United States-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement.

SD-215

2 p.m.

Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the situation in Iraq, focusing on the progress made by the Government of Iraq in meeting benchmarks.

SH-216

SEPTEMBER 12

9:30 a.m.

Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine S. 2017, to amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to provide for national energy efficiency standards for general service incandescent lamps.

SD-366

10 a.m.

Appropriations

Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine enhancing the safety of toy's relating to lead paint, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and toy safety standards.

SD-192

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Julie L. Myers, of Kansas, to be Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security.

SD-342

Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine regulatory preemption relating to federal agencies usurping congressional and state authority.

SD-226

Rules and Administration

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Robert Charles Tapella, of Virginia, to be Public Printer for the Government Printing Office.

SR-301

SEPTEMBER 18

10 a.m.

Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold an oversight hearing on the National Football League retirement system.

SR-253

SEPTEMBER 19

9:30 a.m.
Veterans' Affairs
To hold oversight hearings to examine information technology.
SD-562

SEPTEMBER 20

9:30 a.m.
Veterans' Affairs
To hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation by the American Legion.
345, Cannon Building

2:30 p.m.
Energy and Natural Resources
To hold hearings to examine S. 1377, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey to the City of Henderson, Nevada, certain Federal land located in the City, S. 1433, to amend the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act to provide competitive status to certain Federal employees in the State of Alaska, S. 1608 and H.R. 815, bills to provide for the conveyance of certain land in Clark County, Nevada, for use by the Nevada National Guard, S. 1740, to amend the Act of February 22, 1889, and the Act of July 2, 1862, to provide for the management of public land trust funds in the State of North Dakota, S. 1802, to adjust the boundaries of the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness in the State of Idaho, S. 1803, to authorize the exchange of certain land located in the State of Idaho, S. 1939, to provide for the conveyance of certain land in the Santa Fe National Forest, New Mexico, and S. 1940, to reauthorize the Rio Puerco Watershed Management Program.
SD-366

SEPTEMBER 25

9:30 a.m.
Veterans' Affairs
To hold oversight hearings to examine Persian Gulf War research.
SD-562

SEPTEMBER 27

9:30 a.m.
Veterans' Affairs
To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Paul J. Hutter, of Virginia, to be General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs.
SD-562