CORRECTION

Congressional Record

United States of America

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 153 WASHINGTON, MONDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2007 No. 147

House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. HIRONO).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 1, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MAZIE K. HIRONO to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) for 5 minutes.

EFFECTIVE JOB TRAINING FOR OUR RETURNING WARRIORS

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, when our soldiers come home from combat, they often face an uphill battle. For many servicemembers, the transition from active duty to veteran status and returning to a full, meaningful civilian life is daunting, fraught with many challenging obstacles and bureaucratic barriers. Many times, these brave service men and women require job training but for entirely new careers.

Although statistics show that eventually veterans in general enjoy a favorable rate in the Nation's job market, many veterans obviously find it difficult to compete successfully in the labor market. That is why for over a decade the Federal Government has provided job training benefits to veterans through the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Labor. The mission statement for the Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service, VETS program, is to ''provide veterans and transitioning servicemembers with the resources and services to succeed in the 21st century workplace by maximizing their employment opportunities, protecting their employment rights, and meeting labor market demands with qualified veterans today.''

Additionally, the Department of Labor offers servicemembers leaving the military with a service-connected disability the Disability Transition Assistance Program, DTAP. DTAP includes a 3-day workshop plus additional hours of individual instruction to help determine job readiness and address the special needs of disabled veterans. However, this is the identical DTAP program offered to all transitioning disabled veterans across this country. This 3-day program is valuable support, but it only provides general employment information and at no time addresses the specific needs of the community in which the veteran lives. Unfortunately, this means that frequently there is a void of information on local labor market conditions that result in veterans using their benefits to train for jobs that do not exist in their community.

Mr. Jeffrey Askew is director of the Marion County Veterans' Service Center in my hometown of Ocala, Florida. He said many veterans have used their Federal job training benefit for information technology (IT) career training. However, Ocala has little demand for IT professionals, and veterans are often advised to move to Orlando where there are many more opportunities for them. Upon finally getting settled back into civilian life, it is frustrating and unfortunate to say the least to be forced to uproot one more time and move your family to an unknown city.

I am concerned about this problem, but I think and I believe that there is an easy solution. That is why I introduced legislation to provide better information to veterans on their local job market needs.

H.R. 3646, the Veterans Effective Training Job Opportunities and Benefits Act of 2007, or VET JOBS Act of 2007, directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Labor to conduct a joint study on the greatest employment needs in various job markets around the country and post these results on the VA Web site. These results would then be updated annually to reflect the current and possibly changing needs in the local job market. With this tool, a veteran could plug in his or her zip code and see a list of the occupations that are most in demand, and subsequently use their Federal job training most effectively.

The Department of Labor already has the infrastructure in place for this kind of research, so this is a practical, low-cost solution. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office has unofficially scored this proposal as having insignificant costs, insignificant costs for immeasurable benefits to our veterans.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in this effort. Help our veterans today. Help them with their quality employment. Help them to find out where the jobs that they wish to be trained for are located, and support the VET JOBS Act that I ask for all of my colleagues to cosponsor.

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RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 35 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. CASTOR) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord God Almighty, before the majesty of Your creation and the power of Your will, we humbly stand and present ourselves to You.

We are a people who love freedom. We have proven creative in our work and appear prosperous in the eyes of the world. Yet we are made of the same clay as all others.

Help us to find common cause with others and be proven true to noble purpose in Your sight.

Show us how to use our bountiful blessings, to attain true leadership in the world and a model for others. Thus may we be Your instrument for achieving lasting peace and justice in troublesome times.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 pro tempore. The Chair will lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The SPEAKER pro tempore 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.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
WASHINGTON, DC,
September 28, 2007.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on September 28, 2007, at 9:15 am:

That the Senate passed with an amendment H.R. 327.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.J. Res 43.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.J. Res 52.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3625.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3668.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

LORRAINE C. MILLER,
Clerk of the House.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 4 of rule I, the following enrolled bills and joint resolutions were signed by the Speaker on Friday, September 28, 2007:

H.R. 976, to amend title XXI of the Social Security Act to extend and improve the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes

H.R. 3625, to make permanent the waiver authority of the Secretary of Education with respect to student financial assistance during a war or other military operation or national emergency

H.R. 3668, to provide for the extension of Transitional Medical Assistance (TMA), the Abstinence Education Program, and the Qualifying Individuals (QI) Program, and for other purposes

H.J. Res. 43, increasing the statutory limit on the public debt

H.J. Res. 52, making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2008, and for other purposes

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 4 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1431

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WALZ of Minnesota) at 2 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.

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 after 6:30 p.m. today.

COMMENDING THE WINGS OVER HOUSTON AIRSHOW

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 691) commending the Wings Over Houston Airshow for its great contribution to the appreciation, understanding, and future of the United States Armed Forces, the City of Houston, Texas, and Ellington Field.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 691

Whereas for 23 years the all-volunteer Gulf Coast Wing and West Houston Squadron of the Commemorative Air Force has performed in the Wings Over Houston Airshow at Ellington Field in Houston, Texas;

Whereas the Wings Over Houston Airshow has been rated as one of the top events of its kind in the Nation;

Whereas tens of thousands of people from southeast Texas and all over the United States attend the event each year and experience the unique opportunity to see the United States Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard perform and to meet service members of the past and present;

Whereas the Wings Over Houston Airshow has helped to increase awareness and appreciation for the United States Armed Forces and its active duty members and veterans;

Whereas the Wings Over Houston Airshow serves to promote an understanding and appreciation of military history through the reenactment of battles and the acquisition, restoration, and display of vintage aircraft;

Whereas throughout its history, Wings Over Houston Airshow has benefited local and national charities, including the Wings Over Houston Airshow Scholarship Program, the Texas Southern University Aviation Career Academy, the Exchange Club of Sugar Land, and the Commemorative Air Force aircraft restoration and flying historical programs;

Whereas the Wings Over Houston Airshow and its partners, including the Lone Star Flight Museum, the Houston Airport System, the Clear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, the Bay Area Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau, Destination League City, and the cities of Houston, Kemah, Nassau Bay, Seabrook, and Webster, have contributed to the economy and growth of southeast Texas; and

Whereas the Wings Over Houston Scholarship Program has promoted the importance of math and science education by helping southeast Texas students pursue college educations in the fields of aviation and aerospace: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives commends the Wings Over Houston Airshow for its great contribution to the appreciation, understanding, and future of the United States Armed Forces, the City of Houston, Texas, and Ellington Field.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. REICHERT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. CASTOR. 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 gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 691 commending the Wings Over Houston Airshow for its great contribution to the appreciation, understanding, and future of the United States Armed Forces, the City of Houston, Texas, and Ellington Field.

I would like to thank my colleague from Texas, Mr. NICK LAMPSON, for bringing this measure to the floor of the House.

The Wings Over Houston Airshow is one of the highest rated events of its kind. This coming Saturday and Sunday, folks from Congressman LAMPSON's district and, in fact, from all over America, will come to see these mighty military machines maneuver through the skies with seeming ease. These classic and contemporary airframes break their bounds to Earth and share the heavens with the sun and clouds.

It's a rare experience to see with your own eyes the awe-inspiring airborne arsenal of our Armed Forces. It's difficult to explain the seemingly impossible coordination our pilots execute in midair. No one can truly understand the peril, skill, and thrill involved except for the pilots themselves; yet our extraordinarily talented men and women fly in conditions that require nothing less than perfection. And visitors will have that rare glimpse of airborne art.

Spectators will be visited by the Texas Air National Guard 147th Fighter Squadron. Their TANG F–16s will tear rifts through the sky as they buzz by. The Texas Air National Guard F–16s are at a state of constant readiness, prepared to defend the great State of Texas and our Nation at a moment's call.

Attendees will also have the chance to see Canadian Forces Snowbirds, the P–38, the B–24A, a heritage flight consisting of the F–4 Phantom, the P–51 Mustang, the P–47 Thunderbolt, and the F–15E Strike Eagle, and a number of Navy fighters among them.

Mr. Speaker, the Wings Over Houston Airshow provides an important experience for folks to understand and to see the many machines that help our brave men and women in uniform protect us.

I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 691.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 691, which commends the Wings Over Houston Airshow for its contribution to the appreciation, understanding, and the future of the United States Armed Forces, the City of Houston, and Ellington Field.

Mr. Speaker, for 23 years, the Wings Over Houston Airshow has been delighting aviation enthusiasts and future pilots from around the world with spectacular flying in the skies, and with historical and educational displays on the ground in Ellington Field.

This top-rated aviation event, which is sponsored by the all-volunteer Gulf Coast Wing and West Houston Squadron of the Commemorative Air Force, honors the spirit of the courageous and valiant American military flyers of the past and those who take to the skies today to ensure our Nation's freedoms.

The Wings Over Houston Airshow showcases the United States Air Force, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard, and increases the awareness and appreciation for active duty members and the veterans of our Armed Forces.

But more important than the air show's entertainment, the Wings Over Houston Airshow has awarded $10,000 to $15,000 in scholarships per year to students who are pursuing an education in aviation and in aerospace. In total, this organization has provided over $100,000 to young men and women who have entered into careers in both military and civilian aviation.

The Wings Over Houston Airshow celebrates America's aviation and aerospace history and the courageous military pilots whose sacrifices have ensured our freedom. I am confident that the Wings Over Houston Airshow will continue to ignite the enthusiasm for flying in future generations of American aviators.

I strongly urge all Members to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield 3 minutes to my friend and colleague from Texas, a true champion for Texas and a staunch supporter of our Armed Forces, Mr. LAMPSON, the sponsor of this resolution.

Mr. LAMPSON. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me the opportunity to come and speak on this.

I am proud to honor the Wings Over Houston Airshow because each year about 70,000 spectators from around the world gather in the 22nd Congressional District of Texas to view this historic Ellington Field and view re-enactments of great battles, see up-close views of vintage aircraft, and meet yesterday's and today's heroes.

For the last 23 years, as you've heard, pilots from our Armed Forces and around the globe wow audiences with their high-speed acrobatics. And how often do we get to see real-life daredevils? Well, this weekend, the Canadian Forces Snowbirds will demonstrate their seven- to nine-plane close formations, tight turns, and head-on passes. Crowds will get to view state-of-the-art military aircraft, along with planes from days of old.

This year, the air show brings history to life through authentic World War II vehicles, equipment and uniforms at a realistic military camp. They're going to re-enact part of the movie, ''Tora! Tora! Tora!'' As a former school teacher, I know activities like these help promote an understanding and appreciation of military history.

Visitors are going to be able to see trainers, fighters, and bombers from the World War II, Korea and Vietnam era, and even NASA aircraft. The air show presents a unique opportunity to tour some of the largest aircraft in the world, including the Hurricane Hunter KC–135 and a C–5 cargo plane, walk over the wings of vintage airplanes, and even sit in the pilot's seat.

Children have the opportunity to meet flying aces and decorated war heroes and to hear historical recounts from the people who were there.

This year's show features both Pearl Harbor survivors and the Tuskegee Airmen, who were recently awarded the Congressional Gold Medal. I am proud of these folks, and I know that all Americans are as well. Meeting living legends and air show performers is inspiring for young and old alike, and this show is a rare opportunity to thank these heroes for their service and for their sacrifice.

Wings Over Houston has spent, in the last 23 years, a quarter of a million dollars to help challenge young people to go into aerospace, engineering, and aviation. Many go on to careers in the military and go to work at NASA where they can also gain valuable experience as interns at the Johnson Space Center, which is across the street from Ellington Field. With its important contributions, Wings Over Houston ensures that our Nation leads the way in math and science.

The air show has also donated proceeds to various local and national charities throughout the years, including the Texas Southern University Aviation Career Academy, the Exchange Club of Sugar Land, and the Commemorative Air Force aircraft restoration and flying historical programs. Together with their partner, Wings Over Houston, it has greatly contributed to the economy and growth of southeast Texas.

So I want to thank the members of the House Armed Services Committee, and many of my Texas colleagues, particularly, for their cosponsorship of this resolution. I am pleased to honor the Wings Over Houston Airshow as a leader in the history and the future in the United States Armed Forces.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Washington (Mr. REICHERT) and salute my colleague from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON) for bringing this resolution. I know, as a member of the Tampa Bay area and the Armed Services Committee, we value our air show every year at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa. So I thank my colleague again from Houston for his resolution commending the Wings Over Houston Airshow.

I ask my colleagues to support the resolution.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 691,

commending the Wings Over Houston Airshow for its great contribution to the appreciation, understanding, and future of the United States Armed Forces, the city of Houston, TX, and Ellington Field, of which I am proud to be an original cosponsor. I would like to thank my good friend and colleague, Congressman LAMPSON, for introducing this legislation, and the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Congressman SKELTON, for his leadership on this important issue.

The 23rd annual Wings Over Houston Airshow will take place on October 6 and 7, 2007, at Ellington Field, Houston, TX. This year's event will feature an array of modern civilian aerobatic and state-of-the-art military hardware, including the Canadian Forces Snowbirds, as well as historic planes such as a Lockheed P–38 buried under ice in Greenland in 1942 and only recovered 50 years later. Also performing will be the all-volunteer Gulf Coast Wing and West Houston Squadron of the Commemorative Air Force, which has performed for the last 23 years at the airshow.

Mr. Speaker, the Wings Over Houston Airshow has been rated as one of the top events of its kind. Over 70,000 people, both from the local community in southeast Texas and from all over the Nation, gather every year at this event, where they have the opportunity to see the United States Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard perform, as well as to meet service members of the past and present. The Wings Over Houston Airshow has helped to increase awareness and appreciation for the United States Armed Forces and its active duty members and veterans.

The Wings Over Houston Airshow also serves to promote an understanding and appreciation of military history. The airshow's many events include the reenactment of battles and the acquisition, restoration, and display of vintage aircraft. Among these historical reenactments is Tora!Tora!Tora!, an explosive recreation of the air attack on Pearl Harbor. Viewers of all ages will have the opportunity to view this exciting spectacle, while also learning about military and aviation history.

Mr. Speaker, the Wings Over Houston Airshow plays an important role in both local and national communities. The airshow benefits local and national charities, including the Wings Over Houston Airshow Scholarship Program, the Texas Southern University Aviation Career Academy, the Exchange Club of Sugar Land, and the Commemorative Air Force aircraft restoration and flying historical programs.

The Wings Over Houston Scholarship Program is particularly important. This scholarship program promotes math and science education by helping students from southeast Texas pursue college educations in the fields of aviation and aerospace. Scholarships are awarded to students residing in Harris County, or a contiguous county, who have demonstrated academic potential, leadership, and extracurricular involvement, with preference giving to those pursuing an academic degree directly associated with aviation or aerospace. For 2007, a total of $10,000 in scholarships was awarded, and I would like to congratulate the four recipients: Robert Tristan Reeves, David Gehris, Kristen John, and Donovan Johnson.

Mr. Speaker, the Wings Over Houston Airshow is made possible by the collaboration of a number of Houston area organizations. I would like to extend my thanks to the airshow's partners, which include the Lone Star Flight Museum, the Houston Airport System, the Clear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, the Bay Area Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau, Destination League City, and the cities of Houston, Kemah, Nassau Bay, Seabrook, and Webster. Together, the Wings Over Houston Airshow and its generous partners have contributed to the economy and growth of southeast Texas.

Mr. Speaker, the 110th Congress has made the promotion of math and science education for all our Nation's children a legislative priority. Exciting and exhilarating events like the Wings Over Houston Airshow are an opportunity for children of all ages to engage with science, to hear heroic stories that helped shape America's rich aviation history, to get excited about the world of aviation, to meet and interact with members of our Nation's military, and to dream about their own futures.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Wings Over Houston Airshow in Houston, Texas for its contribution to the city of Houston, local communities, and the military by fully supporting H. Res. 691.

Wings Over Houston is about to give its 23rd annual show and in those 23 years, the show has continued to bring attention to the history and future of the United States Armed Forces, and its veterans and active duty members while becoming one of the top events of its kind in the country and one of the largest in Metropolitan Houston. An estimated 70,000 to 90,000 people are expected to enjoy the air and static displays this year which will not only help to support many non-profit and charitable organizations, but help to fund the Wings Over Houston Scholarship Program and Aviation Career Education summer camp.

This family-oriented international event is housed at Ellington Field. Originally built in 1917, the field was integral in flight training for both world wars and was one of the airfields selected to maintain a large military force after the end of WWII. It currently is home to local presence of NASA, Texas Air National Guard, Coast Guard, the National Guard, as well as being used for other aviation purposes.

Wings Over Houston not only brings local and international tourists to Houston, but also generates awareness of U.S. Armed Forces by showing a vested interest in education and supporting local students through the scholarship program. That is why I support H. Res. 691.

Ms. CASTOR. 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 Florida (Ms. CASTOR) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 691.

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.

HONORING THE SACRIFICES AND COMMITMENTS OF THE MEN, WOMEN, AND FAMILIES OF THE UNITED STATES TRANSPORTATION COMMAND

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 640) honoring the sacrifices and commitments of the men, women, and families of the United States Transportation Command, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 640

Whereas the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 (Public Law 99–433) revoked the law prohibiting consolidation of military transportation functions, and President Reagan subsequently ordered the establishment of a United States Transportation Command;

Whereas October 1, 2007, marks the 20th anniversary of the activation of the Transportation Command at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois;

Whereas the Transportation Command is comprised of the Air Mobility Command at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, the Military Sealift Command at Washington, DC, and the Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois;

Whereas the mission of Transportation Command is to provide air, land, and sea transportation for the Department of Defense, both in times of peace and war;

Whereas Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm first demonstrated the fully operational capability of the Transportation Command with the movement of approximately 504,000 passengers, 3,700,000 tons of dry cargo, and 6,100,000 tons of petroleum products in 7 months;

Whereas the Transportation Command has continued to serve the Nation during many contingency and peacekeeping operations around the world, including United Nations operations in Iraq, Rwanda, and Somalia, as well as North Atlantic Treaty Organization operations in Serbia and Kosovo;

Whereas the Transportation Command has supported many humanitarian relief operations transporting relief supplies to victims of foreign and domestic natural disasters;

Whereas after terrorist attacks killed nearly 3,000 people and wounded thousands on September 11, 2001, the Transportation Command became a vital asset in the global war on terrorism, supporting members of the Armed Forces in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and around the world;

Whereas from October 2001 to September 2007, the Transportation Command, its components, and its national partners have transported approximately 4,000,000 passengers, 9,000,000 short tons of cargo, and over 4,000,000,000 gallons of fuel in support of the global war on terrorism; and

Whereas the 2005 quadrennial defense review recognized the importance of joint mobility and the critical role that it plays in global power projection: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) honors the sacrifices and commitment of the approximately 155,000 men and women who comprise the United States Transportation Command, including active and reserve components, civilian employees, and contractors;

(2) honors the families of the United States Transportation Command and their sacrifices while their loved ones are deployed around the world;

(3) owes the men, women, and families of the Transportation Command a debt of gratitude; and

(4) honors the achievements of the Transportation Command during the global war on terrorism.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. REICHERT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. CASTOR. 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 gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 640, to honor the sacrifices and commitments of the men, women, and families of the United States Transportation Command, or TRANSCOM.

Today marks the 20th anniversary of TRANSCOM's activation at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois, and I would like to thank my colleague from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO) for bringing this measure before the House.

Charged with the vital duty of providing air, land and sea transportation for the Department of Defense, both in times of peace and war, TRANSCOM consists of the Air Mobility Command, the Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command, and the Military Sea Lift Command.

Established in 1978, TRANSCOM is the single manager of America's global defense transportation system, and its skilled coordination allows our country to project and sustain our Armed Forces whenever, wherever and for as long as they are needed.

Responding quickly and effectively to the demands of our warfighting commanders, TRANSCOM first proved its crucial capability during Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm, with the movement of more than 500,000 passengers, 3.7 million tons of dry cargo, and 6.1 million tons of petroleum products in only 7 months.

TRANSCOM has continued to serve the Nation and the world through many contingency and peacekeeping operations around the globe. It has supported numerous humanitarian relief operations, transporting supplies to victims of foreign and domestic natural disasters.

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, TRANSCOM became an especially vital asset to our Nation, supporting our Armed Forces in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

From October 2001 to September 2007, TRANSCOM and its components have transported approximately 4 million passengers, 9 million tons of cargo, and over 4 billion gallons of fuel. House Resolution 640 honors these great achievements and the men and women who make them happen.

TRANSCOM provides a vital service to our Nation and enables our Armed Forces to carry out their missions effectively and efficiently.

I hope you will join me today in congratulating TRANSCOM on its 20th anniversary, and expressing gratitude to the 155,000 men and women who comprise it for their continued sacrifice and commitment to this country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 640.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1445

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 640, as amended, a resolution that honors the sacrifices and commitments of the men, women and families of the United States Transportation Command. U.S. TRANSCOM was established in 1987 as one of the nine U.S. unified commands. TRANSCOM is tasked with coordination of people and transportation assets to allow our country to sustain forces whenever, wherever and for as long as they are needed. The men, women and families of TRANSCOM have done an extraordinary job of supporting this Nation and our national defense over the past 20 years.

I would like to take a moment to share a story with you that exemplifies the incredible capabilities of this unique organization. On an early morning in July, one of our sergeants was on a raid in Baghdad and found himself the victim of a brutal attack that resulted in a severe head injury. The soldier was immediately transported to Balad Air Base in Iraq for treatment. The wonderful people at the 332nd expeditionary medical group, whom I met on a recent trip to Iraq, examined this wounded soldier and determined that he needed to be quickly returned to the United States for a level of care that they could not provide in the field.

This is the point where the amazing men and women of the U.S. TRANSCOM went into action. A C–17 crew was just getting ready to start their day making normal cargo runs around the theater. As they arrived for duty, they were told of the wounded soldier. They immediately began planning the mission to get him the critical care that he needed. While U.S. TRANSCOM deals with urgent requests almost daily, this one was different. The C–17 crew was notified that due to the nature of the sergeant's head injury, they would have to keep the cabin pressure no higher than 4,000 feet on the flight home. They were also told, by the way, that it wouldn't be prudent to land anywhere on their trip as the pressure changes from climbing and descending could trigger bleeding and the patient would possibly lose his life. In order to make the flight home at a lower than normal altitude, the C–17 would need to be refueled twice along the way. The folks at U.S. TRANSCOM coordinated for the air refueling support over Turkey and England. As the flight was en route, this refueling took place. The extraordinary skills and capabilities of U.S. TRANSCOM personnel brought that flight safely to the ground at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, in record time. The wounded soldier was under the care of a neurosurgeon at Bethesda less than 24 hours from the moment of attack.

Now, that miracle is pretty impressive. But there are a few other details that you should know about this story. First of all, the C–17 was a McChord Air Force Base, Washington, airplane, where I happen to serve. It was flown by an active duty crew from Charleston Air Force Base. The doctor who cared for the patient while in flight is a reservist from Langley Air Force Base. The nurse is also a reservist, but he is from MacDill Air Force Base in Florida. The rest of the critical care team is a part of the Air National Guard. The entire mission, Mr. Speaker, was being controlled from Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, by the Tanker Airlift Control Center. That is what U.S. TRANSCOM is all about, bringing together the mobility assets needed to support our war fighters to the medical service that they need.

This is why I am proud to support H.R. 640. The men, women and families of U.S. TRANSCOM have served this Nation well. As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of U.S. TRANSCOM today, let's send them a strong message and support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Washington (Mr. REICHERT), and I thank our colleague from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO) for bringing this resolution to the floor of the House, House Resolution 640, honoring the sacrifices and commitments of the men, women and families of the United States Transportation Command.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 640.

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 640, a resolution honoring the United States Transportation Command (US TRANSCOM) on its 20th Anniversary at Scott AFB, IL. I would like to thank Chairman SKELTON and Ranking Member HUNTER for working with me to bring this to the floor expeditiously.

TRANSCOM is responsible for creating and implementing first-class global deployment and distribution solutions to support the President, Secretary of Defense, and our Combatant Commander assigned missions.

Scott AFB, home of US TRANSCOM, Air Mobility Command, the Surface Deployment and Distribution Command, the 375th AW, the

932nd AW, and the 126th ARW, among other units, have made countless contributions to the OEF/OIF.

Since Oct 10, 2001, the US TRANSCOM has moved over 4 million passengers, almost 4.654 billion gallons of fuel, over 9.4 million tons of cargo, over 88,000 airlift missions, over 760 ship loads, more than 164,000 rail car shipments, and approximately 2 million CONUS truck shipments.

They have done all of this with only 2 fatalities in the aeromedical system. Those statistics demonstrate a remarkable commitment to excellence and an indication of true leadership, strong spirit and continued sacrifice.

Each day, the people at TRANSCOM and Scott AFB and their families and friends, are asked to sacrifice for the good of our country. They make that sacrifice without hesitation and should be commended for it.

Mr. Speaker, as we mark TRANSCOM's 20th anniversary at Scott AFB, I would like to commend General Norton Schwartz and the men and women who serve with him. It is truly an honor to have this command at Scott AFB and I look forward to countless more years of this unique partnership. I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring TRANSCOM and supporting this resolution.

Ms. CASTOR. 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 Florida (Ms. CASTOR) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 640, 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.

RECOGNIZING THE NAVY UDT-SEAL MUSEUM IN FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA, AS THE OFFICIAL NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NAVY SEALS AND THEIR PREDECESSORS.

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2779) to recognize the Navy UDT-SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce, Florida, as the official national museum of Navy SEALs and their predecessors.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2779

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. RECOGNITION OF NAVY UDT–SEAL MUSEUM IN FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA, AS OFFICIAL NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NAVY SEALS AND THEIR PREDECESSORS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The United States Navy SEALs are the most elite fighting force in the world and bravely serve in combat operations around the World.

(2) The Navy SEALs trace their roots from the Navy Frogmen of World War II.

(3) The location recognized as the birthplace of the Navy Frogmen, where thousands of brave volunteers were trained as members of Naval Combat Demolition Units and Underwater Demolition Teams during World War II, is now home to the Navy UDT–SEAL Museum.

(4) The Navy UDT–SEAL Museum is the only museum dedicated solely to preserving the history of the Navy SEALs and its predecessors, including the Underwater Demolition Teams, Naval Combat Demolition Units, Office of Strategic Services Maritime Units, and Amphibious Scouts and Raiders.

(5) The Navy UDT–SEAL Museum preserves the legacy of the honor, courage, patriotism, and sacrifices of those Navy SEALs and their predecessors who offered their services and who gave their lives in defense of liberty.

(6) The Navy UDT–SEAL Museum finances, operations, and collections are managed by UDT–SEAL Museum Association, Inc., a nonprofit organization governed by current and former SEALs and UDTs.

(7) The Navy UDT–SEAL Museum seeks to educate a diverse group of audiences through its comprehensive collection of historical materials, emphasizing eyewitness accounts of the participants on the battlefield and the home front and the impact of Navy SEALs and their predecessors, then and now.

(8) Since 1985, when the Navy UDT–SEAL Museum first opened, it has become home to artifacts and photos telling the history of Naval Special Warfare from the beginnings of Underwater Demolition training in Ft. Pierce, Florida, through the exploits of Navy Frogmen in the Atlantic and Pacific war theaters of World War II, through the role of Navy SEALs in fighting in the War on Terror and in Iraq.

(9) The State of Florida, St. Lucie County, Florida, thousands of private donors, and philanthropic organizations have contributed millions of dollars to build, restore, and expand the Navy UDT–SEAL Museum.

(10) The United States Navy and the United States Special Operations Command have provided many of the historical materials and artifacts on display at the Navy UDT–SEAL Museum.

(b) RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL MUSEUM.—The Navy UDT–SEAL Museum, located at 3300 North A1A, North Hutchinson Island, in Fort Pierce, Florida, is recognized as the official national museum of Navy SEALs and their predecessors.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. REICHERT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. CASTOR. 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 gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2779 to honor the legacy of the Navy SEALs by recognizing the Navy Underwater Demolition Team Sea, Air, Land, or UDT–SEAL, Museum in Fort Pierce, Florida, as the official national museum of Navy SEALs and their predecessors. I thank my colleague from Florida (Mr. MAHONEY) for bringing this measure to the floor of the House.

Since the program's inception in 1962, the Special Operations Sailors, known as Navy SEALs, have risked their lives at sea, in the air and on land to protect the United States of America. The most elite fighting force in the world, the Navy SEALs have bravely executed some of the most dangerous combat operations in our Nation's history. Tracing the roots of these historic sailors, the Navy UDT–SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce, Florida, marks the birthplace of the Navy frogmen where thousands of brave volunteers were trained to become the first members of naval combat demolition units and underwater demolition teams during World War II. The Navy UDT-SEAL Museum is the only museum dedicated solely to preserving the legacy of the Navy SEALs and its predecessors.

Since 1985 when the facility first opened, the museum served both as a physical monument to our sailors' bravery as well as an educational repository that preserves the legacy of their honor, skill, courage and patriotism. The museum traces the SEALs' lineage from the UDTs conducting hydrographic reconnaissance on the beaches of Normandy to the present-day professionals who practice conventional warfare and counterterrorism. The museum exhibits memorialize the incredible courage and versatility of the Navy SEALs through emphasizing eyewitness accounts and photographs of sailors on the battlefield as well as on the homefront.

The Navy UDT–SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce, Florida, is an immensely important venture for the Navy underwater combat community as well as for the great State of Florida, preserving the rich history and valiant story of the Navy SEALs for both the program's veterans and future generations.

Our Nation can express its great admiration for these brave sailors and the gratitude for this monument to their sacrifices by recognizing the Navy UDT–SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce, Florida, as the official national museum of Navy SEALs and their predecessors.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2779, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2779, a bill that recognizes the Navy Underwater Demolition Team-SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce, Florida, as the official national museum of the Navy SEALs and their predecessors. H.R. 2779 has the strong bipartisan support of 44 cosponsors, including the distinguished members of the Committee on Armed Services and my good friends SUSAN DAVIS of California and THELMA DRAKE of Virginia whose districts contain the majority of present-day SEALs units.

The Navy SEALs are deservedly renowned around the world for their combat prowess and are a critical part of our special forces team. This elite fighting team and force traces its beginning to the Navy's World War II

frogman training facility in Fort Pierce, Florida, where this museum is located. During World War II, the Navy trained thousands of volunteers as combat demolition and underwater demolition experts at Fort Pierce. The brave men who mastered these difficult and dangerous skills set the standard for today's SEALs to attain.

The Navy Underwater Demolition Team–SEAL Museum, which we designate today as the official national museum, has an impressive and comprehensive collection of material about these elite Navy fighting forces, providing the public with an excellent education of today's Navy SEALs and their predecessors.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that this bill has been brought to the floor. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAHONEY), who is an outstanding leader and staunch supporter of the Nation's Armed Forces.

Mr. MAHONEY of Florida. I would like to thank my good friend, the gentlewoman from Florida, and an original cosponsor of this bill for yielding time to me this afternoon. I would also like to recognize the gentleman from Washington (Mr. REICHERT) for his support for this important bill.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2779, legislation that I introduced to recognize the Navy UDT–SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce, Florida, as the official national museum of the Navy SEALs and their predecessors.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that there are many today watching and asking how important is it to create a national museum recognizing brave men and women who have served in underwater demolition teams as frogmen and today as SEALs. In my life, I have had the privilege and honor of knowing and learning about brave men who have served our Nation and have seen the hell of combat, people like Reggie White, my daughter Bailey's grandfather, who was a combat engineer and who, like the men of UDT, had the job of clearing Omaha Beach that fateful day of June 6, 1944. My uncle, Bart Mahoney, a B–17 pilot, was one of the first to be shot down over Germany. Bart survived combat and then survived German concentration camps. Bobbie Maynard saw frontline action in Korea and survived some of the heaviest engagements in the Korean War. My friend, Pat Kelley, was a medic in Vietnam who had to endure the life-and-death realities of combat. These men are heroes. These men have seen the horrors of war and survived them. These men never bragged about their service. In fact, they rarely spoke of it, preferring to let the horrors of their experience rest. This bill is important because it gives voice to the heroes whose stories and honor need to be captured and passed down to future generations.

The ground upon which the Navy UDT–SEAL Museum rests was the birthplace of the Navy frogmen. Through World War II, thousands of brave soldiers were trained as members of naval combat demolition units and underwater demolition teams at the site. Since that time, the frogmen have evolved into one of the elite fighting forces in the world, the Navy SEALs.

The Navy UDT–SEAL Museum is the only museum dedicated solely to preserving the legacy of the honor, courage, patriotism, and sacrifices of those Navy SEALs and their predecessors, including the underwater demolition teams, naval combat demolition units, Office of Strategic Service maritime units, and Amphibious Scouts and Raiders.

□ 1500

I would like to personally thank Captain Mike Howard, a retired Navy SEAL; Ruth McSween; Rolf Snyder; and others, who have made the UDT–SEAL Museum possible. I would also like to thank all the men and women who worked to preserve the legacy of the Naval Special Warfare community. Since the museum was opened in 1985, thousands of visitors have learned of the accomplishments of the Navy SEALs through the museum's artifacts and photos tracing the history of Naval Special Warfare from its beginnings during World War II, through the Navy's SEALs current role in fighting the war on terror and in Iraq.

While we are here today to honor the Naval Special Warfare community, I would like to take a moment to remember Petty Officer First Class Robert Richard McRill and all of those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice while serving our Nation. Petty Officer McRill, from Lake Placid, Florida, was killed while serving in Iraq as part of SEALs Group Two when his team was hit by an IED.

By designating the Navy UDT–SEAL Museum as the official national museum of Navy SEALs and their predecessors, we are honoring Mr. McRill and all the warriors who have served in Naval Special Warfare. I ask all my colleagues to join me in recognizing the honor, courage, patriotism and sacrifices of the SEALs and their predecessors by supporting this legislation.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, at this time I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Washington (Mr. REICHERT) for his support. I would also like to thank my colleague and friend from Florida (Mr. MAHONEY) for bringing this thoughtful bill to the floor of the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2779.

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 Florida (Ms. CASTOR) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2779.

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.

COMMENDING THE 1ST BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM/34TH INFANTRY DIVISION OF THE MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 185) commending the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard upon its completion of the longest continuous deployment of any United States military unit during Operation Iraqi Freedom, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 185

Whereas the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard, known as the Red Bull Division, is headquartered in Bloomington, Minnesota, and deployed approximately 2,700 hard-working and courageous Minnesotans and approximately 1,300 more soldiers from other Midwestern States;

Whereas the 1st Brigade Combat Team has a long history of service to the United States, beginning with the Civil War;

Whereas the 1st Brigade Combat Team was most recently mobilized in September 2005 and departed for Iraq in March 2006;

Whereas the 1st Brigade Combat Team recently completed the longest continuous deployment of any United States ground combat military unit during Operation Iraqi Freedom;

Whereas, during its deployment, the 1st Brigade Combat Team completed 5,200 combat logistics patrols, secured 2.4 million convoy miles, and discovered 462 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) prior to detonation;

Whereas the 1st Brigade Combat Team processed over 1.5 million vehicles and 400,000 Iraqis into entry control points without any insurgent penetrations;

Whereas the 1st Brigade Combat Team captured over 400 suspected insurgents;

Whereas more than 1,400 members of the 1st Brigade Combat Team reenlisted during deployment and 21 members became United States citizens during deployment;

Whereas the 1st Brigade Combat Team helped start two Iraqi newspapers that provide news to the local population and publish stories on reconstruction progress;

Whereas the 1st Brigade Combat Team completed 137 reconstruction projects;

Whereas the deployment of the 1st Brigade Combat Team in Iraq was extended by 125 days in January 2007;

Whereas the 1st Brigade Combat Team and its members are now returning to the United States to loving families and a grateful nation;

Whereas the families of the members of the 1st Brigade Combat Team have waited patiently for their loved ones to return and endured many hardships during this lengthy deployment;

Whereas the employers of members and family members of the 1st Brigade Combat

Team have displayed patriotism over profit, by keeping positions saved for the returning soldiers and supporting the families during the difficult days of this long deployment, and these employers are great corporate citizens through their support of members of the Armed Forces and their family members;

Whereas communities throughout the Midwest are now integral participants in the Minnesota National Guard's extensive Beyond the Yellow Ribbon reintegration program that will help members of the 1st Brigade Combat Team return to normal life; and

Whereas the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division has performed admirably and courageously, putting service to country over personal interests and gaining the gratitude and respect of Minnesotans, Midwesterners, and all Americans: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) commends the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard upon its completion of the longest continuous deployment of any United States ground combat military unit during Operation Iraqi Freedom;

(2) recognizes the achievements of the members of the 1st Brigade Combat Team and their exemplary service to the United States; and

(3) directs the Clerk of the House of Representatives to transmit a copy of this resolution to the Adjutant General of the Minnesota National Guard for appropriate display.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MAHONEY of Florida). Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. CASTOR. 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 gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 185, commending the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard upon its completion of the longest continuous deployment of any United States military unit during Operation Iraqi Freedom. I would like to thank my colleague from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) for bringing this measure before the House.

The 1st Brigade Combat Team of the 34th Infantry Division was deployed for 22 months, nearly 2 years. That's how long they were continuously deployed. This is longer than any other ground combat unit in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Many Americans count down the hours until the end of the workday, until Friday night, until the end of the work week. Often our commitment to our jobs comes in bundles of 40 hours.

Yet the soldiers of the Red Bull Division had no such luxury. Counting down the time until redeployment was computed in entire weeks, if not months. Just when they and their families thought they were to come home, their deployment was extended by an additional 125 days.

In 22 months some of our brave men and women in uniform missed their infants and their young children taking their first steps, saying their first words. Some of the roughly 5,000-member BCT missed their kids' high school graduations, and they didn't get a chance to move their sons and daughters into a dorm for college.

So much can change in 2 years. So many precious moments that we hold dear pass by during this time. Yet we go about our daily lives and forget that these precious moments that we enjoy are being protected by America's tremendous servicemembers.

Even more amazing is the fact that the members of the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division are members of the National Guard. These are everyday folks, our neighbors and friends who signed up to be citizen soldiers. Their single deployment lasted as long as some active duty servicemembers' entire time in our Armed Forces. This was an extraordinary commitment and sacrifice on the part of the Red Bull Division.

Mr. Speaker, I know Mr. WALZ and Mr. KLINE, our colleagues from Minnesota, will have much to say about these fine Minnesotans as representatives of that great State. But I would just like to say how proud I am as a Member of the United States House of Representatives and as an American, Mr. Speaker, of the 5,200 combat logistics patrols, the 2.4 million convoy miles, the 400 captured terrorists and the 22-month deployment that the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division accomplished.

We can never repay these servicemembers for their time and their tremendous sacrifice. But what we can do is enshrine our appreciation and thanks by passing this resolution into law.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support House Concurrent Resolution 185.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 185, which commends the men and women of the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division, Minnesota National Guard, for completing the longest continuous deployment of any United States combat team in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Mr. Speaker, these men and women did not want to set this record. They didn't seek this record. In fact, when they left these shores, they had no idea this record was going to be theirs: 16 months in a combat zone, 22 months of mobilization. But when the word came, they didn't flinch. They set forward, they did their duty and they set a record, one which I certainly hope no other unit will ever be asked to surpass.

The men and women of the 1st Brigade Combat Team are some of this Nation's finest soldiers. Their first-rate service in Iraq carries on the tradition of excellence established by previous generations of the 1st Brigade, through service in the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and both world wars.

The more than 2,200 Minnesotans and 1,300 more Midwestern soldiers who served in the 1st Brigade in Iraq performed remarkably during their unrivaled tour of duty. These soldiers completed more than 5,200 combat logistics patrols, secured 2.4 million convoy miles, captured over 400 suspected insurgents, and discovered 462 improvised explosive devices prior to detonation. They also helped to start two Iraqi newspapers and completed 137 reconstruction projects.

As a mark of their commitment to the unit and to this Nation, more than 1,400 members of the brigade reenlisted, reenlisted, while in Iraq, and 21 members became United States citizens.

Throughout their long tour of duty, their historic tour of duty, the soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team had the steady support of families and employers. The soldiers are now home and beginning the process of reintegration through the Minnesota National Guard's extensive Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program.

Mr. Speaker, given their admirable and courageous service over so long a period of time, and in recognition of their willingness to put service to country over personal interest, it is only fitting that we take this opportunity to commend the men and women of the 1st Brigade Combat Team.

I want to thank my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) for bringing this measure forward and for his service with the National Guard.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in strong support of this concurrent resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I intend to recognize the sponsor of this thoughtful resolution, but I think it is important for our colleagues to recognize his service as well. Mr. WALZ from Minnesota spent 24 years himself in the Army National Guard, so he has had a full life of service to this country. I don't think he knew when he enlisted at the young age of 17 that he would end up so many years in the Army National Guard. He also became a teacher. But he achieved the rank of command sergeant major.

I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to Command Sergeant Major WALZ, my friend and colleague from Minnesota, the sponsor of this thoughtful resolution.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for her kind words, and I thank the gentleman from Minnesota for his many years of leadership and his service also and to the whole Armed Services Committee for this important legislation.

I am urging my colleagues, and I am sure it will not take a lot of urging. This House of Representatives understands. This resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 185, has recognized the incredible contributions, courage, and sacrifice of the 1st Brigade Combat Team of the National Guard that they have given to our Nation.

In July of 2005, members of the 1/34th Brigade Combat Team of the famed Red Bull Division were notified of their deployment. Twenty-two months later, in July of 2007, they began returning home, after a 22-month deployment. As my colleague from Minnesota said, they had no intention or no knowledge that they would be setting a record. They simply said yes when they were called upon.

As you have heard from each of my colleagues, the statistics are amazing on what this unit did: 5,200 combat logistic patrols covering 2.4 million convoy miles. You heard Mr. KLINE talk about the number of IEDs that were found. A full 37 percent of the total IED incidents during their time there were attributed to the diligent work of this unit.

They helped start the Iraqi newspapers that you heard about, and they also helped produce documentaries on the positive work that our units are doing in Iraq. They completed 137 reconstruction projects; and during this deployment, as you heard, they reenlisted 1,400 of these brave citizen soldiers. And I think a really special thing is 21 of them became citizens during their time in service to this country.

Although they were originally slated to come home, they endured a 125-day extension, and their families and employers endured that with them. This record of the longest continuous deployment of any U.S. military operation in Iraqi Freedom is something to be incredibly proud of. Being there is one thing. Contributing positively the way they did is quite another.

The soldiers sacrificed 2 years of their lives in service to their country. I know how much they have given, as I was a former member of this Red Bull Division myself; and I know many of these men and women personally.

They have added to the long and impressive list of the Red Bull. Their lineage goes back to the 1st Minnesota Volunteers, the first unit to volunteer for the Civil War. The Red Bulls had 517 days of actual combat in World War II, that is more than any other U.S. division during the war, and captured more enemy hills and territory than any other division in World War II.

I, along with the rest of the Minnesota delegation in both the House and the Senate, introduced this resolution to honor their service and to recognize not just the soldiers, but their families and employers who patiently supported, loved and cared for them and waited for them until they returned to the Midwest.

I want to thank my colleagues from Minnesota for their work in support of this resolution, especially my colleague Mr. KLINE from Minnesota. My colleague from Minnesota himself is a lieutenant colonel, a lifelong and career Marine Corps officer and one that served with distinction. He understands and he too knows the sacrifice that they have given.

I want to thank the 30 other Members of Congress who cosponsored this resolution to show their support of the 1st Brigade Combat Team. But most of all, I want to thank the 2,447 soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team from Minnesota. The other soldiers that augmented this unit came from Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Wisconsin, New Jersey, Kentucky, Idaho, and Washington.

The Red Bulls have truly lived up to their long and heroic tradition and have contributed bravely to the war in Iraq and this Nation's security. Regardless of what any American feels about the war in Iraq, it is clear that America's servicemembers, like those from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, have performed brilliantly and magnificently; and they deserve our full support.

Now Congress must do its part to recognize their service and provide them the benefits and the health care that they need. The Minnesota National Guard has a world-class reintegration program, the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program, which helps soldiers readjust to civilian life.

I want to thank my friend and colleague and fellow Minnesotan, Congressman KLINE, for working to expand this program nationwide for all soldiers. His leadership in this is appreciated by soldiers and families across this Nation.

□ 1515

Their needs will go far beyond reintegration. Long after the initial fanfare fades, Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs must stand ready to assist these brave warriors throughout the rest of their lives. They have more than earned our support, and we must be certain they always have it.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to show their support for the Red Bulls by adopting this resolution.

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself a moment to say that I urge all of my colleagues to support this important resolution. The service that these men and women performed is truly historic and commendable. Again, I thank Mr. WALZ for bringing this measure forward.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues from Minnesota, Mr. KLINE and Mr. WALZ, the sponsor of this thoughtful concurrent resolution, and urge my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 185.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in proud support of this legislation which commends Minnesota's First Brigade Combat Team of the 34th Infantry Division for their completion of the longest continuous deployment of any United States military unit during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

This extraordinary group of men and women, also known as the Red Bulls, is comprised of about 3,700 dedicated Minnesotans and some 1,300 more soldiers from other Midwestern States. Recently, more than 1,000 of our courageous Red Bulls returned home from a 22-month deployment to Iraq.

During their time in the Middle East, the First Brigade Combat Team protected lives and helped to preserve the blessings of liberty here at home. They discovered 462 improvised explosive devices, IEDs, before they were able to wreak havoc on the innocent. By finding these IEDs prior to detonation, the First Brigade Combat Team surely saved the lives of countless fellow soldiers and Iraqi citizens. They also captured over 400 suspected insurgents and completed 137 reconstruction projects. In addition, the First Brigade Combat Team successfully processed over 1.5 million vehicles and 400,000 Iraqis into entry control points without any insurgent penetrations.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to honor the First Brigade Combat Team, whose bravery and commitment to serving our country is as apparent today as it has been in wars long past. These soldiers have returned with an outstanding record of achievement and have earned hundreds of awards including: one Silver Star, 151 Bronze Stars, 32 Purple Hearts, 771 Army Commendation Medals, 136 Combat Infantry Badges, 302 Combat Action Badges and 14 Combat Medical Badges.

The important measure before us today recognizes the service of our Red Bull soldiers, and reminds us of the price of our freedom, and those who have freely chosen to honor it.

To our Red Bulls, and all of the men and women that defend this Nation, my colleagues and I continue to stand in awe of you.

Thank you, and may God bless you and your families.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of the men and women of the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard and in strong support of H. Con. Res. 185.

I want to thank my colleague and friend TIM WALZ for bringing this important resolution before the floor.

The dedicated men and women of 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota Guard have just finished serving the longest continuous deployment of any United States military unit during Operation Iraqi Freedom. This Minnesota National Guard unit served 22 months, 16 of which were in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I believe our Nation owes a debt of gratitude to the members of the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division along with all the men and women who have honorably served in Iraq.

H. Con. Res. 185 represents a small token of appreciation for our grateful Nation. The resolution formally recognizes the achievements of these citizen soldiers and officially thanks them for their service.

This resolution thanks the 1st Brigade Combat Team for their work and the time they have sacrificed from their families, neighbors and communities in their valiant service to our country.

I urge my fellow colleagues in Congress to support this important resolution.

Ms. CASTOR. 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 Florida (Ms. CASTOR) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 185, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. 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.

CORPORAL CHRISTOPHER E. ESCKELSON POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2276) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 203 North Main Street in Vassar, Michigan, as the ''Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson Post Office Building''.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2276

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. CORPORAL CHRISTOPHER E. ESCKELSON POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 203 North Main Street in Vassar, Michigan, shall be known and designated as the ''Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson 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 ''Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson Post Office Building''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. CASTOR). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CLAY. 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 Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleague in supporting H.R. 2276, which names a postal facility in Vassar, Michigan, after Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson.

H.R. 2276, which was introduced by Representative KILDEE of Michigan on May 10, 2007, was reported from the Oversight Committee on September 20, 2007, by a voice vote. This measure has the support of the entire Michigan congressional delegation.

Madam Speaker, Marine Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson was killed on December 28, 2006, while conducting combat operations in al Anbar Province, Iraq. He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, Lansing, Michigan.

In October of 2002, Corporal Esckelson joined the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve and attended Delta College. His desire was to become a doctor, but he was called to active duty in April 2006. Corporal Esckelson was extremely proud to be a marine and committed to serve his country with distinction and courage.

Madam Speaker, I commend Representative KILDEE for introducing this legislation and urge swift passage of this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 2276 honors the life of a young man who fought bravely for his country and made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. Corporal Christopher Esckelson was killed during combat action in Fallujah, Iraq on December 28, 2006. He was less than 1 week shy of reaching his 23rd birthday.

Christopher Esckelson felt personal anger after September 11, 2001, when his country was brutally attacked, and he knew immediately he wanted to serve in the U.S. Marine Corps. In addition to defending his country, it was a way to earn money for college. His plans included attending medical school. His dream of becoming a doctor, however, was cut short on a 5-day mission fighting insurgents in a war-torn Fallujah.

Corporal Esckelson was a squad leader of 12 men and suffered a direct hit during a mission. His leadership skills were proven day in and day out while in Iraq. He knew the risks involved and experienced the horrors of war. But his determination to fight and win was evident. He was fearless on the battlefield.

Christopher never had the chance to return home safely from the war or attend medical school as he planned, but he will surely be remembered in his community by the naming of this post office in his hometown of Vassar, Michigan. I am pleased to support H.R. 2276 in naming of the post office for this valiant soldier.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to Representative KILDEE from Michigan.

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to be the sponsor of H.R. 2276. H.R. 2276 will designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 203 North Main Street in Vassar, Michigan, as the ''Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson Post Office Building.''

Corporal Esckelson of Vassar, Michigan, heroically gave his life fighting for our country in Fallujah, Iraq, on December 28, 2006, 2 days shy of his 23rd birthday. Corporal Esckelson, the squad leader of 12 men, suffered a direct hit while inspecting a truck in war-torn Fallujah, Iraq.

Corporal Esckelson's leadership qualities came to fruition long before he began to serve our country. An outstanding athlete at Vassar High School, Christopher Esckelson played the game of football like he did life, with great passion. That same passion is what drove the aspiring doctor to join the Marines shortly after the September 11 attacks.

He once told his mother, Michelle Hill, that whatever life might bring, he still would have been a marine.

His early time in the Marine Corps Reserve allowed him to earn money to pay for classes at Delta College, where he studied premedicine. Other activities Corporal Esckelson enjoyed were hunting with his father, David, and brother, Craig, as well as spending time with his girlfriend, Samantha Reasner, who last saw him when she drove him to the airport when he left for basic training.

His last contact with his family came 2 days before Christmas 2006 when he left on a 5-day mission which would ultimately be his last.

For his heroism, Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson deserves our recognition and thanks. Designating this postal facility in Vassar, Michigan, where his mother works will allow all who enter the post office the unique opportunity to be mindful of the sacrifices brave young soldiers like Christopher have made and continue to make today.

I would like to thank the entire Michigan delegation for their support on this legislation, and urge all of my colleagues to join me in passing this legislation.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague, Representative KILDEE, for introducing this legislation, and urge its swift passage by the House.

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 Missouri (Mr. CLAY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2276.

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. CLAY. 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.

CORPORAL STEPHEN R. BIXLER POST OFFICE

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3325) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 235 Mountain Road in Suffield, Connecticut, as the ''Corporal Stephen R. Bixler Post Office''.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3325

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. CORPORAL STEPHEN R. BIXLER POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 235 Mountain Road in Suffield, Connecticut, shall be known and designated as the ''Corporal Stephen R. Bixler 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 ''Corporal Stephen R. Bixler Post Office''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CLAY. 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 Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mr. CLAY. 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. 3325 which names a postal facility in Suffield, Connecticut, after CPL Stephen R. Bixler. H.R. 3325, which was introduced by Representative JOE COURTNEY on August 2, 2007, was reported from the Oversight Committee on September 20, 2007, by voice vote. This measure has the support of the entire Connecticut congressional delegation.

Madam Speaker, Marine CPL Stephen R. Bixler was killed on May 4, 2006, while conducting combat operations against enemy forces in al Anbar Province, Iraq. He was assigned to 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

LTC James M. Bright, the battalion's commander, said, ''Corporal Bixler was a vibrant, active man. He died fearlessly leading and willingly sacrificing his own safety for those around him.''

Corporal Bixler was a devoted soldier with strength of character and self-assurance. He served his country with honor and distinction.

Madam Speaker, I commend the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) for introducing this legislation and urge swift passage of the bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, CPL Stephen Bixler was a proud and loyal American who served his country while fighting the war on terror. He made the ultimate sacrifice defending freedom when he lost his life on May 4, 2006. Corporal Bixler was born in Hartford, Connecticut, on August 17, 1985. As a student at Suffield High School, he was known as a ''shy, soft-spoken, very dedicated young man and very patriotic, in a quiet, determined way.'' During high school, he was involved in athletics and was a member of the indoor/outdoor track team as well as the cross country team. His love for the outdoors and helping others was exemplified during the time he was a Boy Scout and his hard work and dedication was shown when he became an Eagle Scout.

□ 1530

In July 2003, Corporal Bixler's sense of dedication to his community and country led him to enlist in the United States Marine Corps. He was an ambitious man who was able to accomplish much in his short, but meaningful, life.

As a result of his exceptional military skills, drive, courage and strength, Corporal Bixler applied for and was selected as a member of the 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion. He volunteered willingly for his second tour in Iraq because he knew his fellow marines needed his help. Tragically, during his second tour, on May 4, 2006, he was killed by enemy fire in Fallujah.

His decorations include the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Humanitarian Service Medal, Armed Forces Terrorism Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, and Purple Heart Medal.

We can never show adequate appreciation in honoring the brave men and women who give their lives in service to our country. However, Corporal Bixler's name is etched on the Wall of Honor in the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington, DC.

In addition to the memorial wall, naming this post office in his honor is a fitting and meaningful tribute to a proud marine who served selflessly on behalf of his hometown and his Nation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to my friend from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY).

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, I thank Congressman CLAY. I also want to thank Congressman WESTMORELAND for his kind words in support of H.R. 3325, which I'm the sponsor of, to name the post office at 235 Mountain Road in Suffield, Connecticut, after Corporal Stephen R. Bixler, who at the age of 20, on a second deployment in Iraq, lost his life serving our Nation.

As the prior speakers have indicated, this young man was not with us long, but made an extraordinary mark on all who knew him and served with him, particularly in his home of Suffield, Connecticut, which is a small Connecticut town of 14,000 people. It was founded in 1749 before our Nation even was born, and his family on his mother's side goes back three generations. As you can imagine, in a tight-knit, small community, he was well-known despite being a quiet young man because of his work in the community as an Eagle Scout. He was a varsity track athlete and an outstanding student.

He had a twin sister, Sandra, who graduated with honors from the University of Connecticut; and, clearly, Stephen could have followed that same path. But he followed a road less traveled, and he enlisted for the Marines before he even graduated from Suffield High School and, as I indicated, was on his second tour of duty when he lost his life on May 4, 2006.

His funeral at Sacred Heart Church in Suffield, which was attended by Archbishop Mansell from the Hartford Archdiocese, was an extraordinary outpouring of support from his community. And all I can say is that event was not the end as far as the town was concerned. They have held many ceremonies in memory of Stephen. They named a stretch of road in Suffield in his memory.

And it is fitting that the post office, which is the only Federal building in Suffield, should be named in his honor. His father has been a letter carrier for 35 years in the United States Post Office; but to be sure, our office solicited requests from the community to make sure that there was actual support in town. We had an outpouring of support: 170 letters came in, again, people who knew him as a young child all the way up through his time in the Marines, and I will submit letters from the Governor on down in support of this measure at this point.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT,
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS,
July 20, 2007.

Congressman JOE COURTNEY,
Cannon House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN COURTNEY: I am writing to encourage you to pursue legislation in the United States Congress that will change the name of the U.S. post office on Mountain Road in West Suffield, Connecticut to honor Marine Corporal Stephen R. Bixler.

As you know, Corporal Bixler was killed in Fallujah, Iraq on May 3, 2006 while on foot patrol. Corporal Bixler was proud of his service to the nation, and believed that he was able to make a difference in the lives of the Iraqi citizens he encountered. In addition to

being a valiant member of our armed forces, Corporal Boxler was a Suffield native and an Eagle Scout. Renaming the post office in his honor would be an especially fitting tribute to Corporal Bixler because it will be a lasting reminder of his selfless service to our nation.

I join with State Representative Ruth Fahrbach, Suffield's Board of Selectmen and numerous residents of Suffield, in urging you to pursue this legislation to preserve the memory of one of our fallen heroes.

Very truly yours,

M. JODI RELL,
Governor.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT SENATE,
STATE CAPITOL,
Hartford, CT, July 26, 2007.

Congressman JOE COURTNEY,
Enfield, CT.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN COURTNEY: Thank you for contacting me in regards to naming the Suffield Post Office in honor of Corporal Stephen Bixler. Although such a gesture can never make up for the loss of such a brave young man, I believe that honoring his life in this way will be a source of comfort to his family and friends. Corporal Bixler, who selflessly gave his life for his country, fellow servicemembers, and all of us, deserves to be commemorated for his bravery and sacrifice. It is my hope that you will introduce this legislation to Congress and that the Suffield Post Office will be dedicated to the life of Corporal Bixler.

Thank you again for asking my thoughts on this issue. It was my pleasure to write in support of this wonderful young man, his family, and his friends.

Sincerely,

JOHN A. KISSEL,
State Senator—7th District.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
July 11, 2007.

Re: Suffield Post Office Comment Period

Hon. JOE COURTNEY,
Member of Congress,
Enfield, CT.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN COURTNEY: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the request to name the Suffield Post Office for Corporal Stephen R. Bixler.

When Kevin Goff first contacted me about his suggestion to name the post office for Stephen, I thought it was an excellent idea. I suggested that he start by first contacting the Suffield Postmaster.

The death of Corporal Bixler brought together a community very divided on the war in Iraq. Residents lined the streets when his remains were transported from Bradley International Airport to the funeral home. Hundreds of friends, relatives and strangers attended his wake to show their love and support and to give thanks for his service and sacrifice to his country as well as to show support for grieving family members. As the funeral procession drove past the Suffield Post Office to the church, Suffield postal employees lined the street outside. (Stephen's father is a postal employee.) McAlister Elementary School students and teachers just across the street lined the route as well. Sacred Heart Church was overflowing with mourners.

I had the pleasure of presenting Stephen with a citation when he received his Eagle Scout award. He was an inspiration and set a positive example to the younger boys in his troop. To Stephen, achieving the rank of Eagle Scout was not just about accumulating badges. It was about guiding younger scouts to achieve their goals assisting them in any way that he could and setting a positive example for those who were to follow. Not because he had to but because that was who he was. Stephen accomplished much in his short life. Since I am not a resident of Suffield, I would defer to those who have decided to honor Corporal Bixler in this manner. I will say that in my opinion, naming the Suffield Post Office in honor of Corporal Stephen R. Bixler is appropriate, and well deserved and I am hopeful that Suffield residents agree.

Sincerely,

RUTH FAHRBACH,
House Republican Whip.

TOWN OF SUFFIELD,
SELECTMEN'S OFFICE,
July 19, 2007.

Congressman JOE COURTNEY,
Enfield, CT.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN COURTNEY: The Suffield Board of Selectmen strongly supports any and all efforts to name the Suffield Post Office in honor of Corporal Stephen R. Bixler. The Board of Selectmen voted unanimously at their July 18, 2007 meeting to support this proposal. The naming of the Suffield Post Office in honor of Corporal Bixler is an appropriate tribute to a man who sacrificed his life for our Country.

The loss of Corporal Bixler had a profound impact on the Town of Suffield and the residents of Suffield have made great efforts to recognize this hero. The Board of Selectmen, on behalf of the residents of Suffield, would like to thank you for your continued efforts to name the Suffield Post Office in honor of Corporal Bixler and will provide any further support you may need in this endeavor.

Very truly yours,

SCOTT R. LINGENFELTER,
First Selectman.

JULY 9, 2007.

Hon. JOE COURTNEY,
Congress of the United States,
Enfield, CT.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE COURTNEY: I would like to lend my support to the suggestion that the Suffield Post Office located at 235 Mountain Road be named in honor of Corporal Stephen R. Bixler, United States Marine Corps. I believe that this would be a fitting tribute to a man who gave his life for his country. I am a member of the Suffield Board of Selectman, and I will ask our First Selectman to add an agenda item to our next meeting supporting this proposal.

Thank you very much.

Very truly yours,

TIMOTHY J. REYNOLDS,
Selectman, Town of Suffield.

The excerpts of the letters, which Mr. WESTMORELAND was kind enough to share with the House, I think again describe an extraordinary person who every day as people drive by that post office and young children come in and ask their parents who that name is, it would be a fitting tribute and an inspiration of human excellence and courage, which all of us should try to aspire to.

And, again, I urge strong support for this measure which is a fitting tribute to an extraordinary young man.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I would like to encourage all my colleagues to vote affirmative on H.R. 3325 honoring this brave young marine who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom and country.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, like my colleague from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND), I urge my colleagues to vote favorably for H.R. 3325, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3325.

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. CLAY. 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.

PHILIP A. BADDOUR, SR. POST OFFICE

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3382) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 200 North William Street in Goldsboro, North Carolina, as the ''Philip A. Baddour, Sr. Post Office''.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3382

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PHILIP A. BADDOUR, SR. POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 200 North William Street in Goldsboro, North Carolina, shall be known and designated as the ''Philip A. Baddour, Sr. 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 ''Philip A. Baddour, Sr. Post Office''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CLAY. 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 Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleague in consideration of H.R. 3382, which names a postal facility in Goldsboro, North Carolina, after Philip A. Baddour, Sr.

H.R. 3382 was introduced by Representative G.K. BUTTERFIELD on March 1, 2007, and was reported from the Oversight Committee on September 20, 2007, by a voice vote. This measure has the support of the entire

North Carolina congressional delegation.

Mr. Baddour was born on March 16, 1915. He was a business and civic leader in Goldsboro, North Carolina. He was a merchant for over 30 years and served on the city council from 1979 until 1995. During his tenure on the council, he also served as mayor pro tempore.

Upon his retirement as a city councilman, Mr. Baddour was honored with a key to the City of Goldsboro and a resolution from the North Carolina League of Municipalities for his years of public service. Former Governor Jim Hunt honored him as a recipient of the Long Leaf Pine. Mr. Baddour died on April 6, 2002.

Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague, Representative BUTTERFIELD, for introducing this legislation, 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.

I rise today to join my fellow Members of Congress in recognizing Philip Baddour, Sr., and his extraordinary contributions to Goldsboro, North Carolina. A steadfast business and civic leader, Mr. Baddour served on the Goldsboro City Council from 1979 to 1995 and owned several downtown businesses.

Mr. Baddour passed away in April 2002 at the age of 87. As a young man, he served in World War II. After the war, he returned to Goldsboro, North Carolina, where he married his wife, Louise, and was the father of four sons.

He was known for his love of the community and affection for what he called the ''little man,'' the average working person in Goldsboro.

As the son of Lebanese immigrants, his desire to give back to the community that had welcomed him when he was just an infant took many paths. He served as a director of Wayside Fellowship, was active in Boy Scouts, Lions Club, and St. Mary's Catholic Church.

Mr. Baddour's popularity as a public servant was a result of his compassion and interest in helping his fellow citizens. He also felt it his civic duty to wisely spend the taxpayers' money while delivering needed city improvement projects. His legacy of sacrifice and service to others is a wonderful example to his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, and the citizens of Goldsboro.

With gratitude for his devotion to the Goldsboro community, it is particularly fitting that we would rename the William Street Post Office in his honor.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my friend from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD).

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend and my colleague, Mr. CLAY from Missouri, for yielding this time to me to speak to this very important legislation. I also want to thank Mr. WESTMORELAND for his leadership on the committee. This is a bipartisan piece of legislation that I hope this body will pass unanimously.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for H.R. 3382 and to urge my colleagues to support this legislation. I am the primary sponsor of H.R. 3382, and I'm proud to say that I am joined by the entire North Carolina delegation, both Democrat and Republican. I am seeking to name the post office located in the downtown area of Goldsboro, North Carolina, which incidentally is the home of Seymour Johnson Air Force Base. We're seeking to name this post office as the Philip A. Baddour, Sr. Post Office.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Baddour was my friend. He was also a well-respected member of the Goldsboro City Council for 16 long years. After his service on the council was complete, Mr. Baddour continued to be involved in the civic life of his community, and he leaves a legacy of service in the perfect sense of the word.

Madam Speaker, Philip Baddour, Sr.'s occupation was that of a downtown merchant for more than 30 years. His service on the city council was his second calling, and he served in that capacity from 1979 until 1995. During his tenure on the council, he served as mayor pro tempore and was instrumental in improving the lives of the citizens of Goldsboro, of all races and backgrounds. He was known as the people's representative because of his ability to listen and understand the concerns of his constituents and because he always stood up for those who did not have a voice.

Upon his retirement from the council, Mr. Baddour was honored with a key to the City of Goldsboro and a resolution from the North Carolina League of Municipalities for his many years of public service. Former North Carolina Governor James B. Hunt, Jr., honored Mr. Baddour as a recipient of the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, for individuals who have a proven record of extraordinary service to our State. It is the highest civilian honor that can be granted in the State of North Carolina.

Mr. Baddour dedicated his time and was very compassionate about his community, a community that had given him so much in his youth. He served as director of Wayside Fellowship and was the recipient of the Cancer Society's Outstanding Crusade Volunteer Award. He was also active in the Cub Scouts and the Boy Scouts of America. He was a lifelong member of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church and served as chairman of the parish council. He was also a member of the Knights of Columbus.

Nothing was more important to Philip Baddour, Sr. than his family. He was married to Louise Farfour for 60 years. Together, they reared four sons who have followed in their father's footsteps by themselves being community leaders and outstanding citizens. Philip, Jr., his son, my dear friend, is an attorney and former majority leader of the North Carolina House of Representatives. Richard is the athletic director at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Stephen is a retired public schoolteacher. And Neil is a real estate broker. Philip Baddour also had eight grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

Sadly, Madam Speaker, Mr. Baddour, Sr. passed away in April of 2002 after giving so much to his community, to his State and his country.

Madam Speaker, I can think of no finer individual in Wayne County, North Carolina, and no person who is more deserving of this honor than Philip A. Baddour, Sr. The people of Goldsboro and Wayne County and the First Congressional District of North Carolina are grateful for his commitment to community and his great leadership. I ask my colleagues to join me today in honoring this great public servant by passing H.R. 3382.

Again, I want to thank the gentleman from Missouri and the gentleman from Georgia, my friends, for yielding this time. I thank them for their service.

□ 1545

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to swiftly pass H.R. 3382, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3382.

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.

LAURENCE C. AND GRACE M. JONES POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3233) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at Highway 49 South in Piney Woods, Mississippi, as the ''Laurence C. and Grace M. Jones Post Office Building''.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3233

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. LAURENCE C. AND GRACE M. JONES POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at Highway 49 South in Piney Woods, Mississippi, shall be known and designated as the ''Laurence C. and Grace M. Jones 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 ''Laurence C. and Grace M. Jones Post Office Building''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CLAY. 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 Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleague in consideration of H.R. 3233, which names a postal facility in Piney Woods, Mississippi, after Laurence C. and Grace M. Jones.

H.R. 3233, which was introduced by Representative CHARLES PICKERING on July 31, 2007, was reported from the Oversight Committee on September 20 of 2007 by voice vote. This measure has the support of the entire Mississippi congressional delegation.

Madam Speaker, Dr. Laurence Clifton Jones was born on November 21, 1882, in St. Joseph, Missouri. He attended the University of Iowa and graduated in 1907. Due to racial oppression and widespread poverty among African Americans, he decided to establish a school in Piney Woods, Mississippi, to educate young people. He started the Piney Woods School with just $2 and three students.

Dr. Jones married Ms. Grace M. Allen in 1912. She became a pivotal helpmate to her husband by performing fundraising activities for the Piney Woods School. Mrs. Jones was an educator and taught courses in domestic science.

Laurence and Grace Jones were dedicated educators who left a legacy in keeping with their principles, ''educating the head, hearts and hands'' of young people. The school they built continues to this day on a 60-acre campus among a 2,000-acre wooded site with an enrollment of 275 students.

Piney Woods School is the largest of four remaining historically black boarding high schools in the United States. It is a college preparatory high school with grades 9–12, where many students graduate and go on to college.

I commend my colleague, Representative CHARLES ''Chip'' PICKERING, 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.

I am pleased to support today H.R. 3233, naming the postal facility in Piney Woods, Mississippi, the Laurence C. and Grace M. Jones Post Office Building.

Laurence Jones was well-known in Mississippi history for founding the Piney Woods School in 1909. After graduating from the University of Iowa, he returned to his home State of Missouri, where he was sought out by a local Baptist church to create a school for black children.

Jones found himself by himself in an abandoned sheep shed with no students, but one day a small barefoot boy arrived seeking a lesson. The next day, this young boy came back with two friends. This simple and small beginning grew over the years to what is now a premier educational institution, teaching 300 high school students on a 300-acre campus. Piney Woods is the country's largest African American boarding school and the oldest continually operating African American boarding school.

Laurence's wife, Grace, was also an educator. They met in Iowa, where she had established a similar school for black children. Upon moving to Mississippi, she helped raise funds for Piney Woods and also taught classes. They believed in the importance of providing these youths with the educational opportunity they deserved.

Laurence and Grace Jones were pioneers in the education system in the early 1900s. Their historic achievements are worthy of this recognition, and I am pleased to support H.R. 3233.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I urge the swift passage of H.R. 3233 and yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3233.

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.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 50 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. CLARKE) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

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. Con. Res. 185, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 2276, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 3325, 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.

COMMENDING THE 1ST BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM/34TH INFANTRY DIVISION OF THE MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 185, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 185, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 378, nays 0, not voting 54, as follows:

[Roll No. 924]

YEAS—378

Abercrombie	Cantor	Emerson
Ackerman	Capito	Engel
Aderholt	Capps	English (PA)
Akin	Capuano	Eshoo
Alexander	Cardoza	Etheridge
Altmire	Carnahan	Fallin
Andrews	Carney	Farr
Arcuri	Carter	Fattah
Baca	Castle	Feeney
Bachmann	Castor	Filner
Bachus	Chabot	Forbes
Baird	Chandler	Fortenberry
Baker	Clarke	Fossella
Baldwin	Clay	Foxx
Barrow	Cleaver	Franks (AZ)
Bartlett (MD)	Clyburn	Frelinghuysen
Barton (TX)	Coble	Garrett (NJ)
Bean	Cohen	Gerlach
Becerra	Cole (OK)	Giffords
Berkley	Conaway	Gilchrest
Berry	Cooper	Gillibrand
Biggert	Costa	Gingrey
Bilbray	Courtney	Gohmert
Bilirakis	Cramer	Gonzalez
Bishop (GA)	Crenshaw	Goode
Bishop (NY)	Crowley	Goodlatte
Bishop (UT)	Cuellar	Gordon
Blackburn	Culberson	Granger
Blumenauer	Cummings	Graves
Blunt	Davis (AL)	Green, Al
Boehner	Davis (CA)	Green, Gene
Bonner	Davis (IL)	Hall (TX)
Bono	Davis (KY)	Hare
Boozman	Davis, David	Hastings (WA)
Boren	Davis, Lincoln	Hayes
Boswell	Davis, Tom	Heller
Boustany	Deal (GA)	Hensarling
Boyd (FL)	DeFazio	Herger
Boyda (KS)	DeGette	Herseth Sandlin
Brady (PA)	Delahunt	Hill
Brady (TX)	DeLauro	Hinchey
Braley (IA)	Dent	Hinojosa
Broun (GA)	Diaz-Balart, L.	Hirono
Brown (SC)	Diaz-Balart, M.	Hobson
Brown, Corrine	Dingell	Hodes
Brown-Waite, Ginny	Doggett	Hoekstra
Buchanan	Donnelly	Holden
Burgess	Doolittle	Holt
Burton (IN)	Doyle	Honda
Butterfield	Drake	Hooley
Buyer	Dreier	Hoyer
Calvert	Duncan	Hulshof
Camp (MI)	Edwards	Hunter
Campbell (CA)	Ehlers	Inglis (SC)
Cannon	Ellison	Inslee
	Ellsworth	Israel

Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
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)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Tim
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Petri
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Putnam
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuler
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—54

Allen
Barrett (SC)
Berman
Boucher
Carson
Conyers
Costello
Cubin
Davis, Jo Ann
Dicks
Emanuel
Everett
Ferguson
Flake
Frank (MA)
Gallegly
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Harman
Hastert
Hastings (FL)
Higgins
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Kind
Kingston
LaHood
Lee
Lewis (GA)
Marchant
Meeks (NY)
Moran (VA)
Murphy, Patrick
Murtha
Neal (MA)
Obey
Perlmutter
Peterson (PA)
Pickering
Pryce (OH)
Radanovich
Rogers (KY)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Sanchez, Loretta
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (WA)
Towns

□ 1857

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The title was amended so as to read: ''Concurrent resolution commending the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard upon its completion of the longest continuous deployment of any United States ground combat military unit in Operation Iraqi Freedom.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CORPORAL CHRISTOPHER E. ESCKELSON POST OFFICE BUILDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2276, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2276.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 379, nays 0, not voting 53, as follows:

[Roll No. 925]

YEAS—379

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
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
Carter
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
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.
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Fallin
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Filner
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Hall (TX)
Hare
Hastings (WA)
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
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)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Tim
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Petri
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Putnam
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuler
Shuster
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—53

Allen
Barrett (SC)
Berman
Boucher
Carson
Conyers
Costello
Cubin
Davis, Jo Ann
Dicks
Emanuel
Everett
Ferguson
Flake
Frank (MA)
Gallegly
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Harman
Hastert
Hastings (FL)
Hayes
Higgins
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Kind
Kingston
LaHood
Lee
Lewis (GA)
Marchant
Meeks (NY)
Moran (VA)
Murphy, Patrick
Murtha
Neal (MA)
Obey
Perlmutter
Peterson (PA)
Pickering
Pryce (OH)
Radanovich
Rogers (KY)
Ros-Lehtinen
Rush
Sanchez, Loretta
Shimkus
Simpson
Smith (WA)
Towns

□ 1905

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CORPORAL STEPHEN R. BIXLER POST OFFICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3325, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3325.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 379, nays 0, not voting 53, as follows:

[Roll No. 926]

YEAS—379

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
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
Carter
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
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.
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Fallin
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Filner
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Hall (TX)
Hare
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
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)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Tim
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Petri
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Putnam
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuler
Shuster
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—53

Allen
Barrett (SC)
Berman
Boucher
Carson
Conyers
Costello
Cubin
Davis, Jo Ann
Dicks
Emanuel
Everett
Ferguson
Flake
Frank (MA)
Gallegly
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Harman
Hastert
Hastings (FL)
Higgins
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Kind
Kingston
LaHood
Lee
Lewis (GA)
Marchant
Meeks (NY)
Moran (VA)
Murphy, Patrick
Murtha
Neal (MA)
Obey
Perlmutter
Peterson (PA)
Pickering
Pryce (OH)
Radanovich
Rogers (KY)
Ros-Lehtinen
Rush
Sanchez, Loretta
Shimkus
Simpson
Sires
Smith (WA)
Towns

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised 2 minutes remain in this vote.

□ 1912

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, due to a family emergency I missed the following votes on Monday, October 1, 2007. I would have voted as follows:

H. Con. Res. 185—Commending the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard upon its completion of the longest continuous deployment of any United States military unit during Operation Iraqi Freedom—"yea."

H.R. 2276—To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 203 North Main Street in Vassar, Michigan, as the "Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson Post Office Building"—"yea."

H.R. 3325—To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 235 Mountain Road in Suffield, Connecticut, as the "Corporal Stephen R. Bixler Post Office"—"yea."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I took a leave of absence on October 1, 2007, as I was attending to personal business. The following list describes how I would have voted had I been in attendance today.

"Yea." H. Con. Res. 185—Commending the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard upon its completion of the longest continuous deployment of any United States military unit during Operation Iraqi Freedom (Rep. WALZ—Armed Services)

"Yea." H.R. 2276—To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 203 North Main Street in Vassar, Michigan, as the "Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson Post Office Building" (Rep. KILDEE—Oversight and Government Reform)

"Yea." H.R. 3325—To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 235 Mountain Road in Suffield, Connecticut, as the "Corporal Stephen R. Bixler Post Office" (Rep. COURTNEY—Oversight and Government Reform)

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably absent from this Chamber today. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 924, 925 and 926.

SUPPORT VETERANS: PASS THE VA APPROPRIATIONS BILL

(Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise this evening to highlight one of the most important pieces of legislation yet to pass this Congress: the Veterans Affairs-Military Construction appropriations bill. Each year from 1995 to 2006 the Republican-led Congress passed record increase

after increase for our Nation's veterans. More importantly, the Republican-led Congress made it a priority to pass the VA appropriations bill so that our veterans could continue to receive the care that they deserve.

That, Madam Speaker, cannot be said of this year's VA funding bill. Reports in today's Congressional Quarterly are that the majority is considering holding the vital VA bill hostage as a means of passing a giant omnibus bill to fund government operations. The health and welfare of our veterans is more important to my constituents than it is to score cheap political points here in Washington, D.C.

Madam Speaker, I hope that you can find it in your heart to appoint conferees to the VA-Military Construction appropriations bill and send the President a bill that he can sign. Our veterans deserve nothing less.

MARINES NOT WELCOME HERE

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, Oakland Airport officials might as well put a sign: ''Welcome to Oakland, but no U.S. military allowed here.''

It seems that over 200 marines from the combat fields of Iraq flew into Oakland, California, and were not allowed to deplane into the airport. They were forced off the plane between two runways and had to sit in the grass for 3 hours while waiting to fly to Hawaii. The troops had flown from Iraq via Kuwait, Germany, and JFK Airport. They had already been completely screened by Customs and TSA at JFK, but the officials at Oakland Airport wouldn't let them into the terminal.

One marine said no explanation was ever given. Interestingly enough, reports say this not the first time Oakland banned the U.S. military from its airport.

Most airports welcome our returning troops with patriotism, cheers, flags and enthusiastic applause. But not in Oakland. They should be ashamed. They should apologize to each marine, and Congress needs to find out why the marines were treated so poorly and even consider prohibiting Federal funds from going to this airport if it is shown that the airport is antimilitary.

And that's just the way it is.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. CLARKE). 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.

REDEPLOYMENT FROM IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, the American people have been opposed to the occupation of Iraq and they have been demanding the redeployment of our troops for a very long time now, but the word obviously hasn't reached our Nation's leaders.

Last Wednesday, the Secretary of Defense asked Congress to appropriate billions of dollars more to continue the occupation of Iraq. He said that American troops will remain in Iraq for years to come with no end in sight.

The occupation has already cost nearly half a trillion dollars, and what have we gotten for that investment? Even General Petraeus couldn't say for sure that our involvement in Iraq has made us any safer when he testified before Congress last month. And the National Intelligence Estimate warned us in July that al Qaeda is using the occupation to energize extremists, raise money, and to recruit and indoctrinate operatives for attacks on the U.S. homeland.

Madam Speaker, the way to make America truly safer is to end the occupation, restore our moral leadership in the world, and use diplomacy to strengthen the structure and institutions of international cooperation and peace. That's why it is time to tell our leaders in the White House that Congress isn't going to be their friendly neighborhood ATM machine any more. Congress has the power of the purse. We can use it to force the administration to change course. We must refuse to appropriate one more dime for the occupation. Instead, we must fully fund the safe, orderly and responsible redeployment of American troops and military contractors out of Iraq.

Redeployment of our troops is the necessary first step on the road to peace. It is clear that Iraq will never stabilize while American troops and the vast unaccountable army of 180,000 American military contractors are there.

Our occupation of Iraq prevents Iraqis from finding solutions to their own problems, and it delays the regional and international diplomatic efforts needed to jump-start a true peace process.

The administration has said that it plans to redeploy some troops, but this is just a tactic, I believe, to win political favor. The arithmetic proves it. We began this year with 130,000 troops in Iraq. The escalation brought the level to 160,000. Now the administration says it will bring out 30,000 troops so by next summer we will again have 130,000 troops.

So, Madam Speaker, we end up with the same number of troops, but the administration calls it a reduction. I call it fuzzy math. President Bush has created a national mathematics panel to study ways to improve math education in America. That is a really good thing, because the President himself needs help with addition and subtraction.

Actually, Madam Speaker, the only way to make sure that our troops are out of harm's way is to proceed right now with a full redeployment and end the fantasy that there is a military solution to this quagmire.

If we fail to use our power of the purse, if we continue to spend our taxpayer dollars on this occupation instead of ending it, we will have failed politically, we will have failed economically, and we will have failed morally. And we will have failed our brave troops along with all of the American people. It is time to bring our troops home.

GOLD STAR MOTHERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, yesterday, under the bright sun and blue sky of the Texas Sunday afternoon, American flags flew in the silent breeze over thousands of quiet marble uniform tombstones in the Houston National Cemetery. This is where Texans bury their war dead, men and women who go off to war for America.

In the center of the immaculately kept cemetery, a tribute of sacrifice was being made to the living: Those mothers who lost their children in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mothers of Texas who gave their children that died in their youth so the rest of us could live in safety were honored on this Gold Star Mothers' Day.

I was present along with Congressman GENE GREEN and Congressman NICK LAMPSON and Congressman KEVIN BRADY to honor these special ladies. We, like those present, were emotionally affected.

Gold Star Moms are what we call them, is a mother who lost a child in combat. This concept started in World War II when Grace Seibold learned on Christmas Eve 1918 that her aviator son was killed in aerial combat in France. Grace Seibold directed her grief and sorrow to helping wounded doughboys in local D.C. hospitals. She formed the Gold Star Mothers to give support for other such moms.

During World War I, if a son had gone off to war in the War to End All Wars, as it was called, a banner was hung in front of the home in the window for each son in the military. This banner had a blue star in the center of it. If the son was killed, a gold star was superimposed over the blue one.

During World War II, my Grandmother Poe hung such a banner with a blue star in the front window of her home in the country. My dad went off to war when he was just 18. When my grandmother died, it was one of the few items she had saved. That banner never had to have a gold star placed on it because my dad returned safely.

Madam Speaker, here is a banner of a Gold Star Mother. It has the name of the soldier that was killed, William

Amundson, Jr. He was killed in Afghanistan. He was from Woodlands, Texas. He was a corporal in the United States Army.

The blue star banners are very similar to this except in the middle there is a blue star rather than a gold star. And when that son or daughter is killed in combat, the gold star is superimposed over the blue one. These banners have been carried throughout all of America's wars since World War I and applies to sons and daughters killed in war.

So yesterday these mothers of the fallen were there. And standing guard around them were the Patriot Guard motorcycle members, rugged Vietnam veterans who escort the fallen to this cemetery for burial. There was a 21-gun salute. Then after all of the speeches, these women were given yellow roses from Texas and the buglers played Taps for the fallen.

Madam Speaker, as a father of four, I can think of nothing worse than to lose one of my own kids. No parent wants their son or daughter killed in unknown foreign lands. No parent wants their child to predecease them, and no parent wants their child to die in their youth. But it happens, and the grief can only be understood by other such parents.

As Congressman GREEN said yesterday, ''Even the greatest heart surgeon in the world, Dr. Michael DeBakey, cannot repair such a broken heart of a mother like this.''

Mothers are special, especially the mothers of those who wear the American uniform. Those who keep statistics on the last words of soldiers say more often than not that the dying words of many soldiers in combat is, ''Mother, mother.''

It seems to me the strongest bond in all of creation is the bond between a mother and her child. The good Lord made it that way on purpose, and when that bond is broken by the loss of a child, that wound just never heals.

Madam Speaker, one out of every nine people in the military is from the State of Texas, and about 400 Texans, 10 percent of the total killed of 4,000, have been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet sons and daughters throughout America continue to join our military knowing that they will no doubt go into the desert of the sun and the valley of the gun, and they leave behind their parents, their mothers.

So as we show honor and respect to America's children who serve, let us show American compassion and ultimate gratitude for the mothers of those troops who display the Gold Star sacrifice from their windows. And the next time we pass a house with one of these gold stars, one of these 4,000 throughout the United States, and they are being displayed in the window, maybe we should stop and say a prayer and say ''thank you'' because of that special mother who gave that child for the rest of us.

And that's just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HALL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HALL of New York addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

COMMUNISM DOESN'T WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, I want to comment right now on a little article that was in the paper. Probably most Americans didn't see it today. But I followed what went on in Zimbabwe a long time ago when the communist leader, Mr. Mugabe, took over. He said they were going to make that country greater because of the movement towards communism.

Well, here is what happened since he took office: The government says that it is going to have to import 100 tons of extra wheat but that is still going to be really short of the 375,000 tons that they need to feed their people. And the United Nations World Food Programme estimates that at least 3 million people will need emergency food aid in Zimbabwe before the April corn harvest.

Communism simply doesn't work. It hasn't worked in the past. It didn't work in the Soviet Union, and it hasn't worked in Zimbabwe or other places. And we ought to be very thankful that we live in a democratic republic in this country. And we ought to do everything we can to help those living under the yoke of communism and do everything to can to make them free.

I think it is extremely important because when you go to those countries, as I have, and you see what those people have to live like and you see the starvation, little children with big bellies because they don't have the food they need, you realize that the communist menace is very, very costly anyplace it occurs in the whole world.

□ 1930

PERU FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HARE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HARE. Madam Speaker, I rise this evening in strong opposition to the pending Peru Free Trade Agreement. NAFTA promised Americans 200,000 new NAFTA jobs, higher wages and an increasing U.S. trade surplus with Mexico, just to name a few. Now, nearly 15 years later, the evidence shows that NAFTA has failed to make good on its promises.

In fact, in many areas in which benefits were promised, conditions are worse than before NAFTA went into effect. For example, in direct contradiction to the promises of NAFTA, nearly 1 million jobs were destroyed directly by the NAFTA free trade deal.

My district, in particular, has suffered the loss of 1,600 jobs; and NAFTA forced Maytag to leave Galesburg, Illinois, for Sonora, Mexico. And just last week, it was announced that Carrhart Manufacturing, a clothing company, will cease production and move to Mexico at the end of December.

Every aspect of the city of Galesburg is hurting. The economy, the schools, the small businesses that feed into these plants, and the citizens have lost their spirit. Now Galesburg is trying to rebuild its identity, but I fear that the Peru FTA promises more of the same.

The proposed Peru FTA would replicate, and in some instances expand, on many of the most devastating provisions of the flawed NAFTA–CAFTA model. First, the Peru FTA preserves many of the CAFTA terms providing extreme foreign investor rights. The provisions in the Peru FTA allow foreign investors to skirt U.S. courts and laws and give foreign investors the authority to sue the United States Government in foreign tribunals for violating their FTA-granted rights.

Second, the Peru Free Trade Agreement includes the NAFTA–CAFTA procurement chapters on Buy America and anti-offshoring policies. The FTA requires foreign firms be treated the same as American firms seeking government contracts, challenging our right to invest tax dollars into American jobs and businesses.

Several groups have publicly opposed the Peru FTA for those very reasons, including the two largest trade unions in Peru.

The September 17 Change to Win Coalition letter states: ''Chapters of the Bush-negotiated FTA that literally replicate job-killing aspects of the core NAFTA–CAFTA model have not been addressed. Not one word was changed from the Bush-negotiated text.''

In addition, the Interfaith Working Group on Trade and Investment released a statement saying: ''Based on our experience with NAFTA and CAFTA, the U.S.-Peru FTA will cause lost livelihoods in rural communities, reduce access to life-saving medication and perpetuate the global 'race to the bottom' for workers and environmental protection.''

But to make matters worse, no one seems to have faith in this President to

enforce the labor standards negotiated in the May 10 agreement. This administration cannot and will not enforce American worker safety right here in the United States.

In a statement released on May 11, AFL–CIO President, John Sweeney, reminded us of the Bush administration's past failures by saying: ''The Bush violations against nations like Jordan and China remind us there is no guarantee the executive branch will enforce any new rights workers may gain through these negotiations.''

The machinists labor union echoed Mr. Sweeney's statement in a letter to Congress dated August 2. It states: ''We are well aware of this administration's dismal record when it comes to workers' rights. For example, it has refused to issue a trade complaint against China for workers' rights violations described fully in AFL–CIO submissions. Given its past record, we fear that this administration will simply ignore even the most egregious labor violations.''

Recently, I received a letter from two Peruvian labor federations concerned about the labor provisions in the pending FTA.

Madam Speaker, our trade policies must start to serve the interests of America's working families and workers around the globe. We can do better. We need to overhaul our trade readjustment program. We need to calculate the loss of American jobs when this bill goes into effect, and we need to remember that our majority is here because working men and women demanded that we look out for them and their families.

Let's slow down, vote ''no'' on this trade deal, and stand up to those people who stood up for us. That, Madam Speaker, is the very least that we can do. I urge my colleagues to please vote ''no'' on the Peru agreement.

FREE THE CUBAN POLITICAL PRISONERS AND PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, pro-democracy activists inside Cuba report that an undetermined number of dissidents were detained by the dictatorship on the morning of September 27. The dissidents were on their way to participate in peaceful activities to request the release of political prisoners.

Those detained in Cuba on September 27 include Martha Beatriz Roque, Jorge Luis Garcia Perez ''Antunez,'' Blas Augusto Fortun Martinez, Yubi Diosenegui Pernet Perez, Alicia Martinez Guevara, Alejandro Gabriel Martinez Martinez, Guillermo Perez Year, Amado Ruiz Moreno, Carlos Cordero Paez, Idania Yanes Contreras, Yesmi Elena Mena Silvano, Jose Diaz Silva, Georgina Noa Montes, Arturo Montgomery Alonso, Roberto de Jesus Guerra Perez, Yunieski Garcia Lopez, Lester Fernandez Zamora, Felix Reyes Gutierrez, Yoel Espinosa Medrano, Ariel Orama Martin, Angel Raul Perez Gavilan, Javier Delgado Torres, Carlos Michael Morales Rodriguez, and others whose names I do not have. At this time it is unknown how many of the detained dissidents have been released and how many will be kept in confinement. It is up to the whim of the ailing tyrant.

The list of political prisoners languishing in Cuban prisons is long, Madam Speaker. Sixty dissidents who were peacefully expressing their opposition to the dictatorship remain in prison since the regime's brutal crackdown of March 2003, joining hundreds of other political prisoners. Reporters Without Borders reports that there are at least 23 journalists languishing in abysmal conditions in Cuban prisons.

The Miami Herald today published a very important editorial about one such journalist. I think it's an editorial that deserves commendation and attention. It reads as follows:

Normando Hernandez Gonzalez may die for exercising free speech in Cuba. An independent journalist, he has been imprisoned since Cuba's crackdown on dissidents in April 2003. Now he is so critically ill that he was transferred to a Havana military hospital last week.

It is bad enough that Mr. Hernandez Gonzalez, 39, is serving a 25-year sentence for criticizing the government, something people in free countries do every day. Yet things could get worse. Returning him to prison would be a death sentence. This is where he contracted serious ailments, chronic digestive disorders and tuberculosis among them. Even if his condition were to improve in the hospital, he would not last long in the filthy cells and eating the food given to political prisoners.

The hope now is that Cuba will free Mr. Hernandez Gonzalez and allow him to leave the country and soon. International pressure is needed.

To their credit, legislators in Costa Rica granted Mr. Hernandez Gonzalez a humanitarian visa in April. Cuban authorities refused to honor the visa. But a recent move appeared to get Cuba's attention. Jose Manuel Echandi Meza, a Costa Rican lawmaker, filed a formal complaint with the U.N. Human Rights Commission two weeks ago that accuses Cuba of torturing Mr. Hernandez Gonzalez by denying him proper medical treatment. The following day, he was sent to the Havana hospital. He appears to be getting some medical treatment, according to his wife.

That wasn't the case before. Mr. Hernandez Gonzalez has been deteriorating since his first year in prison. He has been beaten, placed in solitary confinement and repeatedly denied access to basic medical care. He blames overcrowded, vermin-filled cells and contaminated food and water for his multiple illnesses. He suffers nausea, diarrhea, fever, fainting spells and weight loss.

Last December, he was rushed from his prison to a hospital in Camaguey. There he was placed in a room with no furniture. His food was thrown under the door. He returned to prison untreated. While Cuba boasts of its health care system, it denies political prisoners basic care.

PEN, a writers advocacy group, awarded Mr. Hernandez Gonzalez its prestigious Freedom to Write Award earlier this year. For more information on his case, go to PEN's Web site at www.pen.org. Let the world know that Mr. Hernandez Gonzalez and hundreds of other political prisoners haven't been forgotten. All of them should be released.''

Now, Madam Speaker, the same week that approximately 30 dissidents were rounded up and thrown in dungeons by the Cuban dictatorship, the Spanish Government of Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero decided to unilaterally break the European Union's ''Common Position'' on Cuba, by entering into a cooperation agreement with the Cuban tyranny.

Mr. Rodriguez Zapatero and his government thus continue to act as the Castro brothers' most zealous advocates in Europe, and they deserve the condemnation of all freedom-loving men and women for their disgraceful actions.

I renew tonight my call for the immediate liberation of all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in totalitarian Cuba and urge international solidarity for them and for their right to be released immediately and unconditionally, all of them, now.

OPPOSE THE PERU FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MICHAUD. Madam Speaker, many of the newly elected freshmen campaigned on a platform of ensuring a significant change of course from the Bush trade policy.

The Peru Free Trade Agreement is based on the same flawed NAFTA–CAFTA model that has been so devastating to industries all across our Nation.

While I campaigned for this seat 5 years ago, the cornerstone of my campaign also was to fix our broken trade policies. I've seen firsthand what they have done to the State of Maine.

I firmly believe that in order to address our trade imbalance, we have to change the trade model. The Peru Free Trade Agreement is the same old model with a little lipstick.

There is overwhelming opposition to the agreement by unions, environmental, consumer and small business groups. They're all asking Congress to oppose the Peru FTA. Who supports the bill? The large multinational corporations, Big Business, does.

When Tom Donahue, president of the United States Chamber of Commerce,

states that he is ''encouraged by assurance that the labor provisions cannot be read to require compliance with ILO conventions,'' we should be more than skeptical.

While we have all heard that the Peru trade agreement text improves labor and environmental standards, we fail to hear that they were added on top of the same old NAFTA and CAFTA text. The bottom line: this is another Bush NAFTA expansion.

Key unions are worried about the labor provisions. The new provisions require countries to adopt, maintain, and enforce only the terms of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

The new FTA language does not require signatories to meet the ILO conventions. That's the binding standards. The declaration is a nonbinding statement.

It is highly likely that changes to the environment and labor provisions will have no real effect on the ground.

We all know that the Bush administration has a long record of not enforcing the standards of past trade agreements. Why should they start now?

And there are so many problems with the Peru Free Trade Agreement, whether it's the privatization of Social Security, ban on anti-offshoring, or failure to protect our intellectual property rights. There are more than enough reasons to oppose the Peru FTA. Not to mention if you look at NAFTA, NAFTA has caused a worse problem here in the United States with illegal immigration. The Peru Free Trade Agreement will do the same thing, cause the illegal immigration problem to get worse.

I could go on and on about the Peru FTA. I ask my colleagues to really listen to what America is saying about these free trade agreements. I'm asking Members to vote their conscience. Oppose the Peru FTA.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

□ 1945

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS REPORT ON THE ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Madam Speaker, it's so good to see you in the Chair, especially on this occasion as we engage in the Congressional Black Caucus message hour.

This evening it gives me great pleasure to spend some time talking about the annual legislative conference that was this past weekend right here in Washington, DC.

I am joined this evening by the cochair. The Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus foundation is KENDRICK MEEK, but the cochairs of this wonderful weekend this year are my good friends G.K. BUTTERFIELD from North Carolina and my colleague and good friend DONNA CHRISTENSEN from the Virgin Islands.

So I am going to begin by yielding to my colleague and good friend from the great State of North Carolina, G.K. BUTTERFIELD.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. I want to first of all thank the gentlelady from Ohio for her leadership here in the Congress. One of the first Members that I met when I came to Washington 3 years ago was STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES. She is engaged all the time and is certainly representing the constituents of her district. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share a few thoughts with you this evening.

We have just finished the 37th Annual Legislative Conference of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation.

I want to delineate between the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. Those are two separate entities. So often people confuse those entities, but the Congressional Black Caucus proper is simply an unofficial organization of the 43 CBC members, African American Members who are serving in the Congress who meet from time to time to discuss public policy issues. It is not a foundation; it is simply an informal gathering of Members of Congress.

By contrast, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation is a very formal organization. It is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt foundation that has been in existence for many years. I want to start off by making that point abundantly clear.

The Congressional Black Caucus is composed of 43 members. We hear that number from time to time. That's a very important number. It has not always been 43 members. The African American representation here in Congress has evolved over the years, and now it is at its highest point in its history; 42 African Americans serve in the House. Of those 42, 40 are full voting Members of the House of Representatives. The other two have the right to vote in committees and in the Committee of the Whole, but not in the full House, because they represent the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands. Hopefully one day in the not too distant future even those two Members will have a right to full participation here in the Congress.

But having 42 African Americans in the House of Representatives is significant. That is 17 percent of the House of Representatives, at least the Democrats in the House of Representatives come from the Congressional Black Caucus, and so that is very important.

So over the years, the Congressional Black Caucus has seen fit to annually produce an annual legislative conference whereby African American leaders from all across the country can come to Washington in fellowship and interact and network with other people across the country, and then we conclude the week by having a gala or an annual dinner. We have just completed the 37th annual conference this past week, and it was a smashing success.

I want to thank all of those persons who had a hand in making it happen. KENDRICK MEEK from Miami, Dade County, Florida, is the leader of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. We used to call him a part of the 30-something club, but he has now passed that great 40-year-old mark, but he is still young and energetic and dynamic.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Are you a member of the 30-something club?

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. No, ma'am, I am not. I am a member of the 60-something.

But KENDRICK MEEK has led our organization, and we had a very, very good conference last week. I am not going to go into all the details, I am sure my colleague, DONNA CHRISTENSEN, who was also my cochair last week may give you details about it, but it was a wonderful week.

We had brain trust on just about every topic that you can imagine. We had a gospel extravaganza, and one of my choirs from North Carolina came to Washington and really, really had a magnificent showing in that extravaganza. Then we had a prayer breakfast. We are very close to prayer in the Congressional Black Caucus, because we know it has been our faith that has brought us thus far along the way. Then we concluded on Saturday night with our gala. I don't know how many thousand people were at that dinner.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. More than 3,000.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Yes. There were more, more like 4, 5,000 people in attendance at the dinner, and it was a great success.

I want to thank all of those persons who had a hand in making the week the success that it was, particularly Dr. Elsie Scott and the staff of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation.

You know, Congresswoman, I say in speeches all the time and I will say here on the House floor today, you know, we get credit for a lot of things that we really don't deserve, Members of Congress. We cut the ribbons and take pictures and sit in meetings and engage in unnecessary debate sometimes, but it is the staff that does the heavy lifting and gets the job done. So kudos to the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation staff.

Let me conclude by saying that since 1868 there has only been 122 African Americans who have served in the United States Congress. That is an actual statistic. Our research shows that 19 African Americans served in the House of Representatives during the Reconstruction. Four of those were

from my district that I now represent, which is the northeastern corner of North Carolina. Eight of those were from South Carolina, which is the district that my good friend, the majority whip of this House, Congressman JIM CLYBURN, represents. But we have only had 122 African Americans to serve in this body. We have come a long way to have 42 African Americans serving in the House and one in the Senate.

We have a lot of work to do, and I am going to close by simply saying that we had a good week and a very successful week. I know it's self-serving for me to say this, Congresswoman, but I think it's the best conference that we have had in our 37 years. So many people deserve the credit.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Before you leave, I want to congratulate you on your choice of prayer breakfast speaker. Dr. Clifford Jones out of North Carolina was a wonderful speaker, and his theme, ''Somebody Pray for Me,'' I think hit right home with all of us, and we had a wonderful, wonderful time in praise and worship Saturday morning. You would have actually thought we turned the convention center into a church on Saturday morning. It was a wonderful experience.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. We had a southern missionary Baptist preacher who came to Washington and delivered a powerful sermon. When I first suggested Dr. Jones' name a few months ago, a few people were skeptical because they had not heard of him before. When they came up with their name, I had not heard of their name before.

So I thought it was time to have a southern minister. Dr. Clifford Jones did a wonderful job, as did Rev. William Barber from Goldsboro, North Carolina, who delivered the prayer for the Nation. Dr. Barber is also the State president of the NAACP in North Carolina, and it was just a wonderful occasion. You would have had to have been there to really appreciate it, and hopefully persons who didn't come this year may see fit to come next year.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. I wasn't part of the choice, but I knew a minister named Jones had to be a really good person. Thank you so much for the choice.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Thank you, staff. Thank you all of you who had a hand in making this happen, including the chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus itself. I failed to mention the name of CAROLYN CHEEKS KILPATRICK. Congresswoman KILPATRICK is leader of the Congressional Black Caucus, and that's a tough job, leading 43 diverse politicians. But she reconciles all of our differences, all of our views and leads the Black Caucus with great distinction. Thank you as well to Congresswoman KILPATRICK.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. It gives me great pleasure to yield time to my colleague and good friend, Congresswoman DONNA CHRISTENSEN. She cochairs the brain trust for the Congressional Black Caucus. She represents the Virgin Islands. She has done a great job and always been a great friend since I have been in the Congress. This year, along with G.K. BUTTERFIELD, she cochaired the annual conference for the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, ''Unleashing Our Power.''

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Congresswoman TUBBS JONES, it's a pleasure to be back with you on the floor this evening. We were here together last week discussing SCHIP and the situation in Jena with the Jena 6 high school students, which was also a part of our discussion, a very integral part of our discussion at the annual legislative conference.

We were very fortunate that while we were there, Mychal Bell was released from prison, and we were able to have the lead attorney, Lewis Scott, come up and join us for a session.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Absolutely.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. But this was our 37th Annual Legislative Conference, and our theme, as you heard, was ''Unleashing Our Power.'' That is also exactly what we here in the CBC and our constituents across the country intend to do going forward, unleash our power.

I also want to join my cochair in thanking the Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, KENDRICK MEEK, for his strong and visionary leadership of the foundation and of the conference, and to thank our CBC chairwoman, the Honorable CAROLYN CHEEKS KILPATRICK, for her stellar guidance. As we have come into the majority, she has coalesced and directed our power to influence the product of what I think will be a historic 110th Congress.

I also, as you heard just a few minutes ago, had a great partner in my cochair, Congressman G.K. BUTTERFIELD of North Carolina, whose input, vision and hard work really helped to make this week a successful and momentous one as it was.

Of course, as he said too, the ALC could not have been successful without the work of our staff, his staff and my staff and the staff of the foundation under the excellent and skilled leadership of Dr. Elsie Scott, its president.

As this year's cochair, it was a special pleasure for me to welcome Generation Now and other Virgin Islanders, including Neville Peter, who sang at the prayer breakfast.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. He was excellent. He was excellent. Wow.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Both singers were great, but it was really inspiring. We were really pleased he was able to join us.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Why don't you tell us a little bit about Neville Peter? Some people across the Nation may not know about him.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. He is a young man, born in my district in the U.S. Virgin Islands. He started his musical career very early, at about 5, mostly in the piano and one other instrument. But at about 12, he pretty much lost all of his sight. He became blind at about age 12.

That didn't stop him, though. He went on to college at the University of Miami and studied music there, actually specializing in jazz and some other kinds of music. But in the recent years, he has turned his talent to the service of the Lord, and he has been a gospel singer, writer. He actually performed one of his original compositions, which, as he said, was a testimony of his own life and finding God; it was personal. Now it's personal.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Yes, now it's personal. We remarked, as we were sitting at the table listening to him, that his look was much like a Stevie Wonder look with the braids. When he turned to the side, the profile was much like Stevie Wonder.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Yes, he has a great voice and a great talent. We look for him to go to great places in the future.

So we have him and we have the Generation Now, and, of course, many of us in the Congressional Black Caucus also had our emerging leaders come up from our district that we sponsored; mine, attorney Mark Hodge and Natalie Humphries, also of Generation Now, the last person. So that was exciting.

Our opening session, of course, featured our Chairs, including my colleague here, Mrs. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES, Congresswoman STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES, but also Chairman RANGEL, Chairman CONYERS, Chairman THOMPSON, and of course, our whip, JIM CLYBURN. That was a very, I think, powerful way to start off a conference, a weekend that was all about power.

It wasn't only about power in the Congress, but it was about a power in our community that is still really untapped and unleashed. We could really be agents of change for our community and our country if we were to really come together and use the power that is ours.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. I am with you.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I wanted to focus the rest of my remarks on the town hall, though, and on the health sessions that I was a part of. There were many health sessions. There were many sessions, period, on a number of issues, and all very informative.

The town hall, first, was a real powerful discussion on ways to eliminate or reduce the factors that lead so many black men and now, increasingly, black women into prison. We called it ''Disrupting the Prison Pipeline'' because we wanted to focus on positive action to really stop what was happening over the years.

Too, our session was attended by, I think, over 1,000 people who were at that town hall that morning. And we discussed the disparities in education, health, including mental health and substance abuse, how poverty and unemployment in the criminal justice system, the disparities in those areas create a pathway to incarceration rather than college for so many in the African-American community.

We had wonderful speakers. We had Reggie Weaver, the president of the National Education Association; Dr. Marian Wright Edelman, the president of the Children's Defense Fund; Dr. Beny Primm was a drug addiction expert from New York; Dr. Debra Prothrow Stith, a public health expert who focuses on violence prevention; attorney Rhonda Stewart from North Carolina, an expert on child and family judicial issues; Janks Morton, who is a writer in D.C. representing the media; and several ex-offenders who have made a dramatic turnaround in their lives.

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We want to thank them, as well as our moderator, Leon Harris, and the Members of Congress who participated; Congressman BOBBY SCOTT, who chairs the Crime Subcommittee of the Judiciary and has turned that into, has begun to focus that committee on prevention, which we have long looked forward to doing; DANNY DAVIS, who heads a subcommittee himself on health under the Government Reform Committee. But primarily he was there as the leader of the State of the Black Male Initiative that the CBC and the CBC Foundation have been working on and, of course, Chairman RANGEL, who brought the economic opportunity piece to that discussion. They brought their expertise, they brought the work that they're engaged in, both inside and out of Congress to help disrupt the prison pipeline.

What's clear is that there's too many communities where a young black male in this country has no alternative opportunities, nor is he provided with adequate opportunities to be able to succeed on the path to college. And the two unfortunate recent examples are the Jena high school students and Genarlo Wilson who is still in prison in Georgia. What we will do from here, though, Madam Speaker and colleagues, is to issue a report that incorporates the date, the key points of the discussion, and legislative recommendations, which would be a blueprint for the Congressional Black Caucus, as well as other elected leadership on State and local levels.

What we've heard from our panelists and the audience was a compelling call to action to indeed disrupt that prison pipeline.

The first health session, which I cochair every year with Congresswoman BARBARA LEE on HIV and AIDS, global HIV and AIDS focus on the growing role and the influence of the faith community in combating the HIV/AIDS crisis in the African American community. Ten years ago we called for a state of emergency and a minority AIDS initiative for our community and other communities of color. This administration has taken it far away from the original intent of building the local capacity in our communities to address this epidemic. And the consensus in that conference was that we need a national plan, as we discussed with the Black AIDS Institute on the Hill last week; and it's time to reissue that call for the state of emergency and reclaim our minority AIDS initiative.

Also, on Thursday afternoon there was a great discussion on bringing corporate, State, and union leaders into the disparity elimination partnership. With the ongoing need for corporations to provide health care and the extreme pressures of its rising costs, they will be looking for ways to cut those costs. The health coverage will continue to be a major cause of contention as unions negotiate contracts, and States are beginning to take coverage for all of their residents into their own hands.

We called on business, union and State leaders, we called them together for this dialogue because we want to make sure that as all of this begins to take some kind of shape into a health care reform initiative, that closing the gaps in health care and in health status that's faced by racial and ethnic minorities and rural residents in this country, that those issues would be at the center of that reform; and we intend for that to be an ongoing dialogue.

The last session that I'm going to mention is the Friday session on demanding opportunity and justice for African American health care providers. It spoke to challenges that are almost as disturbing as those we discussed in the prison pipeline discussion. Our keynote speaker, Dr. Sullivan, gave us an update on the still low representation of African Americans and other minorities in health professions schools and in practice, far below our representation in the Nation and woefully inadequate to meet the needs of our diverse society. We heard from hospital administrators, doctors, dentists and others, including students, about the barriers to getting into the health profession school and staying there. Those stories were bad enough. But there was more. We then heard from African American doctors and other health providers, those in practice, about the difficulties they face in staying in practice, given exclusions from certain facilities, faculties and organizations, unfair investigations and sanctions that hold them to a far higher standard than other providers, and also disparities in reimbursement.

What we heard signals a looming crisis that must be prevented if we are ever to eliminate health disparities, if we're ever to improve health care for everyone in this country, and if we're ever to stop the skyrocketing rise in health care costs. Those are just three of the many outstanding issue forums and brain trusts that informed, inspired, and invoked action on the part of the black community.

As I close, I want to thank all of my CBC colleagues, including you, Madam Speaker, for your support. Because of your hard work and that of your staff, we had one of the best annual legislative conferences ever and I want to thank all of the speakers, the exhibitors, and all who attended from all over the country, and even some from beyond and outside of our country, from the Caribbean, from Africa and other areas of the world. Because of the input that you brought, and the support that you gave to the conference, we, as a community, stand more ready than ever to unleash our power.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Thank you, Madam Chair, DONNA CHRISTENSEN, the Delegate from the Virgin Islands, one of the co-chairs for the ALC Conference.

It gives me great pleasure at this time to yield 5 minutes to my colleague and good friend, DIANE WATSON from California, our former ambassador to Micronesia.

Ms. WATSON. Thank you, Congresswoman STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES; and thank you, Madam Speaker.

I want to congratulate Congressman MEEK, Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, and CAROLYN CHEEKS KILPATRICK for putting together a most excellent Congressional Black Caucus annual legislative week. The event was very well attended, and the many issue forums were informative and enlightening.

I held three issue forums, one on African American entrepreneurship in South Africa, and one on African American celebrities and their too often unreported commitment to social issues.

And my third panel, entitled ''Finding Justice for the Black Cherokee Indian Freedmen,'' looked at the current Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma's efforts to expel its black Cherokee citizens. I was pleased to have a number of Cherokee citizens, including Joe Byrd, the former principal chief of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, Jon Velie, attorney for the Freedmen, and Marilyn Vann, president of the Freedmen Descendants Association.

In the year 2000, the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma attempted to disenfranchise its Freedmen descendants. The circumstances were nearly identical to the current efforts of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma to rid itself of descendants of the Freedmen who are rightfully citizens of Cherokee Nation. The Bureau of Indian Affairs took a proactive stance against the Seminoles, cutting off their funding for nearly 2 years and also suspending their franchise to conduct gaming.

Interestingly, the Bureau of Indian Affairs first declared the Cherokee Freedmen situation identical to that of the Seminole Freedmen. Then the bureau did a 180-degree flip flop, taking a hands-off approach to Cherokee Freedmen. The BIA chose to shirk its fiduciary responsibility, even as the Freedmen's rights were obviously being trampled on by the Cherokee leadership.

In March of 2007, the Cherokee Nation held an election to expel the Cherokee Freedmen, in violation of the 1866 treaty which granted full citizenship

rights to Cherokee Freedmen shortly after the Civil War. That is when the plight of the Cherokee Freedmen first came to my attention.

I immediately wrote a letter to Assistant Secretary Artman of the Bureau of Indian Affairs requesting an interpretation of the vote. The letter was signed by 25 of my congressional colleagues. The response I received from Secretary Artman almost a month later was unsatisfactory. In effect, the Secretary said that the bureau had not taken any administrative action and would continue its careful evaluation of all facets of this matter. In effect, I was told that the BIA would continue to monitor a situation that didn't need further monitoring, but immediate action.

It is only when I discovered that the BIA would not move proactively, that it would not forcibly and vigorously stand up for and protect the rights of Cherokee Freedmen as it had done for the Seminole Freedmen, I introduced H.R. 2824 to sever the United States relations with the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma until such time that it restores full citizenship rights to Cherokee Freedmen.

My legislation has been characterized by Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma as a termination bill, which is blatantly false. There is not one sentence in the legislation that addresses terminating the Cherokee Nation's Federal recognition status.

The Cherokee Nation has made the argument that Congress should not intervene until the courts have resolved the matter. It made this point the center piece of its public relations campaign to disenfranchise the Freedmen descendents. But the past actions of the Cherokee Nation belie its commitment to the rule of law. After the Cherokee Nation's tribal courts ruled in favor of Lucy Allen, a Freedmen descendant who sued for citizenship, the Cherokee Nation's leadership chose to dissolve the court and packed the newly constituted court with cronies who proceeded to approve a referendum to disenfranchise the Freedmen.

The Cherokee Nation's leadership states that funding cuts will hurt many Cherokees who depend on Federal funding. This past Friday, coinciding with the day of my issue forum, the Cherokee Nation took out a full page ad in Roll Call and in the Hill making this claim. What the Cherokee Nation doesn't tell you is that it has already spent $2.7 million or more lobbying against Freedmen and that the Cherokee Tribal Council recently debated allocating $4 million to lobby against the Freedmen. What they don't tell you is that a lot of this money has gone and will go to pay for services of high-priced public relations firms. It's too bad that the Cherokee Nation will not use its money to help those in its tribe who really need assistance, but instead will use millions of dollars to launch a hateful and vitriolic attack against African descendents of the Cherokee Nation who form a minority of its, there are only 2,800, they're a minority among its 270,000 thousand Members.

And finally, my legislation was not an attack on Indian sovereignty or the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma's sovereignty.

The Cherokee Nation receives roughly $300 million a year from the Federal Government. It also conducts highly lucrative gaming operations with a Federal gaming charter. The sovereign right to discriminate with our taxpayers' dollars is not a right at all. It's illegal.

The Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma argues that it should be treated like other tribes and have the exclusive right to determine its citizenship. Because the Cherokees signed a treaty with the Confederate States of America and fought against the United States to defend slavery, the conditions of the treaty of 1866 and reconstituting the relationship with the United States was that the former slaves and their descendents, called the Freedmen, would be citizens with full rights. My legislation only seeks redress for the Cherokee Nation for the restoration of their treaty rights that entitle them to citizenship, to vote, to hold office and to have equal rights with other Cherokee citizens.

Madam Speaker and Representative STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES, I appreciate the time you have given us, and I think we were very successful this weekend in gathering information and enlightening our public who attended from across the country and around our Nation. Thank you very much.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of this Special Order today, the annual legislative conference of the Congressional Black Caucus.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. At this time it gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity to yield 5 minutes to my colleague and good friend from the great State of North Carolina, the immediate past Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, Mr. MEL WATT.

Mr. WATT. Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank my colleague, STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES from Ohio, for yielding time. I don't think it will take me 5 minutes to do this, but I did want to spend a little bit of time talking about the annual legislative conference that was conducted by the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation this past weekend.

I heard the comments of my colleague from California, Ms. DIANE WATSON, and I was fortunate to be able to sit in on one of her issues forums related to the Cherokee Freedmen, and I thought it was a very balanced and productive session, and very informative.

I've been privileged to be a part of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's annual legislative weekend for all 15 years that I have served in Congress. And I would have to say that the first 13 of those years I did my piece of the conference by conducting a discussion and issues forum on the Voting Rights Act, access to the vote, and I participated in various issues related to the Judiciary Committee. But last year and the year before last, I was honored to serve as the Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, and I took a different perspective during those 2 years because it gave me an opportunity, as Chair of the caucus, not only to do my own issues forum, but it was part of, I viewed it as part of my responsibility to drop in on all of the issues forums and brain trust discussions that were going on.

And I can tell you firsthand that there was nowhere in the world that there were more thoughtful provocative discussions going on about the state of black America, our role in the United States, our role in education, justice, our role internationally, than take place at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's annual legislative conference.

That is the place to be to discuss the issues that impact our community, and I saw it firsthand, from issues related to the hip hop generation to the confidence of our African American youth, to the prison pipeline that, unfortunately, has been created, to the disparities that exist in health care and education and even in our international foreign policy.

So I'm honored to have been able to have viewed the weekend from a different perspective for the last 2 years.

But I will tell you, Madam Speaker, and my colleague, Representative TUBBS JONES, that I was honored to get back to being able to do just my thing again this year. And we had a delightful discussion about the Voting Rights Act in my issues forum.

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Last year we had just passed the 25-year reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act, and so we took that year to kind of pat ourselves on the back and talk about what we had just accomplished. But we knew the onslaught would be coming immediately. And within that 1-year period, there has been a concerted effort, litigation has been filed, which is a direct frontal attack on the Voting Rights Act and its reauthorization.

So the first part of my issues related to that legal attack, which had just been argued in a court of appeals about 2 weeks ago, and I had the lawyer from the NAACP Legal Defense Fund there at my brain trust to talk about that attack and its likelihood for success. And I'm happy to report that we do not believe it is a serious attack, although there will certainly be others to come.

That presentation was followed by a presentation by Donna Brazile on the various methods that have been used throughout the country to discourage minority participation in the voting process and what we plan to do about it in the 2007 election and, more importantly perhaps, in the 2008 Presidential election cycle, some of the strategies that we plan to follow to combat those efforts to diminish and reduce minority participation in the voting process.

And then our third panelist was a director of a board of elections in Florida who talked about the desirability of creating a paper trail so that people who do show up and vote at the polls can reliably be certain that their vote will be counted and properly assessed.

So we just had three panelists. They did outstanding jobs. We had ample time for discussion and participation by the attendees at the conference and at our issues forum. It was a delightful experience and one that I look forward to being around next year at this time to replicate.

I again applaud you for convening this Special Order tonight to allow us the opportunity to talk about not only the fun things that happened at the foundation's annual legislative conference but, more importantly, the wonderful substantive discussions that take place around every issue that impact our community.

With that I will thank our convener this evening.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. I had a recent discussion with our colleague KEITH ELLISON from Minnesota, and he was telling me that in the seventh circuit that it had been granted to go to the Supreme Court on a voter ID. That will be an interesting case to watch as it goes forward as well.

Mr. WATT. We did talk about that, and we are watching that case very carefully, as well as another case out of North Carolina, which is an attack on whether the Voting Rights Act protects congressional districts that are not majority minority, such as the one I represent, which is only 40 percent or so African American, and the ones that are represented by most of the members of the Congressional Black Caucus today.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for his leadership on getting the Voting Rights Act reauthorized, Congressman MEL WATT of North Carolina.

It gives me great pleasure at this time to yield to my colleague and good friend, a former judge from the great State of Texas, Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON-LEE.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, let me thank my distinguished colleague and friend, chairwoman of the Ethics Committee from Ohio STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES, for more than this one night. I think that we are back in the saddle again, and I applaud the fact that the Congressional Black Caucus, the conscience of the Congress, is now reporting the ions and pages and, if you will, thousands upon thousands of items that we work on and solve on a daily basis here in the United States Congress. So I want to thank her for guiding this for a period of time, and I want to then acknowledge the chairpersons of the 37th Annual Legislative Conference, the Honorable DONNA CHRISTENSEN and G.K. BUTTERFIELD, who did an outstanding job. And as well might I acknowledge and thank, and I know that he will be speaking soon, the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Chairman KENDRICK MEEK, and thank him for his leadership and also for the opportunity to now journey on the foundation board as a new member. As I am a new member of the foundation board, I am delighted to be able to collaborate with him on some of the many, many issues that the board will tackle.

Success; inspirational; exciting; fun; learned; and, of course, message giving. That was the 37th annual legislative session that we just finished here in Washington, D.C.

Allow me to acknowledge the importance of the Voting Rights session that MEL WATT and I, having served on the Judiciary Committee, worked on as we moved to reauthorize the Voting Rights legislation in the last session.

And just to bring to the attention of my colleagues, the reason why that is so important is because it seems that race again is becoming a dividing issue in America. And I just want to remind my colleagues, or maybe bring it to your attention, I am going to sort of merge it into the review of the particular sessions that I had, but I just want to announce to my colleagues that Ward Connelly has managed to get the question of affirmative action on the ballot of nine States. My understanding is that that question which revolves around race will be on the Presidential-year elections. It is my understanding that it will be on the ballot in November of 2008. I am going to investigate that issue, but I wanted to just bring that to the table because a number of our sessions had to do with trying to grapple with this question of race. And certainly the Voting Rights Act and the interpretations that the Supreme Court will make on additional cases involving race really emphasize that.

And I must say that I enjoyed cohosting a series of sessions with BOBBY SCOTT. There was a session that, although I was detained, I was able to get in for a brief moment, but I want to compliment him and acknowledge that one of the aspects that was spoken about was the recent decision dealing with race in schools on the Supreme Court. So you can imagine if there are ballot issues dealing with affirmative action, it just converges on a number of these issues. And that session really emphasized the wrongness of the decision as it relates to the results, meaning that Brown versus Board of Education might be challenged under that decision. Something for us to be concerned about.

So I enjoyed participating in that one and thought it was a very important, instructive session, as well as cochairing the child welfare section with DANNY DAVIS. And the one point I want to mention that came out of that that really cries out for legislation is the fact that foster children age out of protection, age out of a home at age 18. And for those of us who have children that know that we are still mothering them at 21, 22, 23, 24, and they have a home, our children can come back to a home or have a roof over their head that we may have, but foster children get out of the system. There is no obligation to provide them with housing or schooling or anything. What a tragedy, which is why you see that many foster children are homeless, many foster children can't finish college. They get no stipend, and it is a crisis. And it was an outstanding series with Historically Black Colleges.

Let me then indicate that the series that I had involved the energy brain trust, which was historic. And let me quickly say that we had representatives from Shell and CAMAC energy and the CEO of CITGO; from Venezuela, the Venezuelan ambassador; the ambassador from Algeria; Milton Scott, who owns a very important African American energy company; Steve Hightower, African American, owner of an energy company; George Person; Lisa Jackson; Gary Heminger; Hugh Depland from BP; Gary from Marathon; Frank Stewart from the American Association of Blacks in Energy; Willie Trotty. And the key element, high gasoline prices and high utility costs, building bridges. We have a commitment to convene the energy brain trust at the OTC, the Offshore Technology Conference, in Houston, but the main thing we have a commitment to is getting African Americans in the ownership wealth part of energy and making sure that there are African Americans in the corporate aspects of these major Fortune 500 companies and, as well, increasing more ownership.

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Lastly, we did a provocative session on hip hop, ''The Culture of a People, the Language of a People,'' and it actually got people talking. Julianne Malveaux, the president of Bennett College. Azim Rashid, senior VP of operations at Warner Music. J. Xavier, 350-time performer, 15-year-old clean hip hop artist. An Tun Muhammad, the president of The Real Hip Hop Network. Asha Jenning, Igniting Media Accountability. Madhatter of the Box Station in Houston, and JMAC. And then Reverend Ben Chavis and Charles LeBoef.

Let me conclude by saying that we opened up the door of communication to understand hip hop from both perspectives in art, but also accountability. I look forward to continuing those sessions.

But more importantly let me thank the convener, because we were able to say it was vital, it was important, and there was so much learning going on. Now we're going forward with the legislative initiative for the CBC legislative weekend.

I yield back to the distinguished gentlelady. Thank you for the time.

The issue of energy is one of the most important national security issues which face our nation due to our increasing dependence on foreign sources of energy, often times from volatile parts of the world. My braintrust seeks to highlight and remedy the lack of adequate outreach to and participation by the African American community in America's energy industry, which is exacerbated by the inherent barriers present in the energy industry to African American students, workers, entrepreneurs, and investors along with the disparate impact the energy industry has on minority populations, consumers and neighborhoods, both in terms of prices and environmental justice.

There is no issue more integral to our nation's economic and national security than energy independence. This Energy Braintrust, which is comprised of some of the most prominent members of America's energy industry, is designed to be a clarion call to action, in order to build bridges and synergies between the African-American community and America's energy industry.

The purpose of this Braintrust will not only be the discussion of, but more importantly, the transformation of dialogue into action and legislation to address and bolster the relationships between the energy industry and African American consumers, entrepreneurs, investors, workers, and students. My hope and expectation is that six months from now each of today's presenters will join me to collectively and individually issue a plan of benchmarks, goals, and pathways to build concrete and coherent bridges and synergies between the African American community and America's energy industry. Moreover, part of this plan will be a formal mechanism such as a progress report to measure how each of today's prominent panelists and the companies they represent implement and achieve the benchmarks they helped to develop. This will ensure that we transform today's substantive discussion into pragmatic action.

Energy is the lifeblood of every economy, especially ours. Producing more of it leads to more good jobs, cheaper goods, lower fuel prices, and greater economic and national security. However, the U.S. is more than 60 percent dependent on foreign sources of energy, twice as dependent today as we were just 30 years ago. America's growing and dangerous energy dependence has resulted in the loss of hundreds of thousands of good American jobs, skyrocketing consumer prices, and vulnerabilities in our national security.

Energy imports now make up one-third of America's trade deficit. America must improve the supply-demand imbalance, lower consumer prices, and increase jobs by producing more of its own energy resources. With my district of Houston being the energy capital of the world, the energy industry in Houston exemplifies the stakeholders who must be instrumental in devising a pragmatic strategy for resolving our national energy crisis.

At this point in history, the energy industry is at a critical turning point where we can become active agents of change in our collective futures. America's dependence of foreign oil has led us to precarious position in terms of foreign policy and national security, while the youth of our nation have not received sufficient means to move to us a new direction.

Because I represent the city of Houston, the energy capital of the world, I realize that many oil and gas companies provide many jobs for many of my constituents and serve a valuable need. The energy industry in Houston exemplifies the stakeholders who must be instrumental in devising a pragmatic strategy for resolving our national energy crisis. It is crucial that while seeking solutions to secure more energy independence within this country, we strike a balance that will still support an environment for continued growth in the oil and gas industry, which I might add, creates millions of jobs across the entire country.

We have many more miles to go before we achieve energy independence. Consequently, I am willing, able, and eager to continue working with Houston's and our nation's energy industry to ensure that we are moving expeditiously on the path to crafting an environmentally sound and economically viable energy policy. Furthermore, I think it is imperative that part of this policy includes increased involvement by small, minority and women owned businesses, and independent energy companies in this process because they represent some of the hard working Americans and Houstonians who are on the forefront of energy efficient strategies to achieving energy independence.

I will conclude by also emphasizing that renewable and alternate sources of energy must be part of our energy future in order to achieve energy independence. Replacing oil imports with domestic alternatives such as traditional and cellulosic ethanol can not only help reduce the $180 billion that oil contributes to our annual trade deficit, it can end our addiction to foreign oil. According to the Department of Agriculture, biomass can displace 30 percent of our Nation's petroleum consumption.

Along with traditional production of ethanol from corn, cellulosic ethanol can be produced domestically from a variety of feedstocks, including switchgrass, corn stalks and municipal solid wastes, which are available throughout our nation. Cellulosic ethanol also relies on its own byproducts to fuel the refining process, yielding a positive energy balance. Whereas the potential production of traditional corn-based ethanol is about 10 billion gallons per year, the potential production of cellulosic ethanol is estimated to be 60 billion gallons per year.

I will close by emphasizing that we must be balanced and prudent in our approach to address our energy needs. By ensuring access to the African-American community and investing in renewable energy, I believe we can be partners with the responsible members of America's energy producing community present today to achieve our collective goal of reaching energy independence and increased inclusion of the African-American community.

CHILDREN'S ISSUES FORUM: HIP HOP: THE CULTURE OF A PEOPLE

The Annual Legislative Conference is an opportunity for us to discuss and engage with some of the difficult issues that face us as a community and as a nation, This year, it was my honor and pleasure to host a Children's Issues Forum entitled "The Language of Hip Hop: The Culture of a People," This timely and thought-provoking discussion and examination of the impact, both positive and negative, of hip hop on our community featured panelists from the hip hop industry, as well as activists and academics.

As a Member of the Congressional Black Caucus, Chairwoman of the Congressional Children's Caucus, and most importantly a mother, it is my priority to address issues relating to the health and well-being of African American youth in this country. I recognize that Hip Hop culture has had a tremendous influence on the artistic and musical expression of America's youth today. However, many view the culture of Hip Hop as a negative and provocative phenomenon due to some of the negative images and harsh lyrics that some artists use to express themselves. I believe that before we condemn Hip Hop, we must first try to understand it. The Children's Braintrust sought to reach such understanding.

Throughout history, music originating from America's Black communities has always had an accompanying subculture reflective of the political, social and economic conditions of the time. Rap is no different. The history of our music often exemplifies a deeper reflection of the goings on in society—from Billie Holiday's solemn song characterizing those who were lynched as "Strange Fruit" to Nina Simone's musical commentary in "Mississippi G——D——" expressing her disdain for the rampant killings in the South, to Tupac's expression of sincere compassion for poor black women, whom he urged to "keep your head up" despite the fact that society has turned its back on you.

Hip hop is the culture from which rap emerged. Hip hop is a lifestyle with its own language, style of dress, music and mind set that is continuously evolving. We have seen hip hop go from competitive freestyling to breakdancing battles to East Coast-West Coast rivalry. Surely, we lost two extremely talented individuals in Tupac and Biggie, much too soon. We all know their lives did not have to end so violently. But knowing this, we must ask ourselves, why does the violence continue to take so many of our youth?

My Children's Issues Forum was an opportunity to talk with each other, rather than at each other. Panelists and participants came together to discuss solutions, and to look for a way forward that embraces the hip hop artists in their quest to fulfill their dreams but rejects the lethal language that often lends itself to less than desirable outcomes for our children. More and more, we see some of the negative messages affecting the way young people make decisions about engaging in sexual activity, drug use and using violence as a means to resolve conflict. The self esteem and desire of many young listeners to achieve greatness are being deflated by stereotypes and explicit lyrics in some Hip Hop lyrics.

While I uphold America's fundamental right to freedom of speech and believe that artists have a right to creative expression, a middle ground needs to be sought in order to allow artists to create music without demeaning and degrading others. It is difficult to progress as a community if we never take the time to carefully dissect the influence of Hip Hop on our children.

During my forum, panelists examined whether Hip Hop language is culture, creativity

or crisis, and explored the "Stop Snitchin" phenomenon that has had a negative impact on communities across the nation. This important Issues Forum was a substantial first step toward reaching a solution. The ALC is about fostering positive and creative change, and the Children's Braintrust made great strides toward making our communities safer for our children.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. It gives me great pleasure at this time to yield 3 minutes to the Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, and my great friend and son in the House of Representatives, Congressman KENDRICK MEEK, from the great State of Florida, Miami, Florida.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you so much, Madam Chair. And thank you, Ms. LEE, for saying thank you and showing your appreciation.

I know we have some Members that want to speak, and Madam Chair, I'm going to have to leave the floor soon, so I just want to mention two or three things.

One, I want to thank those great Americans that participated in our conference. And I think that some of the brain trusts that were held, from what I'm hearing from e-mails and telephone calls, were some of the best that we've had. That means hats off to those that put on those brain trusts and issue forums; that means one of the 43 members of the Congressional Black Caucus, individually they were able to do it.

And we were also able to shed light on ''Unleashing Our Power.'' It wasn't just a title of members of the Congressional Black Caucus. It was for those participants, black, white, male and female, that attended the conference, to leave empowered to go back to their State, back to their local community, and even in their own home, and unleash their power as it relates to education, health care, so on and so on.

One thing that I can tell you that was very, very good this year, and we were able to work very hard, is making a lot of young people feel welcome with our Emerging Leaders Initiative. Our apprenticeship program has been a really successful program. We had a lot of people that participated. We had high school students that participated; we had college and recent graduates that came to this conference. And I look forward, Madam Chair, to future years where we can be able to continue to have a successful weekend. This was obviously a large fund-raiser for our scholarship program, for our internship program. These are kids that wouldn't ordinarily have an opportunity to be a part of anything here in Washington, D.C., to serve as interns in Members' offices or committees.

So everything happened the way that it should. There are always things that we can work on to make it better next year. But as it relates to the substance, Madam Chair, I am so pleased that people walked away with more knowledge than when they walked in and were inspired by what they heard. And I took the opportunity to go into Mr. PAYNE's Africa brain trust. Very powerful. He had heads of state come in to address people who needed to know more about the African countries that are there.

So with that, Madam Chair, thank you. I want to thank you. We co-sponsored the ALC a couple of years ago together, co-chaired it. I want to thank you for your leadership, and thank you for hosting this hour.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. I thank you, Mr. Chair. It is always great working with you.

At this time, I would like to yield 4 minutes to my colleague and good friend from the great State of Virginia, Congressman BOBBY SCOTT, who has been a leader in and around so many issues. It is great to yield to you.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. I would like to thank the lady from Ohio for convening this Special Order so that we can talk about the great weekend that we had.

The gentleman from Florida, KENDRICK MEEK, did a tremendous job as chairman of the foundation. CAROLYN CHEEKS KILPATRICK from Michigan did a great job as chairman of the caucus; DONNA CHRISTENSEN from the Virgin Islands and G.K. BUTTERFIELD of North Carolina leading the legislative weekend.

We had dozens of important legislative seminars, foreign affairs, armed services and veterans, transportation, health care, education, housing, social services, financial issues, civil rights, voting rights. Every aspect of legislation that you can imagine, we had the nationally recognized experts. They were open to the public, the public had an opportunity for questions and answers and input. These were great workshops. I participated in four of them. The town hall forum entitled ''The Cradle to Prison Pipeline'' that talked about the unfortunate situation where so many of our young people start off and gradually, slowly but surely, get in trouble, drop out of school and end up in prison, and how with appropriate investments, strategic investments we can change that pipeline to a cradle-to-college pipeline, which is so much better for humanity, so much better for our communities, and that we could do that in a cost effective way.

I participated in a budget forum where we had budget experts talk about the fact that in 1993 we began eliminating the deficit. By the year 2000 we had gone into surplus. And, in fact, in 2001, we had a projected $5.5 trillion surplus over 10 years, and how, unfortunately, over the last few years we have converted that $5.5 trillion surplus to a $3 trillion deficit, a swing of $8.5 trillion. And how, with appropriate changes and some of the changes we're trying to make in Congress today, we can change that back to where we have the surplus and save Social Security, invest in health care, education and other important investments.

We had a great workshop on education with the education brain trust. We had one session on desegregation of schools and how, notwithstanding the Seattle and Louisville cases, we can still, with a little hard work, make sure those schools are desegregated.

We focused on the importance of early childhood education and the elementary and secondary education and Higher Education Act. We were able to make sure that we invested appropriately in education to make sure that we have a better community.

We also had another workshop on the judiciary, juvenile justice and the importance of making the choice between reducing crime and playing politics. We need to make sure that we reduce crime. You were very active in law school admissions, to make sure that law schools' admissions policy was not discriminatory.

Great workshops, judiciary, education, budget. The other important workshops. It was a great educational weekend.

Madam Chair, I would like to thank you for your hard work and leadership and also the ability to bring us together so that we could discuss the great work that was done over the weekend.

Thank you very much, and I yield back.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Thank you to the gentleman from Virginia for his comments.

It gives me great pleasure at this time to have the opportunity to yield 3½ minutes to my colleague and good friend from the great State of New Jersey, who serves on the International Relations Committee and is just a leader in the international arena, my colleague and good friend, DONALD PAYNE.

Mr. PAYNE. Let me thank you again for your great work, Congresswoman JONES, she does a fantastic job, and for all of the leaders that you have heard mentioned. And I would like to commend Dr. Elsie Scott for really bringing the foundation forward. Of course, our chairperson MEEKS and KILPATRICK and G.K. BUTTERFIELD and CHRISTENSEN.

Let me also commend our speaker pro tempore this evening for the great work that YVETTE CLARKE, a new Member from Brooklyn, who has come into this House and has brought vitality and excitement. And we know that she will do an outstanding job as she moves that district forward. It's a great pleasure to have you with us.

Let me just say that I dealt with three areas, BOBBY SCOTT, DANNY DAVIS and our brain trust on education. Then I had the Head Start part. Then we had two other workshops and brain trusts, one, ''We Don't Do February.'' And that is about integrating African American history into the regular curriculum so that when we hear about Patrick Henry and Nathan Hale, we will hear about Crispus Attucks and Peter Salem. When we hear about the Rough Riders, we will know about the

Buffalo Soldiers. So the Amistad Committee of New Jersey is integrating African history into the regular textbooks.

Then, of course, as you all know, we deal with the Africa brain trust, the theme, ''The New Africa: Opportunities and Challenges,'' President Wade of Senegal and former President Obasanjo of Nigeria, and Under Secretary Henrietta Fore, Ambassador Ali, AU Ambassador to the U.S. And we had Dr. Adasena, who was representing Kofi Annan's new group on the ''Greening of Africa.'' And Ambassador Lyman, former Ambassador from the U.S. to South Africa and Nigeria. And Dr. Juma from Harvard talking about education.

So we really had standing room only. I recall 19 years ago, when I started the brain trust, we had a difficult time. We used to run in the halls and just drag people, beg them to come in. Now, unless you're there before 9 o'clock, you're not going to get a seat. So it shows that the Congressional Black Caucus, the constituency for Africa has grown very strong, and the members of the caucus are so supportive of the efforts we're doing, not only in Africa but in the Caribbean. And in Latin America, where Afro-Latinos are saying we want our share, too. We have, in Brazil now, an affirmative action program where in their colleges, they will have to admit the qualified blacks who've been ignored, and in Columbia.

So we have seen in the ''hands across the ocean,'' as I often say, that the blood that connects us is much thicker than the water that separates us.

So with that, I will yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Thank you, Congressman PAYNE, from the great State of New Jersey.

I am going to close out this hour and take these last couple minutes. One of the things that you make a mistake about when you leave a Special Order is you yield to everybody, and you forget to talk about your own workshops. So very quickly, I am going to talk about the two workshops that I did. The first one was ''African American Athletes: Roles, Representation, and Expectations.'' It was a wonderful opportunity where I had the opportunity to host Jim Brown, the former Cleveland Browns player, renowned athlete, to talk about things he has been doing around outreach and mentoring. I had Keven Davis, a partner at Garvey, Schubert & Barer, who provided an overview of how African American athletes are represented in financial transactions. Carlos Flemming, a VP of IMG, who represents Venus and Serena Williams. Everett Glenn, the president and CEO of Entertainment & Sports Plus, who is an agent. Ken Harvey, president and CEO of JAKA Consulting, a former NFL player and a representative. Jacquelyn Nance, who is the executive director of the LeBron James Family Foundation. And finally, William Rhoden, who is the author of ''Forty Million Dollar Slaves,'' and is a sportswriter for the New York Times. And I particularly want to thank him for taking care of the workshop while I was required to be here on the floor voting on some other issues. It was a great opportunity, and we talked about a lot of issues around African American athletes.

My second forum was focused on the declining enrollment of African Americans in law schools across the Nation. My panel consisted of Christopher Johnson of General Motors; Vanita Banks, the president-elect of the National Bar Association; John Nussbaumer, associate dean of Thomas Cooley Law School; Dwayne Murray, the Grand Polemarch of Kappa Alpha Psi; John Brittain, a lawyer from the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights; Karen Weaver, associate dean for academic affairs and diversity; and Pauline Schneider, on behalf of the ABA. She's at Orrick & Harrington.

And the quick issue around law schools is that African Americans do have a decline in enrollment and that ABA is responsible for accreditation.

So with that, Madam Speaker, I want to yield back my time and say thank you to Speaker PELOSI for giving the CBC this Special Order to focus on the ALC weekend. It's not a party; it's a legislative conference with great import for all people across the country.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, last week the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation held its 2007 Annual Legislative Conference.

Each year, I have convened the Science and Technology Braintrust. The Braintrust is a discussion forum aimed at bringing together America's brightest minds to share idea on how to diversify our science and technology workforce.

I have remained committed to hosting this Braintrust each year, because I believe that engaging young people in the fields of science and technology is one of the most important things we can do for the future success of America.

With India and China producing more than five times the number of engineers, computer scientists and information technology professions in 2005 than we did, our nation is losing its competitive edge.

The Sciene Committee ushered through a $33.6 billion package of Innovation policies that are designed to help early career researchers, better train math and science teachers, and encourage industry and universities to partner with local high schools to improve science instruction.

Having a dialogue with students and with the science education community is another way to exchange ideas and assess the needs of our population.

My Braintrust consisted of two panels. The first panel consisted of high-level individuals who have risen to great heights in technology and engineering fields. They provided an executive perspective of the educational experiences that are needed for tomorrow's high-tech graduate to be globally competitive.

Panel 2 featured bright, innovative minds from individuals who work with technology in unique ways. The goal was to convince everyone here that a career in math, science or engineering can be fulfilling, challenging and fun.

Madam Speaker, more than 150 local, African American high school students attended my Braintrust, and many of them participated in the discussion by interacting directly with the panelists.

It is my feeling that a few hearts and minds were changed that day, in the Science Committee hearing room. If only one student was influenced toward a career in science, technology, engineering or mathematics, I will be satisfied. This focus has been a major goal of my work as an elected official.

In the 1990s, we responded to the digital age with breakthroughs in computer science and information technology.

Tomorrow's greatest challenge will be to meet the needs of the Innovation Age. We must compete at a global level.

CONGRESSWOMAN EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON'S SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY BRAINTRUST—EDUCATION AND SKILLS NEEDED FOR THE DIGITAL TO INNOVATION AGE

PANEL ONE

EDUCATION AND SKILLS FOR TOMORROW'S HIGH-TECH GRADUATE:

THE EXECUTIVE PERSPECTIVE

Moderator: Sam Ford, Reporter, ABC7/WJLA-TV

Panelists: Dr. Samuel Metters, CEO, Metter Industries, Inc. Mr. Scott Mills, President, BET Networks. Dr. Cheryl Shavers, CEO, Global Smarts, Inc. Mr. John Thompson, Sr. VP and General Manager, BestBuy.com.

PANEL TWO

INNOVATORS AT THE CUTTING EDGE

Moderator: Derek Lloyd, Professor and Senior Network Systems Engineer, Howard University.

Panelists: Ms. Lyn Stanfield, Strategic Relations Manager, Apple Inc. Mr. Darrell Davis, Director, DEA South Central Laboratory. Mr. Rob Garza and Mr. Eric Hilton, Thievery Corporation band. Dr. Anna McGowan, Manager, NASA Langley.

NEW FISCAL YEAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. It is such a pleasure to come to the floor tonight as we start a new fiscal year for the U.S. Government.

A new year is a time where you get to look back at what happened last year, where you get to redirect your focus and talk about what your priorities are going to be and the goals that you want to set.

□ 2045

Now, we all do that with our families as we get to the end of the calendar year and start the new calendar year in January. It is a time that we enjoy.

I hope for each of us, as Members of the House, as we start this fiscal year, that we will put some attention on what we spend and how we spend.

Now, Madam Speaker, over the weekend, I had the opportunity to do a town hall with some of my constituents. We

got together yesterday afternoon after church over lunch. One of them said, ''Do you know, I have been reading Alan Greenspan's book. My goodness, it is amazing to me, absolutely amazing to me what Congress spends, how much money they spend. It is amazing to me that we have seen this debt skyrocket through the '70s, through the '80s and begin to level off through the '90s but still continue to grow. It is amazing to me that decisions are made that grow that debt. It is amazing to me that earmarks are out of control. Explain earmarks.''

My constituent posed this question before the group because, like so many, once he looked at the issue, he realized that every time we grow a program, every time some new program comes along, every time Congress stands and says, ''We must meet this need,'' that there are two costs to that program. Of course, there is the dollars cost, and then there is also the opportunity cost, because if Government steps in and meets that need, the private or not-for-profit sector is not going to step in and meet that need. So my constituent posed this for the group to talk about. I said, ''What a great discussion to have. This is the last day of the fiscal year for the U.S. Government. Tomorrow is a new day. They turn a page in the book and start a new slate with the new budget.''

Now, my constituent said that he would have loved to have seen the U.S. Government get to the end of the year and brag about how much money they had saved. But in reality, he knows that probably there is going to be more bragging done about special projects that go back home to the district in the form of earmarks.

So we talked a little bit yesterday, Madam Speaker, about priorities, about earmarks and about how earmarks came to be. When communities have trouble coming in and going through the process, they will say, ''Oh, can you help us, Member of Congress, to get this set aside in the bill? Can you help us to find this money?'' Quite frankly, Madam Speaker, we all know not all earmarks are bad. It is the abuse of earmarks that are bad. As I came back this afternoon, I found on my desk a copy of Congressional Quarterly Weekly. You can find this at cq.com if someone wants to pull it up. In the article, they are citing that there were 7,000 specific House-passed earmarks in just eight of the bills. There were 500 sought by the White House; roughly 1,000 were identified with more than one sponsor. That left 5,670 earmarks worth a combined $44.2 billion, each linked with a single House Member. And then it goes on and talks a little bit about how many and how much are here in the earmarks game and a little bit about who gets what. But it is the process and the abuse of that earmark process that has our constituents confused, frustrated and, rightfully, a little bit angry.

We know that many of us have pushed for greater transparency in this earmark process. We have pushed for changes, for knowing what is taking place in our earmarks so that people know what is in those bills when they come to the House floor, so that it is easy to find, to pair it up, to know who is asking for what, where it is going to be located or what program it is going to go to, and then how much of the taxpayer money is being spent.

Madam Speaker, it is not our money. It is not government's money. It is the taxpayers' money. So like my constituent who posed the question yesterday, ''Tell me how much you are spending and how you go about spending it and explain these earmarks,'' those are questions that, yes, indeed, they have the right to ask, and we as Members of Congress should be answering those questions and discussing what is in those bills, what is in those appropriations bills, and what we find in those earmarks.

Now, I will have to say that this is a year when we have started our fiscal year on what is called a continuing resolution, and we passed that last year. I will say that the new majority did a good job of bringing a fairly clean continuing resolution before us so that we were running today, so that we didn't have to shut government down. What the continuing resolution basically does is it takes last year's funding numbers and rolls them forward. A lot of people would like to see us hold everything at exactly the same spending level it was. That is not all bad. But the new majority was not able to get one single spending bill through both Houses and to the President to be signed, so that is why we are operating on the continuing resolution.

We have seemed to have time to talk about global warming and pass bills pertaining to global warming or conservation. We have named post offices. We have expanded programs. We have passed billions in new authorizations and new spending. But we did not get the budget done, so we are on a concurrent resolution.

It is our new fiscal year. We are going to spend a little bit of time tonight talking about how we spend that money and looking at what takes place through this earmark process and why we, as Republicans, and why we, as members of the Republican Study Committee, are continuing our push for earmark transparency and earmark reform.

Madam Speaker, at this time, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) who is chairman of the Republican Study Committee, and I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate the gentlewoman's leadership at the Republican Study Committee, Congress's conservative caucus. It is a very timely issue that we are discussing today since, indeed, today is the first day of the fiscal year for the Federal Government. I think for many of us it is easy to sum up the actions of the new Democrat majority; that is, they spend too much and they tax too much. It bodes ill for the future of our Nation.

I think that it is important that we step back for a moment and figure out just how much of the people's money is being spent. And it is the people's money. It is not the government's money. It is the people's money. Today, right now, the last figure I saw is that the Federal Government is now spending $23,289 per family of four. This is just about the highest level that has been spent since World War II. Since I have been on the face of the planet, since I was born, the Federal budget has grown four to five times faster than the family budget. Ultimately, it is the family budget that has to pay for that. Since we have been in this 110th Congress with the new Democrat majority, rarely does a day go by that there is not a new opportunity to begin a new government program on top of the roughly 10,000 Federal programs spread across 600 agencies that already exist. It kind of begs the question: How much government is enough? Because we know that as government grows, our freedoms and our opportunities contract. This is supposed to be the land of opportunity. This is supposed to be the land of freedom. Yet, all we do under this new Democrat majority rule is add program after program after program.

Madam Speaker, unfortunately all of this new spending imposes a new tax burden on the American people. In the budget that the Democrat majority passed, they included in it the single highest tax increase in American history. When fully implemented over a 5-year period, this budget will impose approximately $3,000 of additional taxes on the average American family. Now, every single day we come to this floor and we debate. And our friends on the other side of the aisle, the Democrats, want to talk about great investments in education, great investments in housing, and great investments in nutrition that they are going to use all this money for. Well, the challenge is, though, that every time that they increase some Federal budget, they are having to decrease some family budget to take it, and right now to the tune of $3,000 per American family.

Madam Speaker, I often hear from people in the Fifth District of Texas that I represent. I take great pride in representing these people who have entrusted me with their representation in Congress. I hear from people like the Flores family in Garland, Texas. I heard this lady say, ''I am a divorced mother with a child in college and a child in day care. An increase in taxes of this magnitude would wipe out hope of the first college graduate in the family. Don't let this happen. Let's hold the budget down.''

So, again, what we have here is the Democrats are taking money away

from a family budget in order to give it to some Federal budget. We are not always debating how much money we are going to spend on these items, but we are debating who is going to do the spending. Democrats in Washington want the bureaucrats in Washington to do the spending. Republicans want families to do the spending, the people who actually roll up their sleeves and work hard. They work hard trying to make ends meet. They have got decisions that they have to make around the kitchen table. And this is just one example. I hear from lots of my constituents.

I heard from the Lopez family in Mesquite, ''I would like to let you know that if our taxes are increased, this may mean that we could not continue to finance our child's education.'' I heard from the Winters family in Tennessee Colony, ''Stop the wasteful spending. I am retired and disabled. I am raising three grandchildren. Sometimes I can't afford my own medicine.'' And here we are, this new Democrat majority wants to take $3,000 a year away from these hardworking families to fuel their budget, not these families' budgets, but the Federal budget.

Now, ultimately, though, it is not just the tax increase that we see right over the horizon that is so challenging. It is what is going to happen to future generations. And rarely does a day occur that somebody doesn't come to the floor and talk about the need to help the least of these. Well, I often think that the least of these are those who cannot vote and those yet to be born. They don't seem to have a say-so in this great debate that we are having today.

For example, don't take my word for it, but all this spending that we have seen in Washington, here is the result. Don't take my word for it, but we, right now, are literally on the verge of doing something to the next generation that has never been done before: imposing such a draconian economic burden on them, something that has never been done before, that according to the Comptroller General, the chief fiduciary officer in America, we are on the verge of being the very first generation in America's history to leave the next generation with a lower standard of living.

□ 2100

As the father of a 5-year-old and a 4-year-old, I will not sit idly by and let that happen.

Again, Mr. Speaker, don't take my word for it. Listen to the words of our Chairman of the Federal Reserve, who said: ''Without early and meaningful action to address Federal spending, the U.S. economy could be seriously weakened, with future generations bearing much of the cost.''

Listen to the GAO, the General Accountability Office. They talk about government spending, particularly entitlement spending as a ''fiscal cancer'' that threatens ''catastrophic consequences for our country and could bankrupt America.''

Listen to the famous economist, Robert Samuelson, who writes frequently in newspapers all across the Nation. He says: ''The rising cost of government retirement programs could either increase taxes or budget deficits so much that they could reduce economic growth, and this could trigger an economic and political death spiral.''

The Congressional Budget Office, the Office of Management and Budget, the General Accountability Office, the liberal Brookings Institution, the conservative Heritage Foundation, they all agree that spending is out of control: And what is going to happen is in the next generation either the Federal Government will consist of nothing to speak of but Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security; or you're going to have to double taxes on our children and grandchildren just to balance the budget.

Now we see that hurricane coming over the horizon, we see it coming towards us, and yet this Democrat majority every single day adds to the problem. Just last week the Democrat majority took an insurance program, the National Flood Insurance Program, that is already going broke, was supposed to be self-sustaining through premiums, it's $20 billion in the red, and they add additional coverage to it that could expose the taxpayer to $17 trillion, $17 trillion of new liability in just one program alone.

So that is why it's so important that we start tackling the pennies and the nickels and the dimes, because we are talking about the priorities of American families, we are talking about their opportunities, we are talking about their ability to send their children to college, we are talking about their ability to save that nest egg, to launch their version of the American Dream and start their new business. We are talking about their ability to pay for their health insurance premiums.

Again, Mr. Speaker, every time you increase the Federal budget, you're having to decrease some family budget. I just often wonder when will the madness stop. When will we finally figure out that this isn't investment in the future, that is divesting our children's future by spending all of this money? The Federal budget should not be allowed to grow beyond the family budget's ability to pay for it.

That is why conservatives in the Republican Study Committee, the House Conservative Caucus, support a limitation on the growth of the Federal Government, to force Congress to decide amongst some of these priorities among these competing 10,000 Federal programs. Mr. Speaker, I defy any man, woman or child in America to tell me what they all do; 10,000 of them. It reminds me of what President Reagan once said: ''There is nothing as close to eternal life on Earth as a Federal program.'' They all cost money, and they take away from our children's future.

So that is why I am so happy that members of the Republican Study Committee have gathered here this evening to talk about the challenges of spending for the future generations and to get together to ensure that we let the American people know that we are working to hold the line on spending, to bring more accountability, to bring more transparency, to try to stave off this tax increase of $3,000 per American family, and that's for the families today. And we are fighting just as hard, if not harder, to ensure that the children and grandchildren of today's taxpayers are not saddled with a doubling of their taxation so that they would see a lower standard of living. That is not the America that we grew up in. That is not the moral obligation we have. We cannot be that first generation in America's history to leave the next generation with a lower standard of living.

That is why I am happy to join my fellow members of the Republic Study Committee who have come here to debate this important subject tonight. I especially want to thank the gentlewoman from Tennessee for her leadership in this hour.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for his remarks. He does such a wonderful job in directing the activities of the Republican Study Committee. You can find out a little bit more about the Republican Study Committee going into Mr. HENSARLING's Web site, House.gov/Hensarling, and enter in ''Republican Study Committee.'' It will take you there to some of our activity and the work we are doing.

We also have a little ''money monitor'' that we use every single week, update it, to show you what the majority in the House is spending, show you how this is going to affect your budget. As he said, the priority is the family budget, to be certain that families have the opportunity to decide how and when they want to spend their money.

As the gentleman from Texas said, unfortunately, since World War II what we have seen is the Federal budget has grown four to five times faster than the family budget. The Federal budget growing four to five times faster than the family budget. That is exactly opposite of what our Founding Fathers would want.

I hope that my colleagues across the aisle will join us, join with us as we fight the growth of this budget, as we fight the growth of spending. When it is a new fiscal year, it is a good time to sit down and review this and say, okay, when we get to the end of the fiscal year, what do we want to look back and say we accomplished? Wouldn't it be a great thing if we were to say this is what we were able to save, this is how we were able to find ways to reduce the size and cut what government spends? So we invite our friend across the aisle to come over and join us and work on this issue.

I would like at this time to yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr.

PRICE), who has been a stalwart in working on the earmark issues, the earmark reform, and a real leader in the push for earmark reform, greater transparency and more fiscal accountability from the House.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Tennessee for yielding and for her leadership on this issue, and I am pleased to join my friend from Texas, as well as my good friend from North Carolina, who is yet to come. I appreciate her bringing great focus to this issue, because, Mr. Speaker, if the casual observer were to give you a description of what they thought was going on here in Washington, they would say, Oh, well, they are being much more responsible. They are not spending as much money as they have in the past. All sorts of wonderful things are happening. They would say so because this new majority has captured what I have called ''Orwellian democracy.'' They are talking the talk, Mr. Speaker, but they are not walking the walk.

So I appreciate my friend from Tennessee for taking the leadership and making certain that we bring focus to what truly is happening here in Washington under this new leadership.

Our good friends on the other side of the aisle, as you say, this is the first day of the new fiscal year. It is a great opportunity to look back and see what has happened over the last fiscal year that they have been in charge and to look forward. But if what has happened to date is any harbinger of what is to come in the future, Mr. Speaker, we have got real problems, because, as you know, Mr. Speaker, not a single appropriations bill of the 12 annual appropriations bills has made it to the President's desk yet, and we are done with the last fiscal year. The new fiscal year has begun today.

They didn't make it to the President's desk because this new majority has picked up right where they left off when they were last in the majority back in 1994 with more taxing and more spending. It is the spending that has our attention tonight, and through so many different areas.

This new majority is interested in spending over $23 billion in new money, new Federal money, and that is just the beginning. That is just the beginning. That is what they have appropriated, not what they have authorized to be spent, which is truly hundreds of billions of dollars. But $23 billion is what separates responsible spending from the new majority, which is why we haven't gotten any of the appropriations bills to the President's desk and signed.

What we are talking about tonight is a portion of all of that, and that is the issue of earmarks, the issue of special projects, the issue of spending that gets into bills, oftentimes late at night and oftentimes behind closed doors; little projects that one Member or two in Congress make certain are inserted into bills. It is an earmark process, it is a special project process that we on our side, when we were in the majority recognized, albeit a little late, but recognized that it had significant potential for huge abuse. Some of our former colleagues, in fact, have different residences right now because of that abuse. They violated the law and were held to account.

So what we did as a majority before the end of last year was to pass a rule that said that all earmarks, all special projects, had to be disclosed. Whether they were in tax bills, whether they were in authorizing bills or whether they were in appropriations bills, every one of them had to be disclosed: who asked for it and how much did they ask for.

Mr. Speaker, that makes a lot of sense, doesn't it? It is called sunshine. Sunshine for earmarks, we called it. It is what the American people desire. It is what the American people deserve. It is what my constituents home in Georgia say that is what we want. We want to know who is asking for these things.

We instituted this program. One would have thought, given the talk that we heard from this new majority, that when they took over that would have been one of those commonsense reforms they would have continued. That would have made a whole lot of sense.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, as you know, that is not what happened. In fact, there was to be no disclosure of individuals who requested earmarks, as my friend from Tennessee knows; and we fought, Republicans fought tooth and nail to make certain that disclosure occurred in appropriations bills before any were passed. This happened in May and June of this year.

Finally, finally, the new majority relented and said, Okay, we will allow for disclosure of who is asking for those earmarks, but that is not true for authorizing bills or tax bills. So what we see in these bills, as my friend from Texas cited, is these projects that get pushed into these bills that have special rewards for certain Members of Congress and their districts. We see it in all sorts of bills.

Mr. Speaker, as you will remember, last week we passed in this House of Representatives the SCHIP bill, the State Children's Health Insurance Program bill. One wouldn't think that you would need to sway Members' votes on that from a majority standpoint. Just let the bill stand or fall on its merits. The issue of those merits is another debate. But what we saw in that bill were earmarks, special projects for Members on the majority side to sway their vote.

Mr. Speaker, that is not what my constituents want; it is not what the American people want.

That might not even be so bad if they were disclosed, if people knew what was happening; if the Member had to stand in this Chamber before his or her colleagues and offer the justification for those programs, if they would stand before their constituents at home and offer justification for those programs.

But one of the things that really gets in the craw of my constituents, and I know those of my good friend from Tennessee, is the arrogance with which this new majority has fashioned these programs, the incredible arrogance, once again, saying one thing and doing another.

As my friend from Tennessee, Mrs. BLACKBURN stated, you can get this kind of information at CQ.com, Mr. Speaker, if you like. You may not have seen it. I would ask you to look it up.

They had an article today, as a matter of fact, asking: ''Do you want to know how your tax dollars are being spent in Washington?'' And the response is: ''Tough (expletive).'' They are quoting a very powerful Member of the majority party.

That is what is so distressing, Mr. Speaker. There is an arrogance about this majority. There is an arrogance that exceeds anything that anybody has ever seen in this Chamber, and there is a culture of excessive Washington spending that I believe the American people are sick and tired of.

So when you see this kind of activity going on in the committees, in the authorizing committees and in the tax committees and in the appropriations committees, where Members of this Congress are attempting to hide from their constituents and from other Members of Congress what is in these bills, who is asking for it, how much money and how do I identify it, and when a reporter in fact asks a very senior Member of the majority party how to find out ''how much money for which projects are in this bill,'' that Member of Congress says, ''Tough (expletive).''

□ 2115

Mr. Speaker, that is not befitting of this House. That is not befitting of the institution that you and I were elected to hold a seat in. That is not befitting of the responsibilities that our constituents desire us to have when we come to this House of Representatives.

So what is the solution? Mr. Speaker, the solution at this point in time for this issue is H. Res. 479. We have a resolution that we would like to get debated on this floor, to have a debate on this floor that says just what we have talked about, to disclose who is asking for these special projects, who is asking for these earmarks, whether it is in appropriation bills, authorizing bills or tax bills. It is a resolution that sits in one of the committees controlled by the majority side. There is an opportunity for all Members of this House to say we ought to be voting on that. It is called a discharge petition. There we have 193 Members who signed to bring that resolution to the floor and debate it and vote on it. It takes 218, which is the majority here. So it is going to take some Democrats. So 193 Members have signed that discharge petition. Not a single Democrat has signed that discharge petition.

So, Mr. Speaker, I challenge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who said during their campaign and even come to the floor of this Chamber and say now: We want earmarks disclosed. We want people to know who has been asking for these special projects. So sign the discharge petition, and it will give us a great opportunity to debate this issue on the floor of the house during a legislative session, during a time when we are talking about adopting legislation and making certain that sunshine is present for earmarks.

So I want to commend my friend from Tennessee for her leadership on this issue, for bringing this issue into focus, and for making certain that we fight day in and day out on behalf of the American taxpayer whose money it is that we are given the responsibility for.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia so very much. We have started our new fiscal year, and the new majority was not able to get one single spending bill to the President's desk, so we do operate on a continuing resolution.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, some of us who want to reduce what the Federal Government spends, holding the spending at last year's level is not such a bad idea. We kind of like doing that. But for a new majority who said we are going to have transparency and openness, to come in and continue to spend more and more and more, not less, but more. More of the taxpayers' money, putting more of it into earmarks.

The gentleman referenced the cq.com article which referenced 7,000 earmarks in eight bills; 5,670 of those earmarks with a combined worth of $4.2 billion linked to individual House Members. And the concern with that, as my constituent said, how much you spend and how you spend it and concern over the earmarks.

You know, we have seen quite a bit of hypocrisy from the new leadership. As the gentleman from Georgia said, we do have House Resolution 479. This is something people can go on and pull up on the Internet and take a look at it. We are trying to get that voted on, forcing the transparency issue and restoring those rules that we passed last year to make certain that an individual's name is there, that you can find what individuals are earmarking, not trying to hide this, but you can find it and know who is asking for what in that budget.

We have 193 signatures on the discharge petition so we can force it out of committee, force it to the floor, and force a debate for the American people so they know what is going to be spent here in the House.

I encourage our Members to take a look at that legislation and to come join us on this first day of the new fiscal year. Again, I encourage our colleagues from the other side of the aisle to embrace the issue of reducing what the Federal Government spends, to embrace transparency in these earmarks, and to work for earmark reform, to join us in continuing to work for earmark reform.

Mr. Speaker, I want to yield to Dr. VIRGINIA FOXX from North Carolina who certainly has conservative credentials and understands so very clearly how to work with earmarks, how to work with Federal budgeting and making certain that we remain true to our conservative principles as we address our Federal budget issues.

Ms. FOXX. I am very grateful to you, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. HENSARLING and Mr. PRICE. I was enjoying listening to you all speak about this issue and helping to educate the American people about what we are dealing with here, particularly as it relates to the numbers that Congressman HENSARLING is so good at doing.

It probably won't surprise anybody that a September Gallup Poll revealed that Americans' trust in the Federal Government is at a low ebb. Today, most Americans trust the Federal Government less than they did during the Watergate scandal. At the same time, a new Reuter's poll found that Congress has an all-time low approval rating of 11 percent.

I am extraordinarily proud to represent the Fifth Congressional District of North Carolina in the Congress. I am not proud that is the way that Americans feel, though, about the Congress of the United States. I think there are many reasons that people feel that way about the Congress. I think that one of the main reasons that people feel that way is because last year the Democrats who ran for office and who became the new majority in this Congress after 12 years made a lot of promises.

Republicans were not perfect in the 12 years they were in control of the Congress. Lots of mistakes were made. Republicans, some Republicans, forgot their way, lost their way and strayed from the conservative principles that got them into the majority.

Democrats promised they would be different. They would run the most bipartisan, most fiscally conservative Congress that had ever been seen. They promised lots and lots of things, and they have broken all of those promises. That's why I think that the attitude toward the American people is so negative toward the Congress these days. They are disappointed.

You know, as children we are brought up to believe the promises that are made to us. I think one of the greatest disappointments people have is when they are promised something, particularly by their elected officials, and then the elected officials break those promises. I think that is what has happened.

What we are seeing here is, time after time, things that the Democrats said in the campaign last year, they have gone back on. I am going to give one quote here from Speaker PELOSI from 9–16–06 at a news conference: ''We have to have the fullest possible disclosure, and it has to be on earmarks in appropriations, in authorizations and in taxation. And it has to be across the board, with no escape hatches.''

In fact, what has happened is the Republicans had to take the Democrats kicking and screaming into revealing what their earmarks were. In fact, I was here on the floor with an amendment on the floor for 22 hours back in June when we were dealing with the homeland security bill to say to the Democrats: It is time you lived up to your promise. You've got to disclose these earmarks.

They had planned not to disclose any of those earmarks until after the bills were passed, and then they were going to publish them in the month of August and let people try to figure out where the earmarks were. So I think, again, a major part of the problem that we are having with the attitude of the American people towards Congress is they are disappointed in us.

Republicans last year passed legislation that made all of our earmarks transparent. There are differences of opinion on whether we should have earmarks or not. I think the Constitution gives us not just the right but the responsibility to spend money the way we think it should be spent through the Congress. That is our responsibility. However, everything should be transparent. Everything should be out there.

If I ask for special project money, I should be proud enough of that money to say where it is going. But not everybody wants to do that. What the Democrats have done is they have hidden their earmarks in legislation. We finally were able to force them into revealing earmarks in appropriations bills, but not even in all appropriations bills have they disclosed them.

Reference has been made tonight to earmarks in the SCHIP bill last week. Every time a bill passes this House practically, we find there are earmarks buried in those bills written in such a way it is very difficult to discern where those earmarks are.

Republicans don't believe in that. We believe if you are going to have earmarks, they need to be transparent, and I think that is the direction in which we should be going. And I believe doing that will help the American people feel better toward what the Congress is doing, and we need to build trust with the American people in order for us to be able to do the work we need to do.

But what the Democrats have been doing is trading earmarks for votes. Again, it seems impossible to think that with the majority they have they would need to do that, but they have been doing it. What they are doing is taking taxpayer money, money that we confiscate from the taxpayers of this country, and then spend it on projects that we think are projects that should be funded. We don't need to be doing that, and we particularly don't need to be doing that unless we are willing to show exactly where we are doing it.

What is happening is, again, we forced them to say we are going to do it on appropriations bills, but they still have not agreed to do them on authorizing bills or on tax bills. But we have to have that. We have to have transparency and truth in all of the legislation that we have passing out of this House.

I support the discharge petition that has been signed. I was one of the first people to come here and sign that discharge petition. It is going to be very difficult, but we are going to be putting the Democrats who call themselves the Blue Dogs, call themselves conservatives, this is going to be a defining moment for them. Are you really a conservative or are you just a tax-and-spend liberal who tries to fool the people in your district that are conservative when you don't put your name on the line to bring these bills up so that we can see exactly how you are going to vote on them. You can talk a good game, but the real point is: Are you willing to vote for this legislation? Are you willing to sign a discharge petition? And so far none have been willing to do that.

We are on the first day of a new fiscal year, and we have a reckoning with the American people. No appropriations bills have passed the Congress this year. We are operating on a continuing resolution. I agree, a continuing resolution that keeps spending at last year's level is better than increasing spending. But the Democratic majority have not lived up to their promises. They have broken every single one. It is time we call them to account.

I want to thank Congresswoman BLACKBURN for leading this hour tonight and for bringing this matter to the public yet again, because I think taking care of this matter of earmarks, taking care of this pork barrel spending is something that the American people want us to do, and it is high time we did it.

□ 2130

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina, and she is precisely on target with her remarks.

A year ago, we had some of the senior House Democrats that joined us Republicans in calling for earmark reform in Congress, saying new transparency rules should apply to all earmarks, not just on appropriations bills, but on tax bills, on authorizing bills, transparency for all earmarks of any kind. And House Republicans later delivered those reforms last year when we were still in the majority.

But now that we have the new Democrat majority, they have retreated from those promises. They've gutted the reforms implemented by the Republicans, and they are denying Members the ability to have a full debate on those earmarks.

As the gentlewoman from North Carolina said, this is so unfortunate that this is what they're doing in the House because the people do expect better from us, and as she said, there were promises that were made and there are promises that have been broken.

I want to yield once again to the gentleman from Texas, our Republican Study Committee chairman, Mr. HENSARLING for a few more comments on the earmark issue.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady for yielding, and earmarks are a very important part of the debate about spending in Washington, D.C. We know that the people are overtaxed and are overtaxed because Washington spends too much.

Now, some people say, well, earmarks are just a small portion of the Federal budget. You know, that may be true, but Mr. Speaker, if you look closely at the numbers today under this Democrat leadership, more money is being spent on congressional earmarks than it is the entirety of our veterans health care system. Now, that's a travesty. This body should be ashamed of that fact, that more money is going to these congressional earmarks than they are going for our veterans health care system. There are still needs in that system, but instead, under this Democrat leadership, the earmark machine continues to roll.

Now, when they became the majority party, they claimed they would do better. In fact, our Speaker, Speaker PELOSI, was quoted as saying she would just as soon do without earmarks; though, I've noticed in the latest copy of Congressional Quarterly Weekly she's in the top 10 out of 435 Members when it comes to digging in the trough for more pork, for more congressional earmarks.

Now, people understand that earmarks too often represent a triumph of seniority over merit. Too often they represent a triumph of secrecy over transparency, and too often they represent a triumph of special interest over the public interest.

Now, again, I'm not here to say that all earmarks are bad, but the process is broken. The Democrats claimed they would clean it up, but instead, they've created huge new loopholes in the system.

If you want to go on a pork lean diet, you just can't cut out the sausage. You've got to cut out the bacon and the ham as well, and so when people hear about appropriation earmarks and authorizing earmarks and tax earmarks, what they need to know is what the majority said they were going to do and what they did are two different things.

So I wish I were eloquent enough to have thought of this myself, but to quote a colleague on the Senate side, Senator TOM COBURN of Oklahoma, Earmarks are the gateway drug to spending addiction. And that's why this fight is so important, and it's so disappointing when the Democrats, in some cases rightfully, criticized the Republicans in the last Congress, but we cleaned up the system. At a bare minimum, we brought transparency and accountability to the system, and they've rolled that back.

Now, it was mentioned earlier on the floor this evening that one of the first acts the Democrats had, they asked the entire House of Representatives to pass massive spending bills. They would hide in them earmarks and only later would they be revealed what the House voted on. Thankfully, under the Republicans, we came to the floor and we brought transparency to the debate, and the Democrats were forced to reverse themselves. So at least on a small portion of earmarks, known as the appropriations earmarks, there is at least a modicum of transparency now.

We need to have that great disinfectant of sunshine brought on to this system because earmarks are the gateway drug to spending addiction. They create the culture of spending, and we'll never be able to protect the family budget from the Federal budget until we deal with that culture of spending.

Earmarks, again by definition, have nothing to do with merit. They take merit, they take competition, they take competitive bidding out of the process, and instead what happens is senior Members, typically in smoke-filled rooms in the back of the Capitol, are somehow able to arrange these special earmarks.

Most recently, under the Democrat leadership, there was something like 30 Members of Congress managed to get a special funding stream for hospitals in their district that no one else, no other hospital in America was able to receive. Again, a triumph of seniority over merit, a triumph of secrecy over transparency.

It has to do with the culture of spending, and if we're going to save the next generation from having a lower standard of living than we have because we are on a pathway right now just with the government we have to double taxes in the next generation, unconscionable, immoral, and yet the Democrat leadership continues with this culture of spending.

The earmark machine is alive and well as represented by the cover story right here, Mr. Speaker, in Congressional Quarterly Weekly. I wish every American could read that to see what is happening in this earmark process.

Every time some Member of Congress comes to the floor requesting a new earmark, guess where that money is coming from, Mr. Speaker. Either they're taking it out of the Social Security trust fund, robbing seniors of the hard-earned money that they put into it, or it's going to be part of this $3,000 a year tax increase that the Democrats put into their budget, the single largest tax increase in American history. Or if they choose not to tax it, there's only one other thing they can do, Mr. Speaker, pass on the debt to our children and grandchildren.

And that's why I appreciate the gentlewoman from Tennessee. I appreciate

all the members of the Republican Study Committee coming to the floor tonight to add more transparency to this earmark debate, because unless we have transparency and accountability, we won't reduce the number of earmarks, and until we reduce the number of earmarks, we won't be able to change the culture of spending and be able to give the next generation greater freedom and greater opportunity than we've enjoyed.

Mr. Speaker, I hope people have watched this debate carefully, and for those who wish to know even more, I would invite them to go to the Web site of the Republican Study Committee that I have the honor to chair, at www.house.gov/hensarling/rsc, and learn a great deal more about the spending patterns of the Federal Government and how often the people's money is squandered and taken away from their future and their American dream.

But there's a better way. There's a better way under conservative principles to make sure that we do not allow the Federal budget to grow beyond the family budgets and be able to pay for it, that we don't pass debt on to future generations and that we reform these earmarks and make the Democrats remain good to their word.

So, again, I thank the gentlewoman from Tennessee for her great leadership in the conservative movement in the House, with her eloquent and articulate voice for her leadership on this subject.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman from Texas, and Mr. Speaker, as we come to the close of our hour that we have had tonight where we put the focus on spending and put the focus on earmarks, I would remind my colleagues that a couple of months back Republicans successfully forced the Democrats to restore two critical GOP reforms from last year, and that was disclosing earmarks and their sponsors before spending bills are voted on on the floor and then the right to challenge those bills on the floor. Those were important changes we made last year, and we forced those to be reinstituted so that we could begin to have some debate. Now, they may try to cover up some of those. We're going to keep digging and playing hide-and-seek and figure out who all of those earmarks belong to.

I want to give you a couple of quotes that tie into this. From the AP, ''Democratic leaders gave in to Republican demands that lawmakers be allowed to challenge individual Member-requested projects from the final version of each appropriations bill.'' That's from June 14.

From June 18 of this year from the Charleston Post-Courier, ''A House compromise achieved Thursday night shows that the worthy cause of earmark reform is far from lost. When the Speaker recently signaled a retreat from her repeated vows to fix that problem, House Republican leaders cried foul.''

We called for that accountability. The cost to the taxpayer for earmarks not being disclosed is hundreds of millions of dollars of additional spending.

I hope that as we start this new year that our colleagues across the aisle will reach out to us, that they will join us in signing the discharge petition on Leader Boehner's bill, H.R. 479, and get the 218 signatures we need so that we can come to this floor so that we can have a debate and ensure the public that all taxpayer-funded earmarks are publicly disclosed and subject to challenge and debate on this floor. The future of our children, the future of this government depends on getting our spending under control.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time this evening. I thank you for the opportunity to address the issue of out-of-control earmarks and the need for earmark reform by this body.

NATIONAL SECURITY AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR). 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, tonight I'd like to share a few thoughts about national security and about American foreign policy. We have many challenges that confront us today, and we live in perplexing times, but we also live in a time when there are great challenges as well as great opportunities, as long as we, the American people, have the courage to live up to our potential as a country that could lead the world into a better way than we have known throughout the history of humankind.

We are indeed in a new millennium, and this new millennium, coupled with the technological capabilities that we have and the vast wealth that is available to the free societies of the world today make it possible that we can build a better world than any human being has ever known. But, again, a lot of this has to fall back on the United States of America and our willingness as Americans to live up to the responsibility that we've been handed.

Ronald Reagan used to say that America has a very special role to play in this world. He used to say that because we Americans are a very special kind of people. We are not of one race. We're not of one religion nor one ethnic group, but instead, we are made up of people who come from every part of this planet and every racial background and worship God in every way that you can imagine. And in fact, there are many atheists who don't worship God at all and have that right, but we've come here to live in freedom and to show the world and to lead the world as a country that's made up of people from all over, that lead the world toward that direction which will enable it to overcome those trials and tribulations, those hatreds, ancient hatreds that have plagued mankind for so long.

And yes, today, the United States is the great superpower, thanks of course a lot to Ronald Reagan who I just talked about. The fact that during the Cold War he was willing to act responsibly to make tough decisions, in a way that ended the Cold War in a very real sense, he oversaw the demise of communism in the Soviet Union. It was Ronald Reagan who everyone knows brought down the Berlin Wall and not George Herbert Walker Bush, George W. Bush's father.

□ 2145

But as the Berlin Wall came down because of the policies of Ronald Reagan, we too must make the right decisions to ensure that the challenges that we face today are overcome in time for the next generation to enjoy greater freedom and to free themselves from the threats of fear that we face today. This will not happen unless we act responsibly, unless we act with courage, but, most importantly, unless we stand up and proclaim that, yes, we are from every nation of the world and every race and every religion, and we are the ones who will promote freedom and liberty on this planet. It is that alliance that we can have with those people in every country, that we have are, as I say, those people within our own society who can reach out to every country with that message, that we are allied with those good and decent people throughout the world who would stand with us to create a world where human freedom and liberty and justice and treating people with respect is something that is commonplace rather than the exception.

Sometimes it's a little difficult to think of a world becoming free, and the expansion of liberty and justice in this world, when we hear the reports that we heard today coming out of Burma. Burma, for these last 4 decades, has lived under tyranny, a horrible, horrible tyranny. It has been a closed society. Burma is a country that is so rich in natural resources that after the Second World War it was thought that Burma would be the breadbasket of Asia, that Burma would indeed be one of the richest countries of Asia.

Instead, Burma has sunk year after year, suffering from tyranny but, as a result of that tyranny, its people have lived in deprivation and in hunger and in want that was never ever thought would happen. No one ever thought that would happen after the Second World War.

But if we have learned anything from Burma and from the other countries that are poor today, it is that poverty is not created by too big a population. Poverty is not created by even a scarcity of resources, natural resources. Poverty is created because of tyranny. Tyranny and dictatorship bring corruption and bring about a strangling of those creative impulses within any society and those productive people within every society that will build, that will create the wealth necessary to uplift the people of any society. Instead,

tyranny drags them down, no matter how prosperous the country could be in terms of its natural resources.

The report today is that Burma had its chance, or perhaps it still does, but that the ruling regime, the gangsters that have run that country for decades, have now unleashed their firepower upon the Buddhist monks and the other people in that society who are calling for a liberalization of the Burmese regime. Apparently, thousands of people have been slaughtered.

In fact, an intelligence officer for the Burmese military has defected, and he now is reporting to Western newspapers that it was his orders, by his commanding officers, to round up hundreds, if not thousands of monks, and put them in trucks and take them into the deep jungle and murder them and dump their bodies in the jungle.

He could not do that, and so he defected. He grabbed his child and ran for the border. It is time for the other military officers in Burma and the police not just to take their children and run because they can't obey an order, but to realize that the orders they are being given by their generals, their so-called generals, are not lawful orders. It is time for the army of Burma to side with the people of Burma.

Any military leaders in Burma today who side with the people will become national heroes and will be renowned and remembered by their people for generations to come. They will receive the gratitude not only of the people of Burma, but to all the good and decent people of the world. The soldiers in Burma and the police in Burma should turn their guns on their generals. They should side with the people of Burma, their fathers, their mothers, their brothers and sisters who want honest government and clean government. They should not be slaughtering their fellow family members who want nothing more than clean, honest, Democratic government.

The regime, as I say, is headed by what they call generals, but these are not generals. These are gangsters who have put on military uniforms. No Burmese soldier owes them any allegiance. These generals, these gangsters, have sold out their country and their countrymen to foreign interests, namely, the Chinese. Yes, the dictatorship in Beijing is treating the government, which means the generals, in Burma as if Burma was a vassal state of China.

In exchange for the $1.5 billion worth of military equipment that China has given Burma, the Burmese gangsters who run that country are permitted, the government in Beijing and the Chinese, to rape the natural resources of the people of Burma, the teakwood, the gems, the uranium, the rich minerals that Burma has are being taken away. They are being eliminated from the future of the people of that country in order to pay for the weapons that repress the people of that country. The Chinese have demanded of the Burmese Government a facility on their ocean so that they can be in a position to outflank India and to interfere with the trade, ocean trade in that part of the world.

All of this is being given away by those leaders, so-called leaders in Burma. They are giving away the rightful legacy of the people of Burma to Chinese outsiders, gangsters in China now in league with gangsters of Burma.

This is the type of relationship that China will have with other countries if we permit them. And it is clear, for those of us who are looking, that the military troops that are now shooting down those who seek democracy in Burma would not be doing so if the Chinese would have objected and sent any message to their Burmese stooges not to shoot and not to commit violence against those who are peacefully advocating change, democratic change in Burma.

Yes, they have a regime. But unlike in other countries, like we faced in another issue which I will talk about in Iraq, in Burma, there is an alternative. There is an alternative to the Burmese dictatorship. Aung San Suu Kyi, a Nobel Prize winner, won with her party elections back in the 1990s when the generals were so deluded that they believed their own propaganda in thinking they were more popular than they were, and they permitted a free election. In that free election, they were wiped out.

The fact is that Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma and the people of Burma went to polls and the people of Burma overwhelmingly supported democratic reform and Aung San Suu Kyi. The election was, of course, immediately discarded; the generals mobilized their troops. Aung San Suu Kyi was sent into House arrest.

Aung San Suu Kyi, I went to Burma and met her several years ago, one of the great heroes of our time, a saintly person, someone who is depending on us like the people of Burma to make a strong stand. If nothing else, the American people must let the people of Burma know that we are on their side, and we must let the ruling junta know that we oppose them and we oppose their oppression of the Burmese people.

This should be clear to them, and we must make sure that those Burmese generals and those military officers who were committing atrocities against the people of Burma realize they are not just murdering their fellow Burmese, they are committing crimes against humanity, and they will be followed and pursued just like the Nazis before them, and they will be held accountable and brought to justice.

I am calling on our government to freeze any assets that any leader of the Burmese Government might have, and our government should be working with other governments to issue arrest warrants for any member of the Burmese Government who travels abroad.

Furthermore, we must join with other nations and suggest that China is not doing its part and is playing a horrible role when it comes to freedom in Burma, as it will play the same role in the Philippines and elsewhere as its strength as a country grows.

China has prevented the United Nations from stopping the atrocities that are now going on, as we speak, in Burma. China has been pulling the strings. The Burmese regime would never have opened fire without permission in Beijing. The people of Burma should know that. The people of the world should know that.

It is time for the people in the United States to quit closing their eyes to the monstrous nature of the Beijing regime. Without that regime, the Burmese dictators, the gangsters in Burma, would not be able to succeed in holding down that population and by brutalizing their people.

I have a piece of legislation before the Congress, and I would ask my colleagues to join me. The legislation is H.R. 610. It is a bill suggesting that we go on record as being in favor of boycotting the upcoming Olympics to be held in China.

There is no reason, while China remains the world's worst human rights abuser, and that includes Burma, I might add, the Chinese are the world's worst human rights abuser, and why should we ever hold an Olympics, which stands for some of the higher aspirations of humankind, why should we ever hold an Olympics in China while it has that type of monstrously dictatorial government. Yes, in China they not only are involved with repressing the people of Burma, but they are deeply involved with criminal acts against their own people, especially against religious believers.

Isn't it fascinating that in Burma, those who would try to lead the country to a better and more Democratic way are those Buddhist monks who now, in a very peaceful way, have presented their case and are answered with an iron fist. They are answered by bullets, they are answered by brutality.

In China, it's the same. We have people of the religious faith, whether they are Muslims in the far reaches of China or whether they are people in Tibet, who have been so brutalized, or other religious believers, Christians, Catholics, and, yes, the Falun Gong, the Falun Gong who have a spiritual belief that is somewhat similar to yoga and somewhat meditation. Yet, this very simple and pacifist religion has been vilified by the communist party of China, and thousands and thousands of Falun Gong practitioners believing in meditation and yoga have been arrested. They are picked up, and they disappear.

The women are raped in prison; they are murdered. Perhaps worst of all, when they disappear, they are sent to prisons, and now we have reports coming out of those prisons that Falun Gong prisoners, people who are pacifists, who are simply believing in meditation and yoga, they are, what, they

are being murdered for their organ parts which are then being sold. Sometimes they sell them to Americans who come there. Falun Gong prisoners are killed right before a doctor, who would then remove the cornea from their eye and sell it to people in the West who spend thousands of dollars to get these body parts.

If there is anything more ghoulish than this, even the Nazis, I don't think, could sink that low, but they sank about as low as one could ever expect. But that is the type of thing that goes on today, and we are giving the Chinese the ability to hold the Olympics, to cover up, to put a good face on this type of monstrous regime.

It is time for the people of the United States Congress to join with me in agreeing that as long as China is doing, number one, what it's doing in Burma and in Darfur, where they are again behind the scenes playing a horrible role, it is time for us to join together and say we will not participate in an Olympics hosted by such a criminal government.

□ 2200

And I am happy to announce today NEIL ABERCROMBIE, my colleague from Hawaii, has joined me in supporting this legislation.

China, of course, even beyond, if it was simply a nondictatorship, there would be major problems with China. China is a predatory nation. China is a nation, for example, it is a nation, as a nation state it's huge, and it has more territorial claims than any other major power in the world. China has been built into a huge power, an economic power, which is now being translated into military power. Even though it has claims against India, huge areas of India and Russia, large areas of the ocean are claimed by China. If one remembers, it was just a few years ago when one of our planes, our surveillance planes flying in international waters was forced down in China, and they claimed that their territorial waters extended way beyond anything the United States would recognize. And all they wanted for us to get the crew back was for us to apologize and to acknowledge that we were in their territory.

What does that mean? They would have murdered these American military personnel in order to assert their claim to huge areas of ocean. In fact, they claim the ocean right up to the shore line of the Philippines. They claim the Sprattley Islands, which are only 100 miles from the Philippines and 500 to 600 miles from China. Huge areas, as I say, of India and of Russia.

This is a country that we have built an economy over these last two decades, we have built from a weak country, we now have created a Frankenstein monster. And when I say ''we,'' I mean the policies of the United States Government have uplifted the economic capabilities of a country that has had no liberalization, no political reform of their dictatorial system.

We were told for 20 years, when I first got here, vote for most favored nation status for China, because if we interact with China economically, they will liberalize. What they need to do is, we have to prove to them not to fear us. This is a reoccurring theme by which people who live in democratic societies fool themselves into thinking that the criminals who run other governments, dictatorships are in some way motivated by the same motives that people are in free societies, that people in free societies will fear someone, thus they will agree to certain expenditures, military expenditures.

The Chinese know exactly who we are and who they are. The Chinese people are not the enemy. Those people in Beijing want to hold on to power, just as the dictators in Burma want to hold on to power. And as we move forward and try to determine what our policy should be in the future, let us note the policies of trying to engage China economically, permitting huge transfers of dollars of capital assets, of technology, of American know-how, of opening our markets, even though their markets were closed, letting them manipulate the currency, letting them get away with policies that shifted wealth from the United States into China. That did not have a positive impact on their government. Their government is still corrupt. Their government is still a government of criminal dictators, people who oppress their people and, as I say, are the worst human rights abusers in the world.

So first and foremost, in dealing with China, as in dealing with Burma, we must differentiate how we treat a dictatorship and how we treat a democratic country. Those leaders in China should not be granted the status of acceptability that goes with hosting the Olympics with our blessing.

Yet, we have, for the last two decades, seen an army of American corporate leaders rushing to China to invest and build factories and in partnership with the Chinese Government set up these factories and create manufacturing units that sell goods back to the United States, putting American workers out of work, selling goods back to the United States that have such poor standards that some of them are made of toxic material, as we've just seen with Mattel Toys, American corporate leaders, who are looking for two, three, maybe 4 years' worth of big profit for themselves, then they can cut and run and go off to their vacationland homes and enjoy themselves.

Those corporate leaders have created a monster with the blessing of the United States Government, because it's been our policy to permit them to transfer the technology, the know-how, and the investment dollars that were needed to build China into what it is today. And today, the Chinese are destroying the manufacturing base of the United States, and we have turned a blind eye to the fact that they manipulate the currency, that they manipulate access to their markets, and that they steal American intellectual property. We have turned a blind eye to that, just as we have turned a blind eye to the fact that the Chinese repress their own people.

And when you talk to these corporate leaders who've gone over there and built this monster, created this Nazi-like government, you ask them, they say, well, you know, when we do more and more economic interaction, we have more business; that's what's going to create more liberalism and reform there. How many times have we heard that? We've been listening to that for 20 years. The first speech I heard about this on the floor for most favored nation status for China was saying just that 20 years ago, yet it never happens. This is called the ''hug a Nazi, make a liberal theory.'' Just get close to them and they won't fear you anymore.

Well, the fact is China has been getting worse since, over these last two decades. It was Tiananmen Square that was the turning point. Up until Tiananmen Square, there was a legitimate reason for us to try to build the economy of China, to create closer ties, because there was an evolution going on, both economically and politically in China. And when it reached a point, at Tiananmen Square, you might say the tipping point, the United States didn't stand up. The Chinese gangsters, just like in Burma, where the military regime had to make its decision, was it going to open fire on their own people, the Chinese Government was facing this decision, and our government did nothing and we said nothing.

It is my contention that had George Herbert Walker Bush, then President of the United States, sent a message to China and to the Chinese leaders that if you murder and try to slaughter the democratic movement in China, we are withdrawing from our economic cooperation that we have agreed to, they would not have done so. And I will tell you tonight, Ronald Reagan would have sent that letter in a millisecond. Ronald Reagan would have been told that the democratic movement was on the verge of success, but they would be slaughtered if they sent the troops in and they need to send a message to the leadership of China saying that we are going to withdraw our economic cooperation with them if they, indeed, mowed down their own people. Reagan would have done it.

This President Bush's father did not; and thus we have had, in the last two decades, not a transition to democracy, but only a growing of their economy, which now gives them greater military capabilities and gives them greater wealth from which to try to undermine the United States.

And, again, as we look at this threat, what is really important is the same thing that's important in Burma and elsewhere, the basic message that we need to understand tonight, that when confronting regimes like China and

Burma, and confronting radical Islam that hates America, let's remember that it is the people who want to live decent lives and live in democracy who are America's greatest allies. The people of China, the people of China are the ones we must ally ourselves with. They need to know that we are on their side. They need to know that the people of the United States and the people of China all long to treat people decently and to live in freedom and justice. The people of China will be on our side if we are on their side. The people of Burma are on our side as long as they know we are on their side. Good and decent people throughout the world know this.

But, instead, we have been so busy building an economic infrastructure that permits wealth to flow to China that we have not bothered to make the demands on the government or to create, to help create the democratic movements within China that would move their government from within.

One example, by the way, of how we have done this is the fact that we have built a conveyor system for trade across our oceans, especially across the Pacific, especially from Shanghai into the ports that I represent, Long Beach and Los Angeles. We have built, with American taxpayer dollars, an incredibly efficient system so that American businessmen could go and set up factories in China, manufacture their goods over there, and ship them to the United States via a system that we've paid for, and come into our market and undercut our own American working people and our own American manufacturers who've stayed at home. We built this for them.

That's why I've long been an advocate of a container fee system so that at least, at the very least, if they're going to send containers filled with goods here, why should we build the ports and spend billions of dollars of infrastructure so that they can very efficiently send containers filled with goods into our society and undercut our own manufacturers?

I have not received the support that I believe that idea justifies. In fact, you see people in both the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, oh poo-pooing that as if it was a tax on the American people. We are not charging those American manufacturers who go to China. We're not. We are subsidizing them in their shipment of goods here to undercut our own people. That makes no sense. But it makes sense to those businessmen. It makes not only sense; it makes dollars for them. And as I say, they make a really quick profit; 4 or 5 years and they're done. They're even done with their own companies after 4 or 5 years. But we are the ones with our manufacturing base destroyed who have to pick up the pieces.

In my own city, in Huntington Beach, where I live, a manufacturer of paint and coatings was the person who sold the coatings to Mattel Toys for Barbie dolls. And in the year 2000, Mattel Toys gave an award to this company as the number one supplier for Mattel Toys. And then Mattel Toys sold out to the Chinese, decided to manufacture everything in China. The Chinese came to this gentleman and said, give us the formula for your coatings, and we will be partners. As soon as he gave them the formula, the Chinese disappeared. They disappeared, and he was never able to get a hold of them. And next thing you know, they aren't using his formula. They're using lead in the formula. And my children at home, who have Barbie dolls now, and all the other American children who have Barbie dolls, may have been infected with lead poisoning because Mattel Toys took the easy way out, along with the other American manufacturers who went to China in order to not pay our own American workers a decent wage.

□ 2215

They want to get a 10 percent or 20 percent higher profit in China rather than paying American workers a decent wage and having half as much profit. Who is paying the price for us? The American people in the end will pay the price as China grows into a massive, economic, and military power, which goes with that.

Of course, during the Clinton years, what did we find? There was not only technology transfer in the economic area, but they had actually polluted our political system as well. Campaign contributions flowing into the American political system and American missile technology leaking out in the other direction. The scandal during the Clinton years of American missile technology being transferred to the Chinese through Hughes and Lorel Corporation is a disgrace. And the evidence of Chinese influence and especially financial support during that election makes that even worse.

But we need to make sure that we bypass our own business leaders, bypass the leadership, the gangsters that run Beijing and Burma and like countries, and go directly to the people throughout the world with our message of hope, democracy, liberty, and justice. The people of Burma and the people of China are our greatest allies. These Burmese soldiers now have to make a decision as to whether they will fire upon their own people. The Chinese people should not permit their children, and they only have one child per family, to go into the military so that it can be used to suppress their own people.

This is not unlike the war we fight today, not with Burma or China but, of course, with radical Islam. China is not an enemy today. China is an adversary today, a very powerful adversary. We are, in fact, making that adversary so powerful, it's becoming frightening. But we are at war with radical Islam. We are at war with radical Islam. And again let me note that when I say that, I emphasize that Muslims throughout the world who do not hate America, Muslims throughout the world who love their faith, as they should, which it has meant very much to their lives and over a billion people, Muslims throughout the world who know that their prayer time and their other religious ceremonies and beliefs have meant a lot to their life and have added great depth to their life, those people are not our enemies. Those people are our friends.

We believe in freedom of religion. We respect other people's religion. We ask only that other people respect our religion. And, by the way, our respect for religion doesn't just go to other faiths, but it goes to people who don't believe in God at all, who don't choose to worship.

Our Founding Fathers did not come here, as some of my conservative friends say, to create a Christian Nation. We came here to create a Nation where freedom of religion was respected and that we acknowledged God but we did not in any way want to force those beliefs on those who were nonbelievers.

It is right that the people of Islam worship the way they choose, whether here or abroad. Those people who only want that freedom and are willing to grant that to others are our friends. But a radical fringe which hates everything we stand for has now arisen in the Muslim world.

Let me note that during the 1920s we had terrorists and in years past we had terrorists who were Christians. In 1920, the biggest political force in this country was the Ku Klux Klan. The Ku Klux Klan, as we know, carried around banners with crosses and declaring their love of Christianity. And the fact is that Christian churches in the South did not condemn the Ku Klux Klan, as they should have. The good and decent people of the American South, when they knew that these Klansmen were murdering people, they were terrorizing the black population, murdering them, hanging them, all kinds of torture that was going on in our country against our own black population, the Christian people did not stand up in those areas when they knew that the Klansmen were right there in church with them.

Well, that was a hundred years ago. Our Muslim brothers we are expecting to do better than we did when it came to the Klan because al Qaeda is the Ku Klux Klan of Islam. Al Qaeda are the hate mongers. Al Qaeda are those who would bring people who believe in God and put them at war with one another rather than trying to bring them together in peace and brotherhood.

In Afghanistan after 9/11, the United States went to Afghanistan and allied itself with moderate Muslims. During the 1990s, there was a mistake by this government just as we made a mistake with China. We tried to work with the Taliban. In fact, during the Clinton administration, the Taliban came into

being. And, in fact, it is very easy to see the historical record that the Clinton administration reached an agreement with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, and our government was involved in creating the Taliban.

During that time period, I was a Member of Congress, and because I had spent time in Afghanistan during the war against the Soviets, I spent considerable time in Afghanistan working with those people who would oppose the Taliban. I begged the powers that be that they support King Zahir Shaw, a moderate Muslim, a man who was much beloved by all Afghans, to support his return. And, instead, our government, under Madeleine Albright and all the others of the Clinton administration, did what? They decided to go along with the Saudis and to go along with the Pakistanis in creating a religious force, that they said because the people of Afghanistan are devout, this is what will draw them together, by supporting religious fanatics.

I told them at the time it was ridiculous. I told them that it would backfire on them during the war with the Soviets. The Pakistanis had passed on aid to Hikmatyar Gulbadin, a horrendous terrorist who was, again, a radical Islamist. But there were many others whom we helped during the war against the Soviets. I was there with them. And whether it was Abdul Haq or Commander Massoud or others like them, there were many others, Galani's forces and others, who were very, very mainstream Islamic people who were not anti-Western but were just trying to free their own country from the atheistic dictatorship of the communists, and we helped them. But after that, as we walked away, when the Soviets walked away, we made this deal with the Saudis and with the Pakistanis to let them finance the reconstruction and determine who would be in power in Afghanistan, and that is when the Taliban was born, as I say, at that time over my serious objections, and I spent 5 years going in and out of Afghanistan meeting with those people who would later become the Northern Alliance.

So as we look back on Afghanistan now, years after the Taliban has been defeated and al Qaeda was driven out of that country, let us remember the success that we had was because we went to the people.

There is a mistaken belief that we are not ''winning'' in Iraq because we didn't have enough boots on the ground. We didn't send in enough American troops. Well, in fact, we had probably 100 boots on the ground when Kabul was liberated from the Taliban and al Qaeda forces in the aftermath of 9/11. In fact, that liberation of Afghanistan was accomplished with very few American soldiers on the frontlines. In fact, the people of Afghanistan liberated themselves, and we did not liberate them. And we went into that war, and we reached agreements with those leaders, tribal leaders. They are often called warlords, but that was the Northern Alliance. And it was the Northern Alliance and those good people in Afghanistan who worked with me in the Mujahideen to fight against the Soviets. Those are the people who drove out the Taliban.

When we went into Iraq, it was a different story, unfortunately. Mistakes have been made, yes. Mistakes have been made in Iraq. There is no doubt. We sent in a military force, a strong military force, and they did their job. What did not happen was the political job that was necessary to complement the fact that we had dispossessed Saddam Hussein of his military might. Instead of making agreements as we did in Afghanistan with the tribal leaders, we did not, as we did in Afghanistan, reach out to the local powers that be that were moderate Muslims, and there are many moderate Muslims in Iraq. What we instead did was tell the people of Iraq that we were going to rebuild their entire country and that, for example, there would be no room. Mr. Bremer is quoted as saying to tribal leaders that there would be no room in a modern democratic Iraq for tribalism. Thus in our effort to make the decision for those people, rather than going to the people and their leaders ourselves, we have put ourselves in what has been a horrific quagmire.

How we extricate ourselves from Iraq will go a long way in defining what type of world my children live in and, in fact, what kind of world the young people who are with us today will have. If we try to pull out precipitously and look like we are running away, if we look like we are surrendering, if it looks like we have been defeated, we will embolden those people in Iraq who hate everything about the United States, and we will embolden the radical Islamists throughout the world. There is no doubt about that. That is not to say, again, that we should not be admitting our mistakes and doing what we can to extricate ourselves in a responsible way. That is why I have been supporting General Petraeus and his efforts to have a phased withdrawal, a responsible phased withdrawal, that will then permit those elements within Iraq that do not want to be ruled by radical Islam or those elements that would like to be friends of the West to give them a chance to step up. If we are viewed as retreating and abandoning those people, there will be a heavy price to pay.

And let us admit that with the mistakes that I have already mentioned, it is a tempting target for people involved in our political system to use what is going on in Iraq as a political vehicle in the upcoming elections.

Now, the people here in Congress, we have to search our souls to make sure what we are doing is based not on political motives but instead is based on what is the long-term interest of the people of the United States.

I go down and welcome home the troops, the reservists and National Guard, all the time that come in and out and leave Iraq or are coming back from Iraq, and I welcome them back, and I know, because I have supported this effort, that I must pay special attention. But let us note that we have to be doing this and looking at this and analyzing what is happening in a nonpolitical way. I am afraid that there are some forces at play that would try to politicize what is going on in Iraq.

Those people who oppose our efforts to have a phased withdrawal, would like immediate withdrawal from Iraq, those people who see America as the big problem in the world instead of as the world's only hope, those people cannot attack American soldiers because they realize that all Americans are proud of the men and women who are defending our country in uniform. But what we are witnessing now is what I would consider a maneuver on the part of those who, if they could, would attack American military troops. What they are doing is attacking American security companies who have been brought to Iraq to try to supplement our war effort there. By and large these American security companies are made up of people who have perhaps 10 times the experience of our own soldiers. American security companies like Blackwater, for example, hire on special forces and other extraordinarily well-trained American military personnel when they retire from the military so that their skills can still be put to use in the defense of our country and in the promotion of human freedom.

□ 2230

Their personnel are essential to the success of any of our military goals, but they're also essential to the success of a phased pull-out of Iraq. Otherwise, there will be no buffer. Otherwise, there is no means for us to have the type of withdrawal with success. Otherwise, it is a retreat.

Blackwater, as I say, has been working now, I think, since 1997. It's run by a young man named Eric Prince. He inherited his money. And the fact is he could have done a lot of other things with his money and made a lot more money. He could have gone to China and made 10 times the profit that he makes by creating a security company that would work side by side with American forces and American diplomats overseas to try to offer protection to our country and to those State Department and other people who are working in the United States Government overseas. He could have gone and made much more money.

Instead, now he's being called, I've seen him called ''murderer,'' I've seen the people in Blackwater being called ''thugs,'' when in fact almost every one of these people who work for Blackwater, like Eric himself, are former Special Forces people. Eric was a Navy SEAL for 5 years. And then, rather than just living the life of luxury that he could have done when he

inherited his money, he decided to do something good for his country. Those people who are retiring from our military and have good pensions, yes, they could live the life of Riley; they could go fishing every day. But, instead, they are putting their skills to use by putting their lives in danger for us. Yet, they are being attacked unmercifully by people who just basically oppose the fact that this President got us involved in Iraq in the first place.

We should not be taking it out on the people of Blackwater. Those men and women who are in Blackwater are very honorable people. And not to say they haven't made some mistakes, just as our own military personnel have made mistakes; but, in fact, Blackwater probably has a better record than our own military because they are, as I say, they are people with vastly more experience than that of our own soldiers and sailors and airmen.

So tomorrow there will be a hearing on Blackwater. I would hope that Blackwater and the people of Blackwater, those people who have made enormous contributions to the safety and security of our operations in Afghanistan and in Iraq, that they are not brutalized, that they're treated fairly, and that we do not permit the politicalization of this fight with radical Islam and this effort that now goes on in Iraq to be used in a way that will, number one, hurt brave people who are risking their lives for us, but at the same time, undermine our efforts for the long-term security of our country so that we will have a phased withdrawal that will give the good people of this world a chance.

We need to give the people of Burma a chance. We need to give the people of China a chance. We need to give the people of Iraq a chance. They are our greatest allies.

The people of the world who would live in democracy and see America as a positive force and, fortunately, many of them see America as a positive force, yet many people here in the United States for some reason do not share that opinion of their own country and believe that the United States is a negative force in the world. And that's what motivates many of them in their actions when it comes to Blackwater and it comes to this war.

Finally, let me note this: this President has made a lot of mistakes. And I have supported the President when he has been right; I have been opposed to him when he's wrong. This President seems to be headstrong, and I think that's a pleasant way of putting it. That does not mean that all the decisions that he has made have been wrong. We need to support him when he's right; we need to try to work with him and try to steer American policy when he is wrong. The idea of a phased withdrawal from Iraq is right.

But this President did not get us in this war with radical Islam. This war that we are in with radical Islam was created in the previous administration. We need to document that. It needs to be documented what the policies of the Clinton administration were towards the Taliban. I will be giving a speech in the next few weeks again detailing that, about how I pled, as a senior member of the International Relations Committee, for the documents from Madeleine Albright to prove what our policy was towards the Taliban; why it was that we were giving our foreign aid to the Taliban in radical Islamic areas of Afghanistan and giving short shrift to Commander Massoud and the pro-Western Muslims in Afghanistan.

We need to document these things. We need to document whether or not bin Laden was someone who could have been handled, if we were courageous enough to do it, 5 years, 10 years before 9/11.

We know now that some of the documents that the 9/11 Commission was supposed to read were not available to them. We had a commission that went to study why we had 9/11, but yet we know today that the National Security Adviser to President Bill Clinton stole documents out of the National Archives to prevent that commission, the 9/11 Commission, from seeing certain information that would be relevant to the war on terrorism. Part of his agreement, Sandy Berger, the National Security Adviser to President Clinton, when his theft was discovered, he volunteered, as part of his plea agreement, to give a lie detector test to the Justice Department if so requested to determine exactly what were the documents that he stole from the National Archives.

At the beginning of this year, a majority of Republican Members of this body signed a letter to the Justice Department, under the leadership of TOM DAVIS, asking the Justice Department to give that polygraph test, after so many years, I think it's been 4 years, it could be 3. For 3 years Sandy Berger has not been given the polygraph test to see exactly what documents he stole from the National Archives.

It is time for the American people to demand that we know what caused 9/11, and we will not know that until Sandy Berger, the National Security Adviser to the Clinton administration, is given a polygraph test, which won't happen until the Department of Justice gives that polygraph test and demands it.

Today, I am calling upon the new Attorney General to put Sandy Berger on the line, to give him a polygraph test and determine what documents he stole from the National Archives and to give us a full accounting of what led up to 9/11, what happened during the Clinton administration that was so heinous that Sandy Berger, the National Security Adviser to the President, would risk everything, would risk his reputation and go into the National Archives and steal documents.

Could it be that during the Clinton years that, for example, there was evidence of technology transfers and Chinese involvement in our political system? Could it be that a Gorelick memo, who at that time the lady was an important player in the Clinton administration, she had a mandate that domestic and international intelligence groups and law enforcement could not work together, could that have something to do with a Chinese connection?

What did Sandy Berger steal from the National Archives? We need to know. We should not be ignored. If this was a Republican, I can tell you that every newspaper in the country would be clamoring until we found out exactly what documents were stolen from the National Archives by the President's National Security Adviser.

So, tonight, I hope that my colleagues would join me, number one, in telling the people of Burma we're on their side; and joining me in calling for a boycott of the Beijing Olympics; of supporting a phased withdrawal, responsible withdrawal from Iraq; supporting our people both in uniform and in our protective companies like Blackwater, making sure we do not mistreat them; and finally, join me in calling for the truth in what Sandy Berger, the National Security Adviser for Bill Clinton, stole from the Archives. He needs to be given his polygraph test. The Justice Department needs to act.

So with those requests for my fellow colleagues, I now yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. CARSON (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today and until October 15 on account of convalescence.

Mr. CONYERS (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today.

Mr. KIND (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of family events.

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. JONES of Ohio) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HALL of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HARE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MICHAUD, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today and October 2, 3, and 4.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Ms. Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled bills and joint resolutions of the House of the following title, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 976. An act to amend title XXI of the Social Security Act to extend and improve the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3625. An act to make permanent the waiver authority of the Secretary of Education with respect to student financial assistance during a war or other military operation or national emergency.

H.R. 3668. An act to provide for the extension of transitional medical assistance (TMA), the abstinence education program, and the qualifying individuals (QI) program, for other purposes.

H.J. Res. 43. Joint resolution increasing the statutory limit on the public debt.

H.J. Res. 52. Joint resolution making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2008, and for other purposes.

BILLS PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House reports that on September 26, 2007 she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bills.

H.R. 3375. To extend the trade adjustment assistance program under the Trade Act of 1974 for 3 months.

H.R. 3580. To amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to revise and extend the user-fee programs for prescription drugs and for medical devices, to enhance the postmarket authorities of the Food and Drug Administration with respect to the safety of drugs, and for other purposes.

Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House reports that on September 28, 2007 she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bills.

H.J. Res. 43. Increasing the statutory limit on the public debt.

H.J. Res. 52. Making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2008, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3668. To provide for the extension of transitional medical assistance (TMA), the abstinence education program, and the qualifying individuals (QI) program, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 40 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, October 2, 2007, at 9 a.m., for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

3520. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations — received September 4, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

3521. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Suspension of Community Eligibility [Docket No. FEMA-7983] received September 4, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

3522. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Suspension of Community Eligibility [Docket No. FEMA-7985] received September 4, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

3523. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Medical Use of Byproduct Material — Minor Corrections and Clarifications (RIN: 3150-AI14) received September 4, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3524. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, OFCCP, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's final rule — Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination Obligations of Contractors and Subcontractors Regarding Disabled Veterans, Recently Separated Veterans, Other Protected Veterans, and Armed Forces Service Medal Veterans (RIN: 1215-AB46) received August 9, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3525. A letter from the Associate Administrator, Office of Federal Procurement Policy, Office of Management and Budget, transmitting the Office's final rule — Cost Accounting Standards Board (CAS) Changes to Acquisition Thresholds — received August 6, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3526. A letter from the Associate Administrator, Office of Federal Procurement Policy, Office of Management and Budget, transmitting the Office's final rule — Cost Accounting Standards Board; Time and Material and Labor Hour (T&M/LH) Contracts for Commercial Items — received August 6, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3527. A letter from the Acting Director Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; Fisheries Off West Coast States; Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery; Biennial Specifications and Management Measures; Inseason Adjustments; Correction [Docket No. 060824226-6322-02] (RIN: 0648-AV69) received September 4, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

3528. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries Off West Coast States; Highly Migratory Species Fisheries [Docket number: 070718330-7330-02; I.D. 022807F] (RIN: 0648-AU73) received September 4, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

3529. A letter from the Acting Chief, Regulatory Management Division, Office of the Executive Secretariat, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Removal of Temporary Adjustment of the Immigration and Naturalization Benefit Applications and Petition Fee Schedule [Docket No. USCIS-2007-0040; CIS No. 2417-07] (RIN: 1615-AB61) received September 4, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

3530. A letter from the Director, Regulations & Ruling Div., Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Firearms Excise Tax; Exemption for Small Manufacturers, Producers, and Importers [T.D. TTB-62] (RIN: 1513-AB25) received September 12, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3531. A letter from the Director, Regulations & Rulings Div., Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Materials and Processes Authorized for the Treatment of Wine and Juice (2004R-517P) [T.D. TTB-61; Re: T.D. TTB-17] (RIN: 1513-AA96) received September 12, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3532. A letter from the SSA Regulations Officer, Social Security Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Amendments to the Quick Disability Determination Process [Docket No. SSA 2007-0032] (RIN: 0960-AG47) received September 17, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3533. A letter from the Acting Regulations Officer, Social Security Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Technical Updates to Applicability of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Reduced Benefit Rate for Individuals Residing in Medical Treatment Facilities [Docket No. SSA-2006-0103] (RIN: 0960-AF99) received September 12, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); 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. RANGEL: Committee on Ways and Means. H.R. 3648. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude discharges of indebtedness on principal residences from gross income, and for other purpose; with an amendment (Rept. 110–356). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

REPORTED BILL SEQUENTIALLY REFERRED

Under clause 2 of rule XII, bills and reports were delivered to the Clerk for printing, and bills referred as follows:

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi: Committee on Homeland Security. H.R. 2830. A bill to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal year 2008, and for other purposes; with an amendment; referred to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, and Judiciary for a period ending not later than October 15, 2007, for consideration of such provisions of the bill and amendment as fall within the jurisdiction of those committees pursuant to clauses 1(f) and 1(k), rule X (Rept. 110–338, Pt. 2). Ordered to be printed.

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 New York (for himself and Mrs. LOWEY):

H.R. 3707. A bill to authorize the establishment of a memorial to all victims of terrorism; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself and Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 3708. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the limitations on the amount excluded from the gross estate with respect to land subject to a qualified conservation easement; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. FILNER:

H.R. 3709. A bill to authorize inter-tribal transfers of authority in leases between the Ewiiaapaayp Band of Kumeyaay and the Viejas Band of Kumeyaay, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. HOLDEN:

H.R. 3710. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish an Office of Correctional Public Health; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. HOLDEN (for himself and Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia):

H.R. 3711. A bill to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to eliminate the matching requirement for certain bulletproof armor vest purchases under the matching grant program for bulletproof armor vests; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. KAPTUR:

H.R. 3712. A bill to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 1716 Spielbusch Avenue in Toledo, Ohio, as the ''James M. & Thomas W.L. Ashley Customs Building and United States Courthouse''; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mrs. MALONEY of New York (for herself, Mr. NADLER, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, and Mr. SHAYS):

H.R. 3713. A bill to ensure that the courts of the United States may provide an impartial forum for claims brought by United States citizens and others against any railroad organized as a separate legal entity, arising from the deportation of United States citizens and others to Nazi concentration camps on trains owned or operated by such railroad, and by the heirs and survivors of such persons; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PENCE:

H.R. 3714. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to repeal restrictions relating to electioneering communications, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. SPACE (for himself and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

H.R. 3715. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow long-distance rural commuters a deduction during periods when the local price of gasoline exceeds $3 per gallon; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. WALSH of New York:

H.R. 3716. A bill to amend the Consumer Product Safety Act to require independent safety certification of children's products, to increase the Consumer Product Safety Commission's inspection capability for imported products, and to prohibit hazardous imports based on manufacturing site, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. UDALL of Colorado (for himself, Ms. HOOLEY, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. STARK, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. DOYLE, Ms. WATSON, and Ms. CLARKE):

H. Con. Res. 221. Concurrent resolution honoring all Americans serving in the Armed Forces of the United States and condemning the attack by broadcaster Rush Limbaugh on the integrity and professionalism of some of those Americans; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. PENCE (for himself and Mr. WALDEN of Oregon):

H. Res. 694. A resolution providing for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2905) to prevent the Federal Communications Commission from repromulgating the fairness doctrine; to the Committee on Rules.

By Mr. CAMPBELL of California:

H. Res. 695. A resolution expressing the support for designation of a ''National Fire Fighter Appreciation Day'' to honor and celebrate the fire fighters of the United States; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. COSTA (for himself and Mr. GRIJALVA):

H. Res. 696. A resolution expressing gratitude for the foreign guest laborers, known as Braceros, who worked in the United States during the period from 1942 to 1964; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. KAGEN (for himself, Mr. TAYLOR, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. SHULER, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. KIND, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. PETRI, Mr. WICKER, Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin, Mr. OBEY, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. SPACE, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. MITCHELL, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. MEEK of Florida, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. BACA, Mr. ELLSWORTH, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. HOLT, Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas, Ms. BEAN, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. KLEIN of Florida, Mr. LAMPSON, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. PUTNAM, Mr. ALTMIRE, Mr. COSTA, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MICA, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. DICKS, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. WELCH of Vermont, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. HODES, Mr. SALAZAR, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. ACKERMAN, Ms. HARMAN, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. HARE, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. WEINER, Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. OLVER, Mr. HALL of New York, Mr. NADLER, Ms. SUTTON, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. CARNEY, and Mr. PICKERING):

H. Res. 697. A resolution commending Green Bay Packers quarterback Brett Favre for establishing a National Football League record for most career touchdown passes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. WALSH of New York (for himself and Mr. FARR):

H. Res. 698. A resolution commemorating the 200th anniversary of Congressional Cemetery; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 111: Mr. MCDERMOTT.
H.R. 138: Mr. DREIER and Mr. SESSIONS.
H.R. 271: Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California.
H.R. 280: Mr. GORDON.
H.R. 281: Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. MITCHELL, Ms. DELAURO, and Mr. COURTNEY.
H.R. 369: Mr. UDALL of Colorado.
H.R. 396: Mr. GOODE.
H.R. 621: Mr. KIRK.
H.R. 676: Mr. LANTOS.
H.R. 684: Mr. GORDON.
H.R. 718: Mr. BAKER.
H.R. 726: Mr. BOSWELL.
H.R. 741: Mr. LATHAM.
H.R. 743: Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. GALLEGLY, Mr. TIAHRT, and Mr. CANTOR.
H.R. 758: Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. BOREN, Ms. NORTON, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. RANGEL, and Mr. NADLER.
H.R. 767: Mr. LOBIONDO.
H.R. 782: Mr. GOODLATTE.
H.R. 891: Mr. LANTOS, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, and Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1029: Mr. CANTOR, Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina, and Mr. PASTOR.
H.R. 1043: Mr. SERRANO.
H.R. 1055: Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 1073: Mr. MCDERMOTT.
H.R. 1102: Mr. MILLER of Florida.
H.R. 1108: Mr. EDWARDS and Mr. ANDREWS.
H.R. 1166: Mr. GORDON.
H.R. 1228: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.
H.R. 1229: Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida.
H.R. 1236: Mr. SNYDER, Mr. YARMUTH, and Mr. MATHESON.
H.R. 1264: Mrs. BACHMANN.
H.R. 1280: Mr. LYNCH.
H.R. 1329: Mr. MCCAUL of Texas.
H.R. 1346: Mr. WELCH of Vermont.
H.R. 1409: Mr. TERRY.
H.R. 1424: Mr. HILL.
H.R. 1514: Mrs. DAVIS of California.
H.R. 1553: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.
H.R. 1609: Mr. FORBES, Mr. WAMP, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. SHERMAN, and Mr. SNYDER.
H.R. 1619: Mr. LEVIN.
H.R. 1667: Mr. FARR.
H.R. 1707: Mr. MORAN of Kansas.
H.R. 1738: Mr. GERLACH, Mr. CALVERT, and Mr. GALLEGLY.
H.R. 1828: Mr. GORDON.
H.R. 1843: Mr. COSTA and Mr. CUMMINGS.
H.R. 1886: Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.
H.R. 1919: Ms. DEGETTE and Mr. SESTAK.
H.R. 1992: Mr. LIPINSKI.
H.R. 2074: Mr. KIRK and Mr. CONYERS.
H.R. 2112: Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 2169: Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. NADLER, Mr. WEINER, and Mr. FILNER.
H.R. 2185: Mr. BAIRD.
H.R. 2205: Mrs. MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 2266: Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. ISRAEL, and Ms. KILPATRICK.
H.R. 2417: Mr. NADLER.
H.R. 2425: Mr. SHULER.
H.R. 2452: Mr. CAPUANO and Ms. BALDWIN.
H.R. 2478: Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California.
H.R. 2490: Mr. SPACE.
H.R. 2596: Mr. DELAHUNT.
H.R. 2597: Mr. JONES of North Carolina.
H.R. 2620: Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.
H.R. 2651: Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 2668: Mr. ROTHMAN.
H.R. 2706: Mr. CAMPBELL of California.
H.R. 2711: Mr. HAYES and Mr. EVERETT.
H.R. 2792: Mrs. DAVIS of California.
H.R. 2828: Mr. CONYERS, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. NADLER, and Mr. MCCAUL of Texas.
H.R. 2832: Mr. MCNULTY.
H.R. 2840: Mr. TOWNS and Mr. ABERCROMBIE.
H.R. 2851: Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. ALTMIRE, and Ms. BALDWIN.
H.R. 2852: Mr. PASTOR.
H.R. 2878: Mr. GOODE, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, and Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California.
H.R. 2903: Mr. GORDON.
H.R. 2933: Mrs. BLACKBURN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and Mr. BURTON of Indiana.

H.R. 2954: Mr. BROUN of Georgia.
H.R. 3029: Mr. LEVIN.
H.R. 3140: Mr. KUHL of New York.
H.R. 3148: Mr. PENCE.
H.R. 3167: Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. KAGEN, and Mr. KENNEDY.
H.R. 3176: Mr. CONAWAY.
H.R. 3195: Mr. KLEIN of Florida, Mr. MURTHA, Mr. WEXLER, and Ms. LEE.
H.R. 3232: Mr. SHULER, Mr. ROSKAM, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. SCHIFF, Mrs. EMERSON, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. DICKS, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. RADANOVICH, Ms. HOOLEY, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. PASTOR, Mr. MAHONEY of Florida, Mr. WALDEN of Oregon, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. THOMPSON of California, and Mr. POMEROY.
H.R. 3256: Mr. GORDON.
H.R. 3262: Mr. MARSHALL.
H.R. 3329: Mrs. TAUSCHER.
H.R. 3341: Mr. MILLER of Florida.
H.R. 3360: Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 3402: Mr. HIGGINS.
H.R. 3412: Mr. SMITH of Nebraska.
H.R. 3432: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and Mr. SERRANO.
H.R. 3446: Mr. KILDEE, Mr. KNOLLENBERG, Mr. MCCOTTER, and Mr. ROGERS of Michigan.
H.R. 3466: Ms. SUTTON.
H.R. 3467: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.
H.R. 3498: Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California and Ms. SUTTON.
H.R. 3499: Ms. DEGETTE and Mrs. CAPPS.
H.R. 3512: Mr. HARE.
H.R. 3533: Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. COSTA, Ms. WATERS, and Ms. CLARKE.
H.R. 3543: Mr. FILNER.
H.R. 3544: Mr. SIRES, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. BOUCHER.
H.R. 3558: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. BACHUS, and Ms. BALDWIN.
H.R. 3583: Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. CAMP of Michigan, Mr. GINGREY, Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Mr. SOUDER, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. KUHL of New York, Mr. GOODE, Mr. LINDER, Mr. LUCAS, and Mr. BROWN of South Carolina.
H.R. 3584: Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. HOBSON, Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, Mr. CRENSHAW, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, and Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.
H.R. 3616: Mrs. BLACKBURN and Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky.
H.R. 3639: Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California and Mr. BERMAN.
H.R. 3648: Mr. GORDON, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. HOLT, and Ms. GIFFORDS.
H.R. 3660: Mr. KAGEN.
H.R. 3663: Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. MCDERMOTT, and Mr. DEFAZIO.
H.R. 3674: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, and Mr. DINGELL.
H.R. 3675: Mr. MCKEON.
H.R. 3691: Mr. TOWNS.
H.R. 3695: Mr. FILNER and Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 3703: Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts.
H. Con. Res. 122: Mr. HODES.
H. Con. Res. 137: Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida.
H. Con. Res. 197: Ms. LEE, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. REYES, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. FILNER, Mr. COSTA, Mr. HONDA, Mr. STARK, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. ORTIZ, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. FORTUÑO, Mr. HARE, Ms. NORTON, Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. SPRATT, and Mr. SIRES.
H. Con. Res. 198: Mr. FATTAH.
H. Con. Res. 200: Mr. KENNEDY and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.
H. Con. Res. 204: Mrs. MYRICK.
H. Res. 111: Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. LEVIN, and Mr. SHUSTER.
H. Res. 237: Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas and Mr. SCHIFF.
H. Res. 282: Mr. MCCOTTER, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. MOLLOHAN, and Mr. GORDON.
H. Res. 356: Mr. STARK.
H. Res. 373: Mr. SHERMAN.
H. Res. 415: Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California.
H. Res. 448: Mr. TOWNS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. GORDON, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. BOYD of Florida, Mr. TANNER, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and Ms. DEGETTE.
H. Res. 537: Mr. HONDA.
H. Res. 573: Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. KIRK, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, and Mr. FATTAH.
H. Res. 576: Ms. SLAUGHTER.
H. Res. 610: Ms. KILPATRICK.
H. Res. 616: Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD.
H. Res. 620: Mr. ROTHMAN.
H. Res. 630: Mr. ETHERIDGE.
H. Res. 676: Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. POE, Mr. MILLER of Florida, and Mr. CALVERT.
H. Res. 679: Mr. CARNAHAN.
H. Res. 680: Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. POE, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. SHIMKUS, and Mr. BUYER.
H. Res. 691: Mr. COOPER and Mr. SPACE.

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 amendment to be offered by Representative CONYERS or a designee to H.R. 2740, the MEJA Expansion and Enforcement Act of 2007, 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.

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 153 WASHINGTON, MONDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2007 No. 147

Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JIM WEBB, a Senator from the State of Virginia.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, teach us the mystery of life. Help us to not be victims but victorious in the living of our days. Lead us to a place of understanding, in spite of sorrow and pain. Make us more than conquerors, because You love us.

Today instruct our lawmakers as they seek to do Your will. As they perform their daily tasks, guide their priorities. Show them Your truth so that they will be instruments of Your purposes. When their light of hope is threatened, renew them with faith in Your providence and power. Transform their lives from a hurried succession of days into a walk with You that brings enduring peace.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JIM WEBB 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, October 1, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JIM WEBB, a Senator from the State of Virginia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the prayer, the Pledge, and whatever remarks the two leaders make not count against morning business, that morning business be a full hour.

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following the period of morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the Department of Defense authorization bill. Last week cloture was invoked on the substitute amendment. Approximately 200 amendments have been cleared or voted upon. There are lots of them still pending. Last week Senators LEVIN and WARNER worked their way through some of these. I don't know how many votes we will have this evening on germane amendments, but we will know before long. Any amendments that might be offered have to be germane and have to be timely filed. Currently pending is a first and second-degree amendment relating to contracting. Any votes today will begin around 5:30. It is too early to indicate how many votes will take place. Once action on DOD authorization has been concluded, it is my intention to have the Senate consider the DOD appropriations bill, to be followed by the consideration of Commerce-Justice-Science. Then we have a circuit court judge and several district court judges we plan on working on this week.

We have a lot to do. Hopefully we can finish quickly. We have next week the work period at home. Because of our being here for the time we are, having the weeks sometimes longer than what we would like, I have a lot to do at home. I am sure all other 99 Senators have as well.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Mr. REID. Freedom of speech is one of the country's most cherished values. Nothing sets us farther apart from the countries and regimes we oppose than our belief that everyone's opinion matters—everyone's—and that everyone has a right to express it. That is why when we hear things on the radio and other places that are offensive, by and large we tolerate them. But last week Rush Limbaugh went way over the line. While I respect his right to say anything he likes, his unpatriotic comments cannot be ignored. During his show last Wednesday, Limbaugh was engaged in one of his typical rants. This one was unremarkable and indistinguishable from his usual dribble which has been steadily losing listeners for years, until he crossed that line by calling our men and women in uniform who oppose the war in Iraq ''phony soldiers.'' This comment was so beyond the pale of decency we can't leave it alone. Yet he followed it up with denials and an attack on Congressman JACK MURTHA, who was a 37-year active member of the Marine Corps, a combat veteran.

We have been debating the Iraq war in the Senate and throughout the country, not for months but for years. There are good, patriotic Americans who favor the war and good, patriotic Americans who oppose President

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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Bush's first getting us into war and the way he has handled the war. Neither party holds a patent on patriotism. I know all of my Republican colleagues would agree with this, or at least I hope so. Yet Rush Limbaugh took it upon himself to attack the courage and character of those fighting and dying for him and for all of us. Rush Limbaugh got himself a deferment from serving when he was a young man. He never served in uniform. He never saw a person in the extreme difficulty of maintaining peace in a foreign country engaged in civil war. He never saw a person in combat. Yet he thinks his opinion on the war is worth more than those who have been on the front lines. What is worse, Limbaugh's show is broadcast on Armed Forces Radio which means that thousands of troops overseas and veterans here at home were forced to hear this attack on their patriotism. Rush Limbaugh owes the men and women of our Armed Forces an apology.

This past Friday, many Democrats joined me in drafting a letter to the chief executive officer of Clear Channel, Mark Mays, that we will send out this week. Here is what we wrote:

Dear Mr. Mays, At the time we sign this letter, 3,801 American soldiers have been killed in Iraq, and another 27,936 have been wounded. 160,000 others awoke this morning on foreign sand, far from home, to face the danger and uncertainty of another day at war. Although Americans of goodwill debate the merits of this war, we can all agree that those who serve with such great courage deserve our deepest respect and gratitude. That is why Rush Limbaugh's recent characterization of troops who oppose the war as ''phony soldiers'' is such an outrage. Our troops are fighting and dying to bring to others the freedoms that many take for granted. It is unconscionable that Mr. Limbaugh would criticize them for exercising the fundamentally American right to free speech. Mr. Limbaugh has made outrageous remarks before, but this affront to our soldiers is beyond the pale. The military, like any community within the United States, includes members both for and against the war. Senior generals, such as General John Batiste and Paul Eaton, have come out against the war while others have publicly supported it. A December 2006 poll conducted by the Military Times found just 35 percent of service members approved of President Bush's handling of the war in Iraq, compared to 42 percent who disapproved. From this figure alone, it is clear that Mr. Limbaugh's insult is directed at thousands of American service members. Active and retired members of our armed forces have a unique perspective on the war and offer a valuable contribution to our national debate. In August, seven soldiers wrote an op-ed expressing their concern with the current strategy in Iraq. Tragically, since then, two of those seven soldiers have made the ultimate sacrifice in Iraq. Thousands of active troops and veterans were subjected to Mr. Limbaugh's unpatriotic and indefensible comments on your broadcast. We trust you will agree that not a single one of our sons, daughters, neighbors and friends serving overseas is a ''phony soldier.'' We call on you to publicly repudiate these comments that call into question their service and sacrifice and to ask Mr. Limbaugh to apologize for his comments.

Just as patriotism is the exclusive realm of neither party, taking a stand against those who spew hate and impugn the integrity of our troops is a job that belongs to both parties. I can't help but wonder how my Republican colleagues would have reacted if the tables were turned—if a well-known Democratic radio personality had used the same insulting line of attack against troops who support the war. The letter I read will be available on the Senate floor all day. During the votes, after the votes, colleagues on both sides of the aisle will have every chance to add their names to it. I encourage all to do so. If we take the Republican side at their word that last week's vote on another controversial statement related to the war was truly about patriotism, not politics, then I have no doubt they will stand with us against Limbaugh's comments with equal fervor.

I am confident we will see Republicans join with us in overwhelming numbers. ''Confident'' is the wrong word. ''Hopeful'' is the right word. I am hopeful we will see Republicans join with us in overwhelming numbers. Anything less would be a double standard that has no place in the Senate.

I ask my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, to join together against this irresponsible, hateful, and unpatriotic attack by calling upon Rush Limbaugh to give our troops the apology they deserve. I hope all will sign this letter.

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, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business for 60 minutes, with the time equally divided between the majority and the Republicans, and with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Iowa.

NATIONAL YOUTH ANTIDRUG MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, as cochairman of the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, I have had a distinct interest in the National Youth Antidrug Media Campaign and how we can improve its quality and improve its effectiveness. In 1998, the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, with overwhelming bipartisan support from Congress, launched a historic initiative to encourage kids to stay drug free. That effort in 1998 built upon the success of former First Lady Nancy Reagan's ''just say no'' campaign. The National Youth Antidrug Media Campaign targets youths age 9 to 18. The campaign also targets parents and other adults who might have influence over the choices young people make about drugs.

Research has clearly shown that if we can keep children free from drugs until the age of 20, chances are very slim that they will ever try or become addicted to drugs. Maintaining a coherent antidrug message begins early in adolescence and continues throughout the growing years. This is essential for educating and enabling our young people to reject illegal drugs. Through realistic portrayals, the media campaign is designed to show kids the harmful effects of drugs and the benefits of a drug-free lifestyle.

I wish to call my colleagues' attention to the poster behind me. This is one of those famous antidrug advertisements that maybe they remember from a long time ago. They might recall this famous advertisement known for its unforgettable slogan: ''This is your brain; this is your brain on drugs.'' Created by the Partnership for a Drug Free America in 1987, it is widely recognized as one of the known influential ads of all time. While most of us have probably never seen an actual brain on drugs, this commercial helped to shape the view of an entire generation regarding the dangers of drugs.

The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign is without a doubt the single most visible symbol of the Federal Government's commitment to youth drug prevention. These advertisements are an important source of information for kids and parents about the risks and dangers associated with illegal drugs. Sadly, though, we have come a long way from the cost and success of those early ads, such as the one you see on the easel.

In the 10 years prior to the creation of the media campaign in 1998, the Partnership for a Drug-free America was able to secure grants from various businesses, foundations, and agencies to create over 1,000 ads. Included in that number is the famous ''this is your brain on drugs'' ad which ran in 90 percent of America's households every day.

Between 1987 and 1998, national and local media outlets donated over $2.3 billion worth of free advertising space. If you adjust that number for today's pricetag, that would be nearly $3 billion worth of donated media time. Unfortunately, as drug use began to decline, then, as you might expect, so did the generous donations of free air time. By 1998, Congress decided—since it was not going to be free—to fund a paid media campaign employing the partnership's antidrug messages.

Since that time, the Federal Government has spent well over $1.5 billion to create, to research, to produce, and to distribute ads to prevent teen drug use. Yet I fear we are continuing to spend precious antidrug dollars to fund increasingly mediocre ads that fail to effectively reach our Nation's youth. In other words, they are nothing like the brain being fried ad I told you about.

A case in point are the spots running on TV today. The image you can see in this new ad I have before us in the Chamber is entitled ''Walk Yourself'' from the ''Above the Influence'' campaign. For those who might not be familiar with this ad, I will give a quick synopsis of what this ad says.

The commercial—which looks as though it could have been drawn by a 5-year-old—begins with a man smoking a marijuana cigarette while his dog looks on. When the man notices that his dog wants to go for a walk, he tells his dog to walk himself, presumably because he is too busy getting high. The dog responds, telling him he is disappointed in his master. The ad ends with the dog leaving and raising an ''Above the Influence'' flag.

Now, maybe I am missing the point, but I fail to see how an ad such as this realistically portrays the dangers or harmful effects of doing drugs.

We have a moral obligation in this country to ensure our young people have a chance to grow up without being accosted with drug pushers at every turn. We need, as a country, to create a strong moral context to help our young people know how to make the right choices. They need to know how to say no. They need to know that saying no is OK. And they need to know that saying no to drugs is the right thing to do. It is not just the safe thing, it is not just the healthier thing, it happens to be the right thing.

While funding for the media campaign has been relatively modest in terms of our overall Federal drug control budget, it, for many, is the most visible aspect of our Nation's war on drugs. With only so much money to go around, we must ensure we are getting the most bang for our buck. Although I support and encourage any agency that works to reduce or prevent drug abuse, as Members of Congress it is important we be good stewards of the taxpayers' dollars.

So I refer you to the Weiden-Kennedy chart—and I am not referring to Senator WYDEN or Senator KENNEDY. This is a different Weiden and a different Kennedy. We have had numerous studies over the years as to how the effectiveness of the present media campaign is very minimal, if not nonexistent.

In last year's Weiden-Kennedy test results of teenagers, the flags ads I referred to in the previous chart, as these ads are called—they are called ''flags ads''—were rated on their believability, persuasiveness, and honesty. When you add up the averages of the flags ads with the rest of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America ads, the flags ads perform well under the ratings of the previous ads. I think the most important categories an antidrug ad must deliver on would be the ones you see listed on this chart. That is why I am concerned the media campaign is failing to reach and deliver an important message to our teens.

Now, I would like to refer back to the funding because these are taxpayers' dollars, and we ought to see how they are being spent.

So I am not alone in this assessment about the believability or the effectiveness of these ads. There is a wide variety of studies beyond just the one I referred to showing a lack of effectiveness. Even the Government Accountability Office recommended that Congress reduce funding for the campaign until it can be proven to be an effective prevention tool.

Congress has slashed funding considerably. As you can see from this chart, the funding for the media campaign is only half of what it was 10 years ago. For fiscal year 2008, the House has slashed another $6 million off the campaign's budget to bring it to $93 million, though our Senate version keeps the funding level. If this is not a wake-up call to the Office of Drug Control Policy, I do not know what is. If Congress is to support the White House's request for a 30-percent budget increase, then the drug czar must take several steps to improve the quality and the effectiveness of the campaign.

The first thing that must be done is to improve the quality of the ads. This does not require a budget increase to do so. The ads need to be simple, they need to be direct, and, obviously, they need to show the consequences of drug use. Exaggerations like a girl flattened on a couch or ''smushed'' from pot use, along with poorly drawn cartoons where dogs speak and space aliens freely roam show unrealistic scenarios and damage the credibility of the campaign, as you saw in the previous chart.

The early antidrug public service announcements—I am talking about going back to that period of time 1987 through 1998—were simple, they were short, they were memorable. I believe the success of those early ads can be replicated by using a similar formula.

Secondly, the campaign could be more effective if its message was more diversified. Although the media campaign has begun an awareness campaign on meth, it took an act of Congress to force the campaign to spend 10 percent of its budget to do so. Most of the ads produced by the campaign so far have all been about marijuana. Although I believe it is important that we discourage marijuana use, there are new and alarming drug abuse patterns that are starting to emerge among teens.

Recent studies and articles are showing an alarming rate of teenagers who are abusing prescription drugs to get high. These drugs are easily accessible because kids can easily find and purchase them online or grab them from their parents' medicine cabinet. Many parents are not even aware of the trend or how they should go about discarding leftover medication. The media campaign could be a very useful tool to educate young people as well as parents on these new and emerging threats.

Finally, the campaign, along with Congress, should work to encourage media outlets to donate more air time for antidrug messages. Currently, the campaign spends most of its budget in purchasing air time. Although media outlets match the amount the campaign spends, it in no way compares to what was donated 20 years ago. I believe it is imperative we show these outlets the need for more donated time in light of the trends I have previously illustrated. With more donated time, it will enable the campaign to focus on producing more ads on emerging drugs without Congress having to balloon its budget in the process.

Some maybe think I have been against antidrug media campaigns because I have been overseeing some of that for a long period of time. But I am not against media campaigns. I am against wasting taxpayers' dollars on ineffective programs that show no effort at improvement. I believe the campaign can be remade into an effective tool to aid in our prevention efforts against teen drug abuse. But much has to change in order for that to happen.

So I intend to send a letter to Director Walters, our drug czar, to find out why the campaign is not having a positive impact on preventing teen drug use. What do they intend to do to change this trend? I am going to ask him. I look forward to hearing their response promptly and to begin the process of reforming and reenergizing the National Youth Antidrug Media Campaign.

Mr. President, let me ask my colleague from Iowa, who has been waiting to speak, I do not know whether we have the first half hour or whether we are going back and forth, but if the Senator does not need the floor right now, I have other remarks I want to make.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The time is equally divided, but the order says it is 10 minutes to each speaker. So if the junior Senator from Iowa wishes to speak, he is free to do so.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Go ahead.

Mr. HARKIN. Go ahead.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The senior Senator from Iowa is continued to be recognized.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Thank you, Mr. President. And I thank Senator HARKIN.

CHIP

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, last week, the Senate voted overwhelmingly to approve the bipartisan agreement to reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program. On Saturday, on television I saw that the President called our agreement—our bipartisan agreement, I want to emphasize—he called it irresponsible.

Specifically, in his radio address, the President said we ''put forward an irresponsible plan that would dramatically expand this program beyond its original intent.''

Well, I am here to respond to that accusation by President Bush. To call

what we agreed to as irresponsible is an insult to an agreement we reached and is an insult to 67 Members of the Senate and 265 Members of the House who voted in favor of it.

Calling our bipartisan proposal irresponsible ignores reality. The reality is that the current program—the program of the last 10 years, sunsetting yesterday—is out of control. The present program is failing. That is—to emphasize—the reason for passing the bipartisan bill that we passed. Because the present program is not working the way it was intended, and with this legislation we corrected a lot of problems to turn that around.

So the President is about to veto a bill that fixes the problems and improves the program for the future without having put a credible alternative on the table. We have not heard from the President as to what he would do about the SCHIP program except he wanted to save it and expand it.

The current program does not have adequate funding just to keep running with no changes. Under current law, the current program is authorized to spend $25 billion over the next 5 years. That is the baseline amount. But the Congressional Budget Office says the $25 billion baseline amount will not fully fund the program. So the President says he wants to keep the program going. You cannot do it the way it is funded right now.

Now, what does the Congressional Budget Office say? It says that without more funding, 840,000 kids would lose coverage. Without changes, as many as 22 States will not have any funding to run the program next year, and Iowa is one of those States—my home State. Senator HARKIN is on the floor; he would agree with that, I am sure.

Anyway, the President never said he wanted this program to lose kids, but the Congressional Budget Office says, doing what we are doing now, 840,000 kids would lose coverage. So keeping the current level of funding is not responsible, but if the President vetoes that bill, that is what we are doing. Of course, to the President, ignoring that fact is ignoring reality.

Let's look at what the President proposed. The President proposed a $5 billion increase in funding in his budget, but that is also insufficient funding. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the President's proposal would cause 840,000 children to lose coverage. That is right. The President's proposed $5 billion of new funding, without doing anything to get more kids covered, I think is hardly the responsible thing to do.

The proposal put forward by Senator LOTT and Senator KYL that we voted on 2 months ago—now maybe 3 months ago; I guess it was in July we voted on it—was an alternative to the bipartisan product we eventually passed. The proposal by Senators LOTT and KYL devoted twice as much funding as what the President did. To me, that is recognition enough that the President's thinking on the Children's Health Insurance Program is off track. The Lott-Kyl proposal was the alternative children's health insurance proposal offered during floor debate in July. My good friends put some serious thought into what they developed. They proposed about $10 billion in new Children's Health Insurance Program funding. That proposal covered 900,000 additional uninsured children, according to the Congressional Budget Office, but the Lott-Kyl proposal only received 35 votes—barely a third of the Senate.

There are good ideas in the Lott-Kyl proposal. They took a serious look at what populations should be covered by the SCHIP program, and it doesn't result in kids losing coverage as the President's proposals do, as the President's budget does, and that for sure is going to happen with a veto. But with all due respect to my friends, 35 votes is hardly a ringing success.

So how much funding is really needed to keep the program afloat? Well, the Congressional Budget Office says $24 billion of additional funding is needed to provide States with funding so that States can operate their programs as intended. That means $24 billion is needed to make sure there are no funding shortfalls, and $24 billion is needed just to fill the hole in the baseline and cover the kids whom States would like to cover if they had sufficient funding. The compromise agreement provides that level of funding and then goes an additional step by offering States incentives to cover more low-income kids, meaning kids and families under 200 percent of poverty. Now, that is the goal of reauthorization—to cover more low-income kids.

The bill we passed last week makes other important improvements to the program. Those improvements include better dental benefits, improves mental health coverage, with an outreach program to get the word out to kids for the kids to enroll. A bipartisan compromise is a responsible approach to funding the program and returning it to its original intent—covering lower income kids—and not covering more adults in 3 of our 50 States than our kids are being covered in those States.

Now let me shift gears and talk about the alternative to authorizing the program. The alternative to a reauthorization of SCHIP is a simple extension of current law, and calling for a simple extension of the current program without addressing the many problems it has—and I just suggested one: 3 States out of 50 cover more adults in the children's program than they cover children. Now, if you want to talk about the word ''responsible'' and whether Congress is responsible in this bill, I would say anybody who wants to leave the program the way it is—and that is what is going to happen with a veto—that is an irresponsible position to take, to keep a program going that is covering adults in a children's program. We want to cover kids, low-income kids. So the SCHIP program today, which is the way it has been for the last 10 years, is far off track.

The President has it backward when he says our bipartisan proposal ''expands the program beyond its original intent.'' With no changes, it is the current SCHIP program that has strayed far from the original intent. I wish to remind my colleagues of 1997, passing the State Children's Health Insurance Program. There is no ''A'' in SCHIP. It was never meant to cover adults, but adults are being covered. We want to get back to the original intent of this program being for kids.

First of all, the current program covers kids at incomes far above what was considered low income in 1997. It covers parents, and in some States it even covers adults who have no kids. Under the bipartisan agreement passed last week, this program will return to its roots: covering kids, covering low-income kids. Even though the administration approved of States covering childless adults—now, I want to emphasize that: This administration approved the States covering childless adults. Under our bill, childless adults will be phased completely out of the program. This is a responsible thing for Congress to do. This is one of the reasons the President should sign the bill, because the present policies are irresponsible.

Even though the administration approved of States covering parents, under our bill States will no longer be able to get enhanced Federal funding for covering parents. Even though the administration approved of States covering childless adults, under our bill States will only be able to cover higher income kids if they demonstrate they have covered their lowest income kids first.

The agreement passed last week creates new financial incentives to discourage States from spending a penny to cover anyone other than low-income children. All the financial incentives in the agreement are entirely focused on low-income children and, let me emphasize, families of under 200 percent of poverty.

The administration has done nothing to turn around this irresponsible program which is now on the books. In fact, they have made it worse. Yet they have the audacity to call our bill irresponsible. Those who say our bill is irresponsible clearly haven't read the bill. This bipartisan compromise provides coverage for more than 3 million low-income children who don't have coverage today.

If this bill is vetoed and if at the end of the day all we do is simply extend the program that has now been on the books for 10 years, what will we have accomplished? Will adults be gone from the program? No. Will States have a disincentive to cover parents? No. Will States be encouraged to cover low-income kids before higher income kids? No. Will the funding formula be fixed

so that States are not constantly challenged by funding shortfalls? No. Finally, will we have done anything to cover kids out there who are not covered today? The answer is no. No, no, no, no. Is that responsible? No. It is continuing current law. Let me emphasize, it is a continuation of the current law that is the irresponsible thing to do. The program is broken as evidenced in just one way: the 3 out of 50 States covering more adults than kids, in some instances covering adults who don't have any kids.

The program has strayed. It needs fixing. In fact, the bipartisan agreement follows the path laid down by the President himself. I have said this repeatedly. The President made a promise at the Republican Convention in New York:

> We will lead an aggressive effort to enroll millions of poor children who are eligible but not signed up for the government's health insurance programs.

President Bush said that. An extension of current law will not do that. He may not want to hear this quote again and again, but until he honors the commitment he made in that speech by making a proposal to cover more low-income kids, I intend to keep repeating it.

The President can keep his commitment by signing the bill we passed last week. But if he is going to veto it, he owes those of us who tried to keep his commitment with our bill a sense of what serious policies Congress can adopt to cover more kids.

I yield the floor.

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for 2 minutes to pay tribute to a great Louisianan who passed away.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator has that right. We are in morning business.

Ms. LANDRIEU. And that Senator HARKIN would follow me for 15 minutes.

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, first let me associate myself with the remarks of the Senator from Iowa who just spoke so eloquently, strongly, and forcefully about the need for our children's health program in the country. I will be speaking later on that subject throughout the week as we all battle to get a better plan to cover more children at such a critical time now in that debate.

TRIBUTE TO HARRY LEE

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to speak just very briefly about a loss Louisiana has suffered—and, in many ways, the Nation—of a great political leader, a great political figure, and a friend to many.

Earlier this morning, Sheriff Harry Lee of Jefferson Parish passed away after a battle with leukemia. As my colleagues know, I come from a place of rich political heritage, colorful characters, and of amazing and fantastic stories at times about our political figures. Among the most colorful, though, was Sheriff Harry Lee, who stood out and stood tall for so many years. He served the people of Jefferson Parish since 1979 as their sheriff, but he started life in Louisiana in a much more humble way.

Harry was born in the back room of a Chinese laundry in downtown New Orleans to immigrant parents, Bing and Yip Lee, who instilled in him a strong and very determined spirit that would serve him well and serve all of us well for the rest of his life.

After a promising educational start at Francis T. Nicholls, where he served as both senior class president and student body president, Harry went on to college at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. He joined the ROTC Program there and was recognized early on as an outstanding cadet. He didn't stop there, though. His next step was to serve the country in the Air Force during the height of the Cold War. He served in the famous Strategic Command. His Air Force career led him to make a great decision in life, and that was to marry Lai Beet Woo, his wife of 40 years.

When Harry returned to Louisiana, he took over the family restaurant and convinced his father to allow him to attend law school. He excelled and became the first Federal magistrate for the Eastern District of Louisiana. He soon then, through many political contacts and his great spirit and gregarious nature and classwork, became parish attorney for Jefferson Parish.

Then, in 1975 and shortly thereafter, he was elected sheriff, a post he held for more than two decades, and he became a household name in Louisiana. This story has probably been tracked by others, but for Harry Lee, who comes from a Chinese-American background, at the time he was elected sheriff I think he was the highest ranking Chinese official and the only Chinese-American sheriff in the country. He was always extremely proud of that, proud of his heritage, always reminding us of that singular accomplishment.

After being a larger-than-life force in the realm of criminal justice for over 30 years, as I said this morning, he finally lost his own battle with leukemia. He had fought and won many battles on the streets in Jefferson Parish, in the courtrooms, and also in the court of public opinion.

Harry Lee's success says something important about our country—the son of immigrants who goes on to not only serve his parish, his city, his region, but went on to befriend Presidents, Republicans and Democrats, being the go-to person when people of great political distinction would come to our State. They always wanted to see and talk with Harry Lee.

Like all of us in public life, his tenure was not without controversy, but he was fiercely loyal to his deputies. There are thousands of deputies, current and former, who are mourning his passing today.

Looking back on a life like this, you can only think that his father and mother, Bing Yip Lee, who have long passed away, must have looked down and smiled on their son's accomplishments.

The loss of this singular figure in Louisiana politics is not only a loss to Jefferson Parish and to the State of Louisiana, but it is a loss to this great country that we all try our best to serve.

I want to extend my heartfelt condolences to the Lee family, to the deputies, to the law enforcement officials of Jefferson Parish in our State who are mourning this loss today. I hope we will all take some solace from the fact that they are being joined by so many mourners who recognize and appreciate a life well lived.

In closing, a not-so-secret hobby of Harry's was singing. I cannot say he would have ever made records, but he tried and he sang with great zest. At many jazz fests, he would be tempted to the stage by his friend Willie Nelson. They would often sing together. His favorite song was ''Welcome to My World.'' I would like to say to Harry today: Thank you for welcoming us to your world, Sheriff Lee. You served us well, and you will be missed.

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at the closing of my remarks, the Senator from Montana, Mr. TESTER, be recognized.

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

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, how much time do I have?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senator has 15 minutes. The majority side has 22 minutes 40 seconds remaining.

GUARD AND RESERVE FAMILIES AMENDMENT

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues for accepting my amendment to support the families of those National Guard and Reserve individuals serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. I thank Senator LEVIN and Senator MCCAIN for their support and assistance in including it as part of the National Defense Authorization Act, on which we will be voting on final passage later today.

This is a new era for our National Guard and Reserves. They are shouldering a huge share of the combat burden in Iraq and Afghanistan, plus a

stepped-up role here in homeland security. It speaks volumes that more than four times as many Guard members have been killed in Iraq as during the entire Vietnam war.

With many Guard and Reserve members on their third or even fourth deployment, and with some deployments being stretched to at least 16 months, the stresses on their families are acute. Their children are at greater risk for depression, behavioral disorders, and academic problems. Long family separations often result in financial difficulties and troubled marriages.

Earlier this year, I introduced the Coming Together for National Guard and Reserve Families Act, which is the heart of this amendment. That amendment was accepted by the majority and the minority. The amendment does a number of things: It strengthens the family assistance program to ensure there are adequate resources for Guard and Reserve families throughout the deployment cycle. It provides special attention for the children of deployed servicemembers, who often react to parental separation with acting-out behaviors, anxiety, and depression. Finally, the amendment ensures that Guard and Reserve families receive appropriately timed information about the psychological symptoms that can appear long after coming home—such as anger, depression, alcohol abuse, or post-traumatic stress disorder—to help them take advantage of the services and support they may need.

Shortly after introducing the bill, I received a letter from the fiancé of an Iowa Guard member deployed in Iraq. It was one of many letters I received. I cannot read them all. I thought this portion of it summed it up:

> I received a letter from you today about the S. 902 bill that would help National Guard families, and I just wanted to say thank you. I cried when I first read this; for the first time in 2 years I feel like someone heard me. I hope this bill is passed and carried out. My fiancé is in Iraq with the 133rd Infantry of the Iowa National Guard. He was due home in March but now will be there until August. To say the least, I was devastated when I heard that he was extended, and honestly believe that it is such a terrible thing. Since he has been extended, many of his friends in the unit have tried to commit suicide and even more are deeply depressed. More times than not, I hear him saying how he wishes he could just have his life back. And I ask that you keep fighting for this because our soldiers' lives are hanging in the balance. My soldier and I will have to deal with the long-term consequences of his being in a war zone for so long for the rest of our lives, and we have to stop this before our children and grandchildren have to deal with this as well. . . . I am proud to live in the United States of America. However, my fiancé has done his part; he has protected this country for 22 months and he has been away from my side for that long. Let him come home, give us our lives back.

Mr. President, one happy result is that the brave men and women of the 1st Battalion of the 133rd Infantry of the Iowa National Guard—the same soldiers who inspired this amendment—returned home in July after serving as part of the longest continuous deployment of the Iraq war, spending nearly 2 years in active duty and 17 months in Iraq.

Senator GRASSLEY and I passed a resolution earlier honoring the service and sacrifices made by these brave soldiers and their families. But there is more we can do. Of course, I am working with my colleagues on this side of the aisle, and others, to begin the long, overdue process of redeploying our troops out of the civil war in Iraq. I hope we can make real progress on this in the coming weeks.

Until we are able to accomplish that, we must do everything we can to make sure the loved ones and family members of our deployed soldiers receive the support they need and deserve.

These families, many of whom are just starting their lives together, are dealing with tremendous stress. They include many small children who have grown up while their mothers or fathers were away.

Mr. President, this is a quiet crisis that we don't read about in the morning newspaper, but it is a crisis nonetheless. This amendment addresses that crisis by strengthening family assistance programs and doing outreach to parents and professionals who serve children—including mental health counselors and teachers—to alert them to the special needs of kids in military families, especially those with a parent in a war zone.

This amendment also ensures that families receive support after soldiers come home. The amendment ensures that families receive mental health information for up to 6 months post deployment so they can have access to the services and support they need.

Again, why is the amendment necessary? It became clear, after visiting with families of these National Guard troops and reservists who were overseas in Iraq that we have one set of family services and intervention and support for families of regular military personnel in the Army, Marines, Navy, and Air Force, but don't have the same support services for National Guard and Reserves. Many times in our small towns and communities you have one or two families who have a husband or a father overseas in the National Guard for an extended time, but those families don't get the same support and services as a family with a loved one in the regular Armed Forces, either throughout the deployment or when the soldier returns. Perhaps this made sense in the past. But the line between the Reserves and National Guard and the regular forces has become very blurred with the war in Iraq. So we see the National Guard carrying out what normally would have been done by the Active-Duty military. That is why this amendment, providing Guard and Reserve families with this support, is so important.

On a final note, the benefits of this amendment will apply to all Guard and Reserve troops, as well as their families—and I might point out, even those who disagree with President Bush and Vice President CHENEY. They can disagree and this amendment will still apply to them. I feel obliged to say this because a prominent conservative leader, Rush Limbaugh, of radio infamy, said men and women in uniform over in Iraq who oppose the war are ''phony soldiers,'' and are presumably unworthy of the American people's support.

Earlier today, I was here and I heard Senator REID, our majority leader, speak about this. This statement is outrageous and despicable. Our men and women in uniform in Iraq have made extraordinary sacrifices. 3,800 have been killed and nearly 28,000 have been wounded, many with amputations and brain injuries they will live with for the rest of their lives. Our troops live in constant danger. Meanwhile, their families at home have had to cope with repeated separations and with the constant dread of bad news from Iraq. The very thought of Rush Limbaugh sitting in his air-conditioned broadcast studio and ranting about ''phony soldiers'' in Iraq who dare to speak their mind is just shameful. Perhaps in Mr. Limbaugh's case the correct word is ''shameless.''

I realize he and some other extremists on the right hold the view that you are either with us or you are against us; you are either a good American or a bad American, depending upon whether you agree with the conservative Republican line. But that is not the way most Americans think. We respect disagreement. We value dissent. We don't resort to name-calling when our fellow Americans—especially those in uniform—express a differing point of view.

For the record, by labeling as ''phony soldiers'' those who disagree with the war or the President's comments, that denigrates many thousands of our Armed Forces serving in Iraq. Listen to this. A December 2006 poll conducted by the Military Times found that fully 42 percent of servicemembers disapproved of President Bush's handling of the war, while just 35 percent supported it.

In other words, our men and women in uniform are not much different from the rest of the American people, the majority of whom also disagree with Mr. Bush's conduct of the war. Frankly, it increases my respect for those soldiers' professionalism and sense of duty. They disagree with their Commander in Chief, but they continue to perform their jobs with enormous courage, confidence, and commitment. That is cause for admiration and praise, not name-calling and denigration.

I must add, as a veteran, I find it offensive that Rush Limbaugh, who never put on the uniform of this country, would attack the patriotism or dedication of any soldier fighting in Iraq. I have often said about someone like that, before they drape themselves in the flag of this country, they ought

to put on the uniform first to defend it. In Limbaugh's case, he would not do that.

Well, I also find it disturbing that his offensive comments have not been condemned by our Republican colleagues, or by the Commander in Chief, all of whom were so quick to condemn a similar personal attack on General Petraeus several weeks ago.

The Boxer-Levin-Durbin Amendment to the Defense authorization bill said the Senate ''strongly condemns all attacks on the honor, integrity, and patriotism of any individual who is serving in the Armed Services.'' I just point out that all but two Republican Senators voted against this amendment. Will any one of them stand up and be brave enough to take on Rush Limbaugh? Will anybody on that side of the aisle take on Rush Limbaugh for this statement? We have not heard anything yet, but I hope they do.

The silence from President Bush and the Republican leadership is simply deafening. Is this because they agree with Mr. Limbaugh, or they don't want to risk angering such a prominent conservative by taking him to task.

Mr. President, in August, seven soldiers published an op-ed in the New York Times criticizing the current strategy in Iraq. Tragically, two of those soldiers were subsequently killed in action, making the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

I only can assume by Mr. Limbaugh's definition that they, too, were phony soldiers. What is most despicable, Rush Limbaugh says these provocative things to make more money. So he castigates our soldiers. This makes more news. It becomes the news, more people tune in, he makes more money.

I don't know, maybe he was high on his drugs again. I don't know if he was or not. If so, he ought to let us know. That shouldn't be an excuse.

I wish to make it clear that I respect Mr. Limbaugh's right to say whatever he wants, but we also have a right. We have a right not to listen to him.

So I think the best thing to do for him is to tune him out, tune out Rush Limbaugh and listen to more responsible talk show hosts in this country.

I think that it is time, again, for us to stand up for our troops, as we have, I think, in the past, to give them every bit of support and give their families support. That is what my amendment does. I am pleased this amendment has been included in the National Defense Authorization Act, because it is an important step toward ensuring that our National Guard and Reserve families receive the kind of support the families of our regular forces also receive.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Montana.

TRIBUTE TO JOE PAPEZ

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute and thanks to Joe Papez, Technical Sergeant, U.S. Army retired. Joe is a veteran of World War II. In fact, he is believed to be the oldest living Purple Heart recipient in the United States, and he is one of the brave men who answered the call of their country and who helped the ''greatest generation'' earn that title.

Joe was injured three times during his stint in the Army, where he served in both Africa and Italy, in the campaigns of 1943 and 1944. He earned three Purple Hearts fighting in Casablanca, on the island of Sicily, and in Italy. But it was his last wound by a German artillery shell during the fierce fighting at Anzio, Italy, that earned him a free ticket back home.

The way Joe tells the story, after he was wounded in Anzio, he was put on a ship and sent home, but he doesn't remember the trip. He woke up in Virginia. After a while, he was shipped to Denver, where he recovered in a hospital. Then he was shipped to Oregon and finally to Santa Barbara.

When he finally got back on his feet, he kept on serving his country by caring for German prisoners of war in Utah, where he remained until the war was over.

Following the war, Joe returned to Red Lodge, MT. Disabled from his war wounds, he was unable to get a job. He made a drawing for a homestead in Powell, WY, but was told he was too sick to have it. However, with help from his brothers and a bank loan, he got into farming and ranching.

On December 19, Joe Papez will turn 100 years old or, should I say, 100 years young. He will turn 100 in the same town in which he has lived for nearly his entire life. Although he was born in Franklin, KS, the State of Montana is proud to claim Joe as one of our own.

Joe's family moved to Red Lodge when he was a year old. Residents of Red Lodge know he is a fixture in the town's Memorial Day parade, he is a regular in the Fourth of July parade, and even at his age, he marches in these parades to remember his brothers in arms with whom he served. And they will always remember him. Fittingly, the Billings chapter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart is named for Joe Papez.

Joe is spry and healthy and said he would serve his country again if he could. Joe Papez has served his country and his community, and he has done it very well.

So today we give thanks to him and Dorreen, and we pray for more folks just like Joe.

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

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. 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.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak as in morning business for 10 minutes.

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

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, today marks the beginning of domestic violence month, and it marks a time when we look at the progress we have made in this area and what challenges remain.

As a former prosecutor, I am well aware of the tragedies we see every day in this country from domestic violence. But it is also a time in our State where we look back at the lives of Paul and Sheila Wellstone, who devoted their time, their passion, and their energy to doing something about a problem that so often is overlooked or about which people do not want to talk.

This is, in fact, a few weeks on the calendar before their tragic death in a plane crash. Today we are going to welcome their son, David Wellstone, to the Capitol, and there will be a quilt displayed in the Russell rotunda, a quilt made by women and children from 13 different domestic violence centers across this country.

At the event today, we are going to have in Paul and Sheila's honor—we are not just going to look back on all they accomplished and stood for, but we are also going to look ahead to the work we all must do to carry their legacy forward, especially that commitment they had to ending domestic violence.

It is hard to believe it has already been nearly 5 years since we lost Paul and Sheila. It feels both so long ago and yet not that long ago. But we know their dreams and passions remain alive in each one of us, and that is why we are gathering tonight.

For me, I get my own special reminder of Paul Wellstone every day. His family gave me the flags that hung in his office. I am also reminded every day by ordinary people in the Capitol when I say I am from Minnesota—the tram drivers in the basement or the police officers or the secretaries in Senate offices who, when you say you are a Senator from Minnesota, they remember Paul, and they remember how well he treated people and the dignity with which he treated people every day.

Above all, I keep in mind, in front of my mind, the fundamental values for which he fought and struggled—being a voice to the voiceless, bringing power to the powerless, bringing justice to those who suffered injustice and above all, bringing hope to all of us that we can change the world and make it a better place.

There is no better way to honor Sheila's groundbreaking work in domestic violence than to mark the beginning of Domestic Violence Awareness Month with that quilt hanging in the Capitol.

I had the honor and opportunity to work with Sheila on many occasions when I was Hennepin County attorney. She was instrumental in creating and funding the Hennepin County Domestic Abuse Service Center. Hennepin County has about 1.1 million people, and this center is a landmark center across the country. It is a single place where women and their children can come. There is a play area for the kids. There are prosecutors there. There are police there. It is one place where they can get through the redtape and come to get help. The center is an international model for serving victims of domestic violence.

Sheila and I shared a particular concern for the fate of children who grew up in homes with domestic violence. There are deeply disturbing statistics on children who witness domestic abuse in their homes. These kids are six times more likely to commit suicide. They are 24 times more likely to commit sexual assault. They are 60 times more likely to exhibit delinquent behavior and, most chilling of all, little boys who witness domestic violence are 100 times more likely to become abusers themselves.

In my job as a prosecutor, I learned very quickly that when there is domestic violence, there is always a victim, the immediate victim, but it ripples through an entire family.

I remember a case we had in a suburban area where a man who had been abusing his wife killed her. There was a little girl, a little daughter who was about 4 years old. When he disposed of his wife's body, he brought the daughter with him in the back seat. A few days later, the grandparents came in from Russia. The woman was a Russian immigrant. They brought the deceased woman's twin sister, identical twin sister. This little daughter had never seen her aunt before. She ran through the airport when she saw her get off the plane and she said: Mommy, mommy, mommy. When you hear stories such as that story, you remember it is not about one victim, it is about an entire family.

Sheila knew those stories, and Sheila knew those statistics. But even more, she knew the names and the faces of the real children who witnessed and experienced abuse in the home. It made her all the more determined to do something about it because in America, of all places, kids should be free to grow up with safety, security, and peace of mind.

I remember the last time I saw Sheila. It was 2 weeks before that terrible plane crash. She and I had been asked to speak at a ceremony celebrating the new citizenship of Russian immigrants. It wasn't a campaign event. There were no cameras, even though it was about 3 weeks before one of the biggest elections in the country. It was just new citizens and their families.

We both talked about the immigrant traditions in our own families. She talked about her family growing up in Appalachia. I talked about my family on the Iron Range with the Slovenian roots. As the event was winding down, in walked Paul. He wasn't supposed to be there. He was supposed to be in Washington. It was 3 weeks before this major election, and he was in this little room, with no reporters and no cameras, to greet these new citizens.

I always knew he was there for two reasons. One, he was there because he loved his wife and he wanted to be there to surprise her and support her. But he was also there that night because he truly embraced that immigrant tradition. He embraced the idea that a person could come to this country, an incredible journey to freedom, with nothing, and they could work hard, succeed and send their kids and their grandkids to college because that had been what had happened to him and that had been what happened to Sheila.

It was the same thing for Sheila and Paul with victims of domestic violence, people who had sunk to the lowest in their life, who had no home, who were out on the street, who were out hiding in a shelter. She worked tirelessly to ensure that victims and their families could begin their own journeys to freedom, that they could get a fresh start, with new opportunities, in a new and secure environment.

We will always miss Paul and Sheila, but thanks to their son David, who is going to be with us here this evening, and countless volunteers and friends from all over the country, they have carried on their legacy and their work. They have carried on their legacy to change the world and make it a better and safer place for everyone.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is concluded.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 1585, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A 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.

Pending:

Nelson of Nebraska (for Levin) amendment No. 2011, in the nature of a substitute.

Reid (for Kennedy) amendment No. 3058 (to amendment No. 2011), to provide for certain public-private competition requirements.

Reid (for Kennedy) amendment No. 3109 (to amendment No. 3058), to provide for certain public-private competition requirements.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I understand that later in the afternoon there will be probably two votes, one on the Mikulski-Kennedy amendment and probably a vote on final passage; am I correct?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The amendments that are now scheduled for a vote are the substitute amendment and final passage.

Mr. KENNEDY. Well, Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry: I was under the impression we had a vote agreed upon.

Mr. President, I understand there has been an agreement with the leadership that we will dispose of this amendment at the hour of 5:30. In any event, is the time divided between now and 5:30?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The time is not divided.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I desire to talk on the amendment that is sponsored by Senator MIKULSKI, myself, and a number of others, which is an amendment to the Defense authorization bill. I see the ranking member of the committee. If he had other business he wanted to deal with, obviously, I would withhold.

Mr. President, at the end of last week, on Thursday evening, there was an excellent presentation on this issue before the Senate by Senator MIKULSKI. I addressed the Senate on Friday on this issue, and I am going to take a few minutes this afternoon.

This is an exceedingly important issue. It relates to the underlying concept of our national security and our national defense. In this legislation, we are authorizing some $675 billion, which is essentially the backbone of our defense. What this amendment deals with is the personnel who will be working on the tanks, the planes, and the military hardware which needs to be conditioned and updated and improved so it is available and accessible to those men and women who are involved in defending this country. These are the employees who work primarily in the Defense Department.

There is a phenomenon that has arisen that works to discriminate against these excellent workers. They are not only excellent workers but a third of them are veterans. A third of them are veterans. These are men and women who have worn the uniform of our country and have decided that they want to continue in public service and so, therefore, have brought their skills and their training they have achieved in the military to give attention to the Defense Department. This is probably the highest percentage of veterans in any undertaking or employment base we have in this country, because these individuals, highly patriotic, highly motivated, highly skilled, want to continue their service to the country.

Basically, what they are asking is for an opportunity to continue service within the Defense Department, working on the various challenges and contracts which come before the Defense Department. This chart shows that thousands of veterans could lose their

jobs under the outsourcing rules. That is what this amendment is about. We are going to get fairness in competition so these workers are treated fairly and the taxpayer is treated fairly, and we get the dollar value for the taxes paid, and the workers will be treated fairly.

Under the current system, the rules that have been developed by the administration undermine that sense of fairness for these workers—a third of whom, as I said, are veterans. That is the issue. Thirty-four percent of the civilian defense employees are veterans. This amendment ensures that these 226,620 dedicated Americans who have served our country will not lose their jobs because of unfair outsourcing. That is what we are talking about—unfair outsourcing.

Let me explain how this works. The chart probably demonstrates it as well as it can be demonstrated. This is the Government here for some particular Defense Department work. You can see from the green box that the Government can provide a lower rate for the cost of providing the service, and can also do it with higher skills than on the private bid. But the fact that the Government employees have health insurance or retirement benefits adds an additional cost to their proposal, which puts them out of competition. So what we are finding now with these new rules and regulations is the bids and contracts are going to companies that are dropping their health care and dropping their pension programs and dropping other security benefits so they can come up underneath the Government contract. Essentially, this is a race to the bottom.

In a country where we have 47 million Americans who are uninsured, and we are having a major national debate about covering children, why are we providing more financial incentives to companies to drop their health insurance? That is what we are doing. The ones who are losing out are, by and large, the ones who have served in the Armed Forces of our country.

This isn't only on Government bids; this could be a responsible contractor and an irresponsible contractor. Maybe a responsible contractor can do it more efficiently even than the Federal Government, but look how it works. If you have a responsible contractor who is trying to provide some benefits, limited benefits, or good benefits for their employees—and that is the combination we are talking about, health and retirement; those are the two, retirement and health—we are seeing those contractors who can provide the services more efficiently and better. Nonetheless, the bid will go to the irresponsible contractor. So this works against responsible contractors and it works against veterans working in the Defense Department.

What we are saying with this amendment—and there are other provisions in the amendment—but what we are saying is let the competition take place. Let the competition take place between the workers in the Defense Department and the private sector, but let them have an even playing ground. Let us exclude the health insurance and retirement benefits. Let us have the competition out there and the best person win. The best bid wins the contracts.

Why would we want to continue to drive out these contracts? We can show what has been happening over time to these workers. We saw in 2004, because of these new regulations, where Federal employees lost on 10 percent of these bids; in 2005, it went to 30 percent; and the best estimate now is it is going all the way up to 78 percent, and basically it is about this issue—not completely, but it is fundamentally about this issue.

Now, in the amendment there are other provisions which I will mention very briefly. Provisions of this amendment, which have been debated on the floor and acted on in the Senate at other times, have also had strong bipartisan support, and I will mention those very briefly.

At the present time, a private contractor can appeal an unfair decision if there is a belief by the private contractor that there is unfairness in terms of the decision in the competition with the Federal workers. They are entitled to get an appeal. On the other hand, if the Federal workers believe it is an unfair competition, they have no right to do so. They have no right to do so. This restores that right. This represents a very similar provision that was sponsored by Senator COLLINS in 2004, and Senators CHAMBLISS, WARNER, THOMAS, and VOINOVICH have also supported appeal rights in the past for Federal employees in previous appropriations legislation. I am not speaking for them, but it is an indication that this is an issue that has been before the Senate at other times and there has been bipartisan support for it.

On this point here—can renew a contract without recompetition—if they have a follow-on contract, they can renew that, if it is a private contract. With the Federal workers, they do not have that right to do that at the present time. So under the outsourcing provisions, these Federal workers are shortchanged.

The provision regarding the submission of the competitive bid that requires the Federal workers to follow procedural and administrative provisions actually increases the cost of their bids. Again, at the request of the employees, all they wish to do is have the same kind of ''most competitive bid'' they can offer. They would like that one to be on the table so we will get the best in terms of productivity and skill and also get the best in terms of savings for the taxpayers. But they are denied that right.

We provided, through the Appropriations Committee, those protections. Those provisions had been added through the Appropriations Committee. But what has happened is, as the Appropriations Committee process goes along, these provisions expire, and so we have to come back to them. We have to win them again every time. Because if they are added on the appropriations, they do not continue to last and we have to refight those issues.

Finally, there are what they call ''quota provisions,'' which have been put on by OMB and require a certain amount of quotas in terms of the private contracting, which obviously provides some unfairness to the workers and, secondly, to the public and the taxpayers.

These are basically the provisions we have in the legislation. The primary one we have talked about today has been on this competition we have had for the benefit cost. This is the overarching issue and question.

We are going to have a good national debate during the Presidential elections of 2008 about how we are going to address the problems of cost in this country on health care. We have gone from $1.3 trillion to $2.3 trillion in the last 5 years. We have added $1 trillion worth of spending in health care and have added 7 million more people who are uninsured and there would have been a great deal more if we didn't have the CHIP program.

We cannot continue that as a nation. We are not going to be able to continue that. Our companies are not going to be able to; the costs in terms of local communities have gotten prohibitive. These involve real people and real sacrifices—real important considerations. We are talking about families. We are talking about, by and large, fairly treating people who served in the military. They had health care when they were serving in the military. They could have the health care when they retired. But the real question is going to be, now, when they are continuing to be a part of the whole defense and security of this country, whether we are going to treat them with the kind of respect they need, understanding they have families and they need this health care coverage. They are glad to pay for it and bargain for it. They have to look down the road in terms of their security and the security of their families, in terms of pensions in the future. They are glad to pay for that. But why we should be able to effectively cut them loose at a time of intense competition, I don't know.

I thank the Senator from Connecticut, Mr. LIEBERMAN, who has been involved in the different phases. I mentioned half a dozen different phases on this issue. He has been involved and engaged in these different aspects since he has been on that committee. I enjoy serving with him on the Armed Services Committee. He has been an eloquent and effective voice and has given enormous support to this effort. I see him on the floor and thank him for all of his help and assistance on this issue.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I thank my friend from Massachusetts for his eloquent, passionate statement and for his kind words. I appreciate it very much. In a short while, I will be adding my own few words of support for this amendment offered by the Senator from Massachusetts, the Senator from Maryland, and others—including myself.

I am privileged to be managing the bill until the chairman, Senator LEVIN arrives. I thought insofar as there are Members here on both sides, we would go back and forth. I suggest Senator SESSIONS, who is here now, go next. I will follow him.

I ask, through the Chair, of my friend from Alabama, how much time he would like to speak?

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I would like 10 minutes.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I ask unanimous consent the Senator from Alabama go next for 10 minutes and then I be recognized for 7 minutes.

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

The Senator from Alabama is recognized.

THE RETIREMENT OF GENERAL PETER PACE

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I had the honor today to be at the retirement ceremony, a few hours ago, for the 16th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the armed services of the United States, GEN Peter Pace, and the installation of the 17th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, ADM Mike Mullen. The weather was beautiful, indeed, in your State of Virginia at Fort Myer, the brass shining in the Sun, the music was stirring, and the uniforms of the services in their bright collars gave appropriate recognition to the passing of the torch from a Chairman proven to a new Chairman challenged.

It is always thus, I suppose. It was a thrill to see the commander of the Honor Guard one last time advance and say: ''General Pace, the Honor Guard of the United States is ready for your inspection.''

And General Pace did just that, it appeared with pleasure and satisfaction. That he is admired within the military cannot be denied. I understand last week they planned a surprise for him in the Pentagon. He was invited to come to a meeting for some business, it was suggested, and the halls filled with over 1,200 people who appeared and applauded him for 20 minutes. It was a true expression of the admiration and affection in which he is held throughout the military. Such support is not a surprise for anyone who knows that wonderful man.

He made a number of remarks at his retirement or change of command. He expressed his admiration for President Bush's willingness to listen to his advice the entire time of his tenure. He made clear President Bush did listen, and he was a regular briefer of the President; and General Pace's admiration for the President for standing by his commitments when he sent military men and women in uniform into harm's way was quite personal and strong. In other words, General Pace is there. General Pace has been part of this process. General Pace has seen this Congress and this President authorize soldiers and send soldiers into harm's way. He felt a sense of appreciation for President Bush, I would say, for his willingness to not give lightly and to be totally supportive of those troops once they had been sent in harm's way.

He said the No. 1 question he is asked when he goes about with military personnel: Does Congress still support us?

I remember not too many months ago, a gentleman right out there caught me. His son was about to go to Iraq. He told me: Senator, make no mistake, those soldiers over there and in training to go over there are watching what you do like a hawk.

Secretary Gates, President Bush, Admiral Mullen were exceedingly complimentary of General Pace. They discussed his bravery as a young lieutenant at the battle of Hue in Vietnam. They lost quite a number of officers. He was moved up as a second lieutenant to be in command of the company they would have to have led. There was a bitter battle and he lost a number of marines.

He said he felt a debt to those marines, that he had spent 40 years of his career in the military attempting to pay off.

Several people made reference to that. He called those marines he served with, who lost their lives there, by names at that retirement ceremony. He indicated he still did not believe he had paid that debt that he owed those people who had given their full measure to our Nation's defense. But other speakers said he had, and they were most complimentary of him.

Recently, at a hearing, he was encouraged—let me say it that way—to retreat from a statement he had made that reflected his personal moral and faith beliefs; but he admirably, I suggest, declined to pander or to retreat from what he honestly believed, and he restated his personal values. That is the kind of man you want leading us, I suggest.

Our Nation is in the debt, I think, of GEN Peter Pace. He has given tirelessly of himself to support the policies of our country and to make those policies successful.

I say: Well done, good marine, well done.

Mr. President, on a different subject, I want to take a few minutes to note that on Friday, September 21, the Missile Defense Agency had a highly successful missile defense intercept. A target vehicle was launched from Kodiak, AK. It went into space. The interceptor missile was launched at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. It was, indeed, a realistic test of this capability. According to Rick Lehner, the spokesman for the Missile Defense Agency, ''This was a very operationally realistic test.''

In those tests we want to determine whether our missile defense capability will actually succeed in knocking down an intercontinental missile. These two missiles were launched, the target vehicle on a track not unlike what we would see if, for example, the North Koreans launched an attack. We launched our defensive missile out of California. And they collided and destroyed one another over the Pacific, like we planned, a bullet to bullet. There were no explosives in the ''kill'' vehicle. Just speed, guided by computers and sophisticated guidance systems, allowed those two to collide and to destroy the incoming missile.

The American people have a number of questions and misconceptions about missile defense. Some think we already have a complete missile defense system that can knock down incoming missiles. That is not so. Some think we do not have any capability, that this is a bunch of money being spent on programs that are never going to work. That is absolutely not so. We now have proven the technology. General Obering and his team at the Missile Defense Agency have continued to have success after success. We know we have the capability to knock down an incoming missile that threatens the people of the United States, who knows—with a nuclear weapon or biological or chemical munition contained within it.

This is an important matter for the United States that the President can know. If he is negotiating with some extreme nation that threatens to attack us with a missile and tries to use that threat as leverage or bargaining power, he can say: We are not afraid of you. You send a missile off and we will knock it down.

We are reaching that point in our capability. Intelligence tells us Iran also continues to build its systems and produces greater capability.

I would say, we need a site in Europe. I hope we continue to work toward that. We need to maintain steady appropriations and authorizations in this Senate to make sure our missile system that we have committed so many years to, and so many dollars to, is now completed, since it has been proven to be a good investment from the beginning.

I thank the Chair for giving me this opportunity and note I am excited about this test's success. I do believe it is important for all of us in Congress to note that and make sure about our funding—which I think this year is a bit tight. The President took some money down out of missile defense. The Congress has taken some more. But I believe we have enough funding to keep this program on track.

I see my colleague, Senator LIEBERMAN. I note there are few in the Senate who have studied the issue more or who have been engaged in it longer than he. I know he and Senator THAD COCHRAN offered the resolution, not long after I came to the Senate, to

deploy a national missile defense system ''as soon as technologically feasible.'' That was the language, wasn't it, Senator LIEBERMAN? Indeed, we are now deploying it. We are already deploying the system, and the American people took comfort last July 4, when the North Koreans launched missiles to demonstrate their power—they took comfort because of you and others, before I even came into the Senate—such as Senator SHELBY, my colleague from Alabama—who were pioneers moving that forward. We can now take comfort that we do have ability. It means a lot for our people and for the safety of America.

I yield the floor.

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

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to extend my statement, which I will now offer for 10 minutes instead of 7; to be followed by the Senator from Alabama, Mr. SHELBY, for 10 minutes; followed by the Senator from Vermont, Mr. SANDERS, for 10 minutes.

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

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I extend my time to respond to two things my friend from Alabama, Senator SESSIONS—one of my two friends from Alabama, Senator SESSIONS, mentioned.

The first is the good news from the Missile Defense Program of the successful test last Friday. We wish we did not have to spend money building a missile defense, but the truth is that the number of powers, including a lot of hostile anti-American countries that have the capacity to fire missiles at us and our allies, carrying both conventional weapons and potentially weapons of mass destruction, is increasing and has increased.

The creation of this program has been controversial. The funding of it is controversial. But I believe, just as deeply as anyone can believe anything, that we will, particularly as we hear the success of the testing, look back on the investments we have made in this program and be very thankful we did it because it will protect the security of the United States from attack via a missile from the enemies that exist to our country and to our values.

I wish to just briefly echo what Senator SESSIONS said about General Pace, who has just ended his time as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I put an extensive statement in the RECORD last week without being on the floor. I just say now that this is a good man, a patriot who has served his country with a tremendous sense of excellence, of bravery, of honor, taking on risks and burdens to himself for the defense of America.

When he was appointed and confirmed as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, there were two pieces of history, two firsts. We are a country that loves firsts because when people do something for the first time, it talks about the increasing openness, the reality of what we call the American dream. The one that was greatly commented on was Peter Pace was the first marine to become Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. That was a historic first. The other—perhaps less commented on but a great story of America—Pete Pace was the first Italian American to be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—yet another extraordinary accomplishment and act of service to our country from its Italian-American community.

Pete Pace served during a difficult time. He served with honor and integrity. He was intensely devoted to the men and women who serve all of us, and their families. He has maintained the fighting edge of our military going through a very difficult time, oversaw two extraordinary victories in Afghanistan and Iraq and then the post-Saddam war increasingly against al-Qaida in Iran and Iraq—very difficult times. But he leaves office now at a moment when, obviously thanks to the skill and bravery of the American military, there are some reasons for encouragement in Iraq, good reasons.

I thank General Pace, his wife, and his family for their service to America. We wish them well in the years ahead.

AMENDMENT NO. 3058

Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of the amendment offered by Senator KENNEDY and Senator MIKULSKI and others, including myself, which will be voted on later today. This amendment would bring some commonsense reforms to the process by which agencies decide whether to outsource Federal jobs to contractors.

Sometimes, obviously, it makes a lot of sense for agencies to turn to contractors because they are able to perform certain functions more efficiently than the agencies could themselves. That is in everybody's interest, including the taxpayers'. However, in many cases, experience has shown Federal employees can perform the work just as efficiently or more efficiently than the contractors and deserve the right to bid when work is proposed to be outsourced. Additionally, agencies must ensure that inherently governmental work—in other words, work which is intimately related to the public interest—is performed by Federal employees and not by private contractors. That is why the Government was created.

The process for deciding when to outsource jobs has to be a careful one, it has to be fair to contractors, and it has to be fair to Federal employees. Of course, it has to be fair, most of all, to America's taxpayers.

The Kennedy amendment provides Federal employees the same right contractors currently possess to appeal outsourcing decisions. In other words, when a particular function is proposed for outsourcing, open to bidding by private contractors, there is a process—and a good one—that has been created where Federal employees themselves may bid against those contractors for that outsourcing work. What the Kennedy amendment says is Federal employees should have the same rights contractors have to appeal outsourcing decisions. Why just have one of the competitors for the outsourcing have the right to appeal and the other one does not? To me, that is simply a fundamental issue of fairness.

The amendment also contains a provision to ensure that contractors competing for Department of Defense work do not receive an unfair advantage because they offer inferior health or retirement benefits to what we are offering to Federal employees. I do not think any Member of this Chamber would want employees of the Department of Defense to be at a disadvantage in competing for their jobs because they receive health and retirement benefits that we authorize and ordain from the Federal Government.

This amendment also addresses a concern I have had for quite a long time; that is, it sometimes appears as if the Office of Management and Budget pushes agencies to meet arbitrary numerical targets for the outsourcing of jobs. Decisions on outsourcing should be made on a case-by-case basis where it makes sense for agencies to outsource the jobs as opposed to giving them a quota of outsourcing and say they have to hit that quota.

Arbitrary numerical targets, I am afraid, take agencies off the path of pursuing other means of cutting costs. They overtax agencies already struggling to monitor work performed by contractors. I believe they sometimes, without cause, undermine the civil service, which we ought to be elevating as it is elevated in so many of the other industrialized developed democracies. Those types of numerical targets were prohibited by Congress in the fiscal year 2003 Omnibus appropriations bill, but the Office of Management and Budget seems to be continuing to pressure agencies to conduct competitions between Federal employees and contractors on a certain number of jobs each year. That is not right. The amendment before us makes clear that use of such quotas at the Department of Defense is impermissible.

These are all, in my opinion, sensible, modest reforms. They do not and they are not intended to prohibit the outsourcing of Federal jobs, which I support when it makes sense, but, rather, ensure that the process is objective, fair. It essentially puts both parties here on a level playing field.

The core provisions of this amendment have, in fact, received bipartisan support in the Senate over the last few years. I hope we can continue that support when the amendment comes to the vote today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DURBIN). The Senator from Vermont.

AMENDMENT NO. 2905

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I wanted to take this opportunity to say a few words about an amendment I have offered, No. 2905, that is cosponsored by Senators SUNUNU, KERRY, HARKIN, and BROWN. This amendment addresses a problem that is huge, that is going to continue to grow in coming years, and is something the Congress must address. All across our country, veterans of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan are going to come home with what we believe to be very high levels of post-traumatic stress disorder as well as traumatic brain injury. These are the signature injuries of the war in Iraq. I worry very much that we are not yet prepared to address this serious problem which not only impacts the returning soldiers, it impacts their wives, their kids, and their communities.

The amendment I have offered would develop a pilot program for State-based outreach to assist servicemembers and their families. The concern I have is that those who return home with TBI or PTSD are not going to get the care they need unless somebody makes contact with them and makes them aware of services and help that might be available. We can have all of the money we want allocated to addressing TBI or PTSD, but unless somebody goes out and brings those people into the system, that money is not going to do any good. I worry about that, especially for those returning soldiers who are in the National Guard who are not part of the active duty, who do not have a military infrastructure in front of them. I worry about soldiers coming home to small towns in Vermont and all across this country who suddenly find that their world is very different than the world they left, that they have nightmares, cold sweats, panic attacks when they go through a tunnel, and they don't know how to address those very serious symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

What this amendment does uniquely is create an outreach effort by which trained personnel from the National Guard or elsewhere are literally going to knock on doors and chat with the individual returning soldier and his or her family and get a sense of what is going on in the family, letting those veterans understand that what they are experiencing is something being experienced by tens of thousands of other soldiers, and there is nothing to be ashamed of about the kinds of problems that individual is having.

The essence of this program is its nature as an outreach effort, not to sit back but to aggressively go out, knock on doors, have dialog, and bring people into the system which might be able to help them.

This amendment is supported by the National Guard Association of the United States. They have pointed out that this amendment, with its unique emphasis on outreach, is a perfect compliment to the reintegration and readjustment policies laid out by the Yellow Ribbon Program in the previously adopted Chambliss amendment to the Defense authorization bill.

This is a very strong amendment. I look forward to having support on both sides of the aisle. If we are serious about addressing the problems of PTSD and TBI, we have to be aggressive in outreach. That is what this amendment does.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks recognition?

Mr. KYL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

COST OF PRIVATE SECURITY CONTRACTORS

• Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, the recent incident in which Blackwater USA reportedly killed at least 11 Iraqis and wounded several others has prompted a long overdue examination of the role that private security contractors are playing in Iraq. An article in today's Washington Post titled ''U.S. Pays Steep Price for Private Security in Iraq'' helps to highlight the exorbitant mark-up that private security contractors are reportedly charging the U.S. Government.

Last week, the Senate accepted an amendment to the Defense Department authorization bill that I offered that will require Federal departments to report information to Congress on the total number of contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan, the companies awarded these contracts, and the cost of the contracts. The provisions of the amendment are drawn from the Transparency and Accountability in Military and Security Contracting Act, S. 674, that I introduced in February.

The American people have a right to know how their tax dollars are being spent in Iraq and the role that security contractors are playing in that conflict. We need to make sure that security contractors in Iraq are subject to adequate and transparent oversight and that their actions do not have a negative impact on our efforts to bring the war in Iraq to a responsible end.

I ask to have printed in the RECORD the text of the article from the Washington Post.

The article follows.

[From the Washington Post, Oct. 1, 2007]

U.S. PAYS STEEP PRICE FOR PRIVATE SECURITY IN IRAQ

(By Walter Pincus)

It costs the U.S. government a lot more to hire contract employees as security guards in Iraq than to use American troops.

It comes down to the simple business equation of every transaction requiring a profit.

The contract that Blackwater Security Consulting signed in March 2004 with Regency Hotel and Hospital of Kuwait for a 34-person security team offers a view into the private-security business world. The contract was made public last week by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee majority staff as part of its report on Blackwater's actions related to an incident in Fallujah on March 31, 2004, when four members of the company's security team were killed in an ambush.

Understanding the contract's details requires some background: Regency was a subcontractor to another company, ESS Support Services Worldwide, of Cyprus, that was providing food and catering supplies to U.S. armed forces in Fallujah and other cities in Iraq. And ESS was a subcontractor to KBR, a subsidiary of Halliburton, which had the prime contract with the Defense Department.

So, Blackwater was a subcontractor to Regency, which was a subcontractor to ESS, which was a subcontractor to Halliburton's KBR subsidiary, the prime contractor for the Pentagon—and each company along the way was in business to make a profit.

Under the contract, Regency was to pay Blackwater $11,082,326 for one year, with a second year option, to put together a 34-person team that would provide security services for the ''movement of ESS's staff, management and workforce throughout Kuwait and Iraq and across country borders including the borders of Iraq, Kuwait, Turkey and Jordan.''

Blackwater's personnel were to do more than just convoy security. They were also to run command centers in Kuwait and Iraq 24 hours a day, seven days a week, that were to control all ESS security operations; prepare risk assessments; develop security procedures; train ESS personnel in security; and even vet other Iraqi security forces hired by Regency.

But their main role was to provide ''tactically sound and fully mission capable protective security details, the minimum team size [being] six operators with a minimum of two vehicles to support ESS movements.''

Blackwater's pricing was to be on ''a per person support basis, not including costs for housing, subsistence, vehicles and large equipment items,'' according to the contract. The team would be made up of two senior managers, 12 middle managers and 20 operators.

Regency was to provide Blackwater personnel with housing and necessities, including meals, as well as office space and administrative support. In addition, Regency would provide basic equipment, including vehicles and heavy weapons, while Blackwater was responsible for purchasing individual weapons and ammunition.

According to data provided to the House panel, the average per-day pay to personnel Blackwater hired was $600. According to the schedule of rates, supplies and services attached to the contract, Blackwater charged Regency $1,075 a day for senior managers, $945 a day for middle managers and $815 a day for operators.

Acording to data provided to the House panel, Regency charged ESS an average of $1,100 a day for the same people. How the Blackwater and Regency security charges were passed on by ESS to Halliburton's KBR cannot easily be determined since the catering company was paid on a per-meal basis, with security being a percentage of that charge.

Halliburton's KBR blended its security costs into the blanket costs passed on to the Defense Department.

How much more these costs are compared with the pay of U.S. troops is easier to determine.

An unmarried sergeant given Iraq pay and relief from U.S. taxes makes about $83 to $85 a day, given time in service. A married sergeant with children makes about double that, $170 a day.

Army Gen. David H. Petraeus, the top U.S. commander in Baghdad overseeing more than 160,000 U.S. troops, makes roughly $180,000 a year, or about $493 a day. That comes out to less than half the fee charged by Blackwater for its senior manager of a 34-man security team.●

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, when it comes to running the Federal Government and its workforce, the Bush administration is driven too much by ideology and not enough by common sense. In its quest to scuttle a civil service system that has served us well during peace time and war, the administration has embarked on an unprecedented campaign to privatize what most would agree are ''inherently governmental'' functions.

The Office of Management and Budget, OMB, has spearheaded privatization, claiming it can save taxpayers money. One example: relinquishing tax collection to private contractors. In May 2007, OMB claimed that contracting out Internal Revenue Service, IRS, debt collection to private contractors resulted in saving $35 million in fiscal year 2006. OMB failed to mention that the contractor had missed several deadlines imposed under the contract, leaving IRS employees to perform the bulk of the work. Another concern about that particular contract: our Government is turning over sensitive and private financial information entrusted to it by its citizens and placing that information in the hands of private debt collectors with grave potential for abuse.

An article from the February 3, 2007, New York Times neatly summarizes the situation: ''Without a public debate or formal policy decision, contractors have become a virtual fourth branch of government. On the rise for decades, spending on federal contracts has soared during the Bush Administration, to about $400 billion last year from $207 billion in 2000, fueled by the war in Iraq, domestic security and Hurricane Katrina, but also by a philosophy that encourages outsourcing almost everything government does.'' This unofficial branch of Government is not subject to the same checks and balances of accountability found in the civil service system.

The true cost of the executive branch's decision to privatize is the countless number of dedicated and highly trained Federal workers who will seek employment elsewhere rather than face the uncertainty of working in an environment that is subject to the political whims of an administration that pursues ideology over common sense and sound business policies. Even worse, such a hostile atmosphere will deter highly skilled candidates from ever considering public service, thereby depriving the public sector of the best and brightest who would otherwise seek careers in public service.

Left unchecked, this notion that the Federal Government is divisible and its functions can be auctioned off to the lowest bidder will ultimately deprive us of an experienced Federal workforce and the institutional memory that are essential for the Government to function effectively, especially in a crisis. We don't need each new contractor to start from scratch reinventing the wheel when old problems arise.

At a minimum, Federal employees should be allowed to compete with private contractors on an equal footing, which is where the Kennedy-Mikulski amendment comes in.

Currently, the contracting rules as spelled out in OMB Circular A–76 are overwhelmingly weighed in favor of contractors and against Federal employees. This amendment will correct inequities in the public-private competitive process at the Department of Defense, DOD, to ensure that hard-working civilian defense employees are not unfairly deprived of their jobs. It will also provide basic protection from unfair competition for other Federal employees at other agencies.

The amendment excludes the costs of health and retirement benefits from bids in public-private competitions, so contractors are not rewarded for providing bad benefits or even no benefits at all. Contractors currently have an incentive to shortchange their employees' benefits to gain an unfair advantage in bidding for Government work. The amendment would eliminate this incentive.

The amendment prohibits the use of ''privatization quotas.'' It is unlawful for OMB to set quotas for the amount of work that agencies should outsource away from the Federal workforce, but there is substantial evidence that the administration has a de facto quota system. The amendment would protect agencies' independent decisionmaking by requiring that any decision to conduct a public-private competition be wholly independent of OMB.

The amendment allows Federal employees the same appeal rights as contractors. When Federal employees win a privatization review, contractors can have the agency's decision reviewed by independent third parties, by appealing to the Government Accountability Office, GAO, or the Court of Federal Claims. Federal employees currently have no such appeal rights.

The amendment requires DOD to issue long overdue guidance on outsourcing Federal jobs. These guidelines were due in January, but DOD has failed to act. The amendment requires DOD to issue this guidance.

Finally, the amendment provides a fair opportunity to renew contracts won by Federal employees. Currently, DOD requires managers to ''re-compete'' contracts that are won by Federal employees at the end of each contract term, rather than extending the contract. But the same managers have discretion to extend contracts for jobs that are awarded to private contractors without reopening them to competition. The amendment gives managers discretion to extend contracts awarded to public employees.

We can and should have a discussion about the proper role of Government, and we should try to make the Government as efficient as possible. What we shouldn't do is carve it up and outsource its essential functions willy-nilly to politically favored contractors. There is money at stake but much more too. The Kennedy-Mikulski amendment is a proper way to proceed with regard to public-private competitions, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

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

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

AMENDMENTS NOS. 2937, AS MODIFIED; 3028; 3099, AS MODIFIED; 3102; 2264, AS MODIFIED; 2953, AS MODIFIED; 3005, AS MODIFIED; 2957, AS MODIFIED; 3103, AS MODIFIED; 3107; 3082, AS MODIFIED; 2325, AS MODIFIED; 2897, AS MODIFIED; 2068, AS MODIFIED; 3112; 3032, AS MODIFIED; 2905, AS MODIFIED; AND 3027, AS MODIFIED, TO AMENDMENT NO. 2011, EN-BLOC

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I send a series of 18 amendments to the desk which have been cleared by myself and the now acting ranking member, Senator WARNER, and ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider those amendments en bloc, the amendments be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to any specific amendment be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. WARNER. No objection.

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

The amendments were agreed to, as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 2937, AS MODIFIED

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. 256. COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED FUNDING REDUCTION FOR HIGH ENERGY LASER SYSTEMS TEST FACILITY.

(a) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report containing a cost-benefit analysis of the proposed reduction in Army research, development, test, and evaluation funding for the High Energy Laser Systems Test Facility.

(b) EVALUATION OF IMPACT ON OTHER MILITARY DEPARTMENTS.—The report required under subsection (a) shall include an evaluation of the impact of the proposed reduction in funding on each Department of Defense organization or activity that utilizes the High Energy Laser Systems Test Facility.

AMENDMENT NO. 3028

(Purpose: To allow additional types of vehicles to be used to meet minimum Federal fleet requirements)

At the end of subtitle E of title X, add the following:

SEC. 1070. DEFINITION OF ALTERNATIVE FUELED VEHICLE.

Section 301(3) of the Energy Policy Act of 1992 (42 U.S.C. 13211(3)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''(3) the term'' and inserting the following:

''(3) ALTERNATIVE FUELED VEHICLE.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The term''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(B) INCLUSIONS.—The term 'alternative fueled vehicle' includes—

''(i) a new qualified fuel cell motor vehicle (as defined in section 30B(b)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986);

''(ii) a new advanced lean burn technology motor vehicle (as defined in section 30B(c)(3) of that Code);

''(iii) a new qualified hybrid motor vehicle (as defined in section 30B(d)(3) of that Code); and

''(iv) any other type of vehicle that the agency demonstrates to the Secretary would achieve a significant reduction in petroleum consumption.''.

AMENDMENT NO. 3099, AS MODIFIED

At the end of subtitle C of title I, add the following:

SEC. 132. ADVANCED PROCUREMENT FOR VIRGINIA CLASS SUBMARINE PROGRAM.

Of the amount authorized to be appropriated by section 102(a)(3) for shipbuilding and conversion for the Navy, $1,172,710,000 may be available for advanced procurement for the Virginia class submarine program, of which—

(1) $400,000,000 may be available for the procurement of a second ship set of reactor components; and

(2) $70,000,000 may be available for advanced procurement of non-nuclear long lead time material in order to support a reduced construction span for the boats in the next multiyear procurement program.

AMENDMENT NO. 3102

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Energy to develop and implement a strategy to complete the remediation at the Moab site, and the removal of the tailings to the Crescent Junction site, in the State of Utah by not later than January 1, 2019)

At the end of title VIII, add the following:

SEC. 81____. (a) The Secretary of Energy shall develop a strategy to complete the remediation at the Moab site, and the removal of the tailings to the Crescent Junction site, in the State of Utah by not later than January 1, 2019.

(b) Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate, the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Appropriations of each of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report describing the strategy developed under subsection (a) and changes to the existing cost, scope and schedule of the remediation and removal activities that will be necessary to implement the strategy.

AMENDMENT NO. 2264, AS MODIFIED

At the end of subtitle C of title XIV, add the following:

SEC. 1422. ADMINISTRATION AND OVERSIGHT OF THE ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME.

(a) INDEPENDENCE AND PURPOSE OF RETIREMENT HOME.—Section 1511 of the Armed Forces Retirement Home Act of 1991 (24 U.S.C. 411) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by adding at the end the following: ''However, for the purpose of entering into contracts, agreements, or transactions regarding real property and facilities under the control of the Board, the Retirement Home shall be treated as a military facility of the Department of Defense. The administration of the Retirement Home (including administration for the provision of health care and medical care for residents) shall remain under the direct authority, control, and administration of the Secretary of Defense.''; and

(2) by striking subsection (g) and inserting the following new subsection (g):

''(g) ACCREDITATION.—The Chief Operating Officer shall secure and maintain accreditation by a nationally recognized civilian accrediting organization for each aspect of each facility of the Retirement Home, including medical and dental care, pharmacy, independent living, and assisted living and nursing care.''.

(b) SPECTRUM OF CARE.—Section 1513(b) of the Armed Forces Retirement Home Act of 1991 (24 U.S.C. 413(b)) is amended by inserting after the first sentence the following new sentence: ''The services provided residents of the Retirement Home shall include appropriate nonacute medical and dental services, pharmaceutical services, and transportation of residents, at no cost to residents, to acute medical and dental services and after-hours routine medical care''.

(e) CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER.—The Armed Forces Retirement Home Act of 1991 is further amended by inserting after section 1515 the following new section:

''SEC. 1515A. CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER.

''(a) APPOINTMENT.—(1) The Secretary of Defense shall appoint the Chief Medical Officer of the Retirement Home. The Secretary of Defense shall make the appointment in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security.

''(2) The Chief Medical Officer shall serve a term of two years, but is removable from office during such term at the pleasure of the Secretary.

''(3) The Secretary (or the designee of the Secretary) shall evaluate the performance of the Chief Medical Officer not less frequently than once each year. The Secretary shall carry out such evaluation in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer and the Local Board for each facility of the Retirement Home.

''(4) An officer appointed as Chief Medical Officer of the Retirement Home shall serve as Chief Medical Officer without vacating any other military duties and responsibilities assigned to that officer whether at the time of appointment or afterward.

''(b) QUALIFICATIONS.—(1) To qualify for appointment as the Chief Medical Officer, a person shall be a member of the Medical, Dental, Nurse, or Medical Services Corps of the Armed Forces, including the Health and Safety Directorate of the Coast Guard, serving on active duty in the grade of brigadier general, or in the case of the Navy or the Coast Guard rear admiral (lower half), or higher.

''(2) In making appointments of the Chief Medical Officer, the Secretary of Defense shall, to the extent practicable, provide for the rotation of the appointments among the various Armed Forces and the Health and Safety Directorate of the Coast Guard.

''(c) RESPONSIBILITIES.—(1) The Chief Medical Officer shall be responsible to the Secretary, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, and the Chief Operating Officer for the direction and oversight of the provision of medical, mental health, and dental care at each facility of the Retirement Home.

''(2) The Chief Medical Officer shall advise the Secretary, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, the Chief Operating Officer, and the Local Board for each facility of the Retirement Home on all medical and medical administrative matters of the Retirement Home.

''(d) DUTIES.—In carrying out the responsibilities set forth in subsection (c), the Chief Medical Officer shall perform the following duties:

''(1) Ensure the timely availability to residents of the Retirement Home, at locations other than the Retirement Home, of such acute medical, mental health, and dental care as such resident may require that is not available at the applicable facility of the Retirement Home.

''(2) Ensure compliance by the facilities of the Retirement Home with accreditation standards, applicable health care standards of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and any other applicable health care standards and requirements (including requirements identified in applicable reports of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense).

''(3) Periodically visit and inspect the medical facilities and medical operations of each facility of the Retirement Home.

''(4) Periodically examine and audit the medical records and administration of the Retirement Home.

''(5) Consult with the Local Board for each facility of the Retirement Home not less frequently than once each year.

''(e) ADVISORY BODIES.—In carrying out the responsibilities set forth in subsection (c) and the duties set forth in subsection (d), the Chief Medical Officer may establish and seek the advice of such advisory bodies as the Chief Medical Officer considers appropriate.''.

(f) LOCAL BOARDS OF TRUSTEES.—

(1) DUTIES.—Subsection (b) of section 1516 of the Armed Forces Retirement Home Act of 1991 (24 U.S.C. 416) is amended to read as follows:

''(b) DUTIES.—(1) The Local Board for a facility shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Director of the facility and to the Chief Operating Officer.

''(2) The Local Board for a facility shall provide to the Chief Operating Officer and the Director of the facility such guidance and recommendations on the administration of the facility as the Local Board considers appropriate.

''(3) The Local Board for a facility shall provide to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness not less often than annually an assessment of all aspects of the facility, including the quality of care at the facility.

''(4) Not less frequently than once each year, the Local Board for a facility shall submit to Congress a report that includes an assessment of all aspects of the facility, including the quality of care at the facility.''.

(2) COMPOSITION.—Subparagraph (K) of subsection (c) of such section is amended to read as follows:

''(K) One senior representative of one of the chief personnel officers of the Armed Forces, who shall be a member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty in the grade of brigadier general, or in the case of the Navy or Coast Guard, rear admiral (lower half).''.

(h) INSPECTION OF RETIREMENT HOME.—Section 1518 of such Act (24 U.S.C. 418) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 1518. INSPECTION OF RETIREMENT HOME.

''(a) INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.—(1) The Inspector General of the Department of Defense shall have the duty to inspect the Retirement Home.

''(2) The Inspector General shall advise the Secretary of Defense and the Director of each facility of the Retirement Home on matters relating to waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement of the Retirement Home.

''(b) INSPECTIONS BY INSPECTOR GENERAL.—(1) Every two years, the Inspector General of the Department of Defense shall perform a comprehensive inspection of all aspects of each facility of the Retirement Home, including independent living, assisted living, medical and dental care, pharmacy, financial and contracting records, and any aspect of either facility on which the Local Board for the facility or the resident advisory committee or council of the facility recommends inspection.

''(2) The Inspector General may be assisted in inspections under this subsection by a medical inspector general of a military department designated for purposes of this subsection by the Secretary of Defense.

''(3) In conducting the inspection of a facility of the Retirement Home under this subsection, the Inspector General shall solicit concerns, observations, and recommendations from the Local Board for the facility, the resident advisory committee or council of the facility, and the residents of the facility. Any concerns, observations, and recommendations solicited from residents shall be solicited on a not-for-attribution basis.

''(4) The Chief Operating Officer and the Director of each facility of the Retirement Home shall make all staff, other personnel, and records of each facility available to the Inspector General in a timely manner for purposes of inspections under this subsection.

''(c) REPORTS ON INSPECTIONS BY INSPECTOR GENERAL.—(1) Not later than 45 days after completing an inspection of a facility of the Retirement Home under subsection (b), the Inspector General shall submit to the Secretary of Defense, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, the Chief Operating Officer, the Director of the facility, and the Local Board for the facility, and to Congress, a report describing the results of the inspection and containing such recommendations as the Inspector General considers appropriate in light of the inspection.

''(2) Not later than 45 days after receiving a report of the Inspector General under paragraph (1), the Director of the facility concerned shall submit the Secretary of Defense, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, the Chief Operating Officer, and the Local Board for the facility, and to Congress, a plan to address the recommendations and other matters set forth in the report.

''(d) ADDITIONAL INSPECTIONS.—(1) Every two years, in a year in which the Inspector General does not perform an inspection under subsection (b), the Chief Operating Officer shall request the inspection of each facility of the Retirement Home by a nationally recognized civilian accrediting organization in accordance with section 1422(a)(2)(g) of this amendment.

''(2) The Chief Operating Officer and the Director of a facility being inspected under this subsection shall make all staff, other personnel, and records of the facility available to the civilian accrediting organization in a timely manner for purposes of inspections under this subsection.

''(e) REPORTS ON ADDITIONAL INSPECTIONS.—(1) Not later than 45 days after receiving a report of an inspection from the civilian accrediting organization under subsection (d), the Director of the facility concerned shall submit to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, the Chief Operating Officer, and the Local Board for the facility a report containing—

''(A) the results of the inspection; and

''(B) a plan to address any recommendations and other matters set forth in the report.

''(2) Not later than 45 days after receiving a report and plan under paragraph (1), the Secretary of Defense shall submit the report and plan to Congress.''.

(i) ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME TRUST FUND.—Section 1519 of the Armed Forces Retirement Home Act of 1991 (24 U.S.C. 419) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(d) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—The Chief Financial Officer of the Armed Forces Retirement Home shall comply with the reporting requirements of subchapter II of chapter 35 of title 31, United States Code.''.

AMENDMENT NO. 2953, AS MODIFIED

At the end of subtitle E of title V, add the following:

SEC. 565. EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES ENROLLING MILITARY DEPENDENT CHILDREN.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Help for Military Children Affected by War Act of 2007''.

(b) ASSISTANCE AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of Defense may provide assistance to eligible local educational agencies for the additional education, counseling, and other needs of military dependent children who are affected by war-related action.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ELIGIBLE LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—The term ''eligible local educational agency'' means a local educational agency that—

(A) has a number of military dependent children in average daily attendance in the schools served by the local educational agency during the current school year, determined in consultation with the Secretary of Education, that—

(i) equaled or exceeded 20 percent of the number of all children in average daily attendance in the schools served by such agency during the current school year; or

(ii) is 1,000 or more,

whichever is less; and

(B) is designated by the Secretary of Defense as impacted by—

(i) Operation Iraqi Freedom;

(ii) Operation Enduring Freedom; or

(iii) the global rebasing plan of the Department of Defense.

(2) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—The term ''local educational agency'' has the meaning given the term in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

(3) MILITARY DEPENDENT CHILD.—The term ''military dependent child''—

(A) means a child described in subparagraph (B) or (D)(i) of section 8003(a)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7703(a)(1)); and

(B) includes a child—

(i) who resided on Federal property with a parent on active duty in the National Guard or Reserve; or

(ii) who had a parent on active duty in the National Guard or Reserve but did not reside on Federal property.

(d) ASSISTANCE.—Assistance provided under this section may be used for—

(1) tutoring, after-school, and dropout prevention activities for military dependent children with a parent who is or has been impacted by war-related action described in clause (i), (ii), or (iii) of subsection (c)(1)(B);

(2) professional development of teachers, principals, and counselors on the needs of military dependent children with a parent who is or has been impacted by war-related action described in clause (i), (ii), or (iii) of subsection (c)(1)(B); and

(3) counseling and other comprehensive support services for military dependent children with a parent who is or has been impacted by war-related action described in clause (i), (ii), or (iii) of subsection (c)(1)(B), including the subsidization of a percentage of hiring of a military-school liaison.

AMENDMENT NO. 3005, AS MODIFIED

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. PROGRAMS FOR USE OF LEAVE BY CAREGIVERS FOR FAMILY MEMBERS OF INDIVIDUALS PERFORMING CERTAIN MILITARY SERVICE.

(a) FEDERAL EMPLOYEES PROGRAM.—

(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

(A) CAREGIVER.—The term ''caregiver'' means an individual who—

(i) is an employee;

(ii) is at least 21 years of age; and

(iii) is capable of self care and care of children or other dependent family members of a qualified member of the Armed Forces.

(B) COVERED PERIOD OF SERVICE.—The term ''covered period of service'' means any period of service performed by an employee as a caregiver while the individual who designated the caregiver under paragraph (3) remains a qualified member of the Armed Forces.

(C) EMPLOYEE.—The term ''employee'' has the meaning given under section 6331 of title 5, United States Code.

(D) FAMILY MEMBER.—The term ''family member'' includes—

(i) individuals for whom the qualified member of the Armed Forces provides medical, financial, and logistical support (such as housing, food, clothing, or transportation); and

(ii) children under the age of 18 years, elderly adults, persons with disabilities, and other persons with a mental or physical disability, who are unable to care for themselves in the absence of the qualified member of the Armed Forces.

(E) QUALIFIED MEMBER OF THE ARMED FORCES.—The term ''qualified member of the Armed Forces'' means—

(i) a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces as described under section 10101 of title 10, United States Code, who has received notice to report to, or is serving on, active duty in the Armed Forces in support of a contingency operation as defined under section 101(a)(13) of title 10, United States Code; or

(ii) a member of the Armed Forces on active duty who is eligible for hostile fire or imminent danger special pay under section 310 of title 37, United States Code.

(2) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—The Office of Personnel Management may establish a program to authorize a caregiver to use under paragraph (4)—

(A) any sick leave of that caregiver during a covered period of service; and

(B) any leave available to that caregiver under subchapter III or IV of chapter 63 of title 5, United States Code, during a covered period of service.

(3) DESIGNATION OF CAREGIVER.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—A qualified member of the Armed Forces shall submit a written designation of the individual who is the caregiver for any family member of that member of the Armed Forces during a covered period of service to—

(i) the employing agency; and

(ii) the uniformed service of which the individual is a member.

(B) DESIGNATION OF SPOUSE.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1)(A)(ii), an individual less than 21 years of age may be designated as a caregiver if that individual is the spouse of the qualified member of the Armed Forces making the designation.

(4) USE OF CAREGIVER LEAVE.—Leave may only be used under this subsection for purposes directly relating to, or resulting from, the giving of care by the employee to a family member under the designation of the employee as the caregiver for the family member.

(5) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Office of Personnel Management shall prescribe regulations to carry out this subsection, including a definition of activities that qualify as the giving of care.

(6) TERMINATION.—The program under this subsection shall terminate on December 31, 2010.

(b) VOLUNTARY PRIVATE SECTOR LEAVE PROGRAM.—

(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

(A) CAREGIVER.—The term ''caregiver'' means an individual who—

(i) is an employee;

(ii) is at least 21 years of age; and

(iii) is capable of self care and care of children or other dependent family members of a qualified member of the Armed Forces.

(B) COVERED PERIOD OF SERVICE.—The term ''covered period of service'' means any period of service performed by an employee as a caregiver while the individual who designated the caregiver under paragraph (4) remains a qualified member of the Armed Forces.

(C) EMPLOYEE.—The term ''employee'' means an employee of a business entity participating in the program under this subsection.

(D) FAMILY MEMBER.—The term ''family member'' includes—

(i) individuals for whom the qualified member of the Armed Forces provides medical, financial, and logistical support (such as housing, food, clothing, or transportation); and

(ii) children under the age of 18 years, elderly adults, persons with disabilities, and other persons with a mental or physical disability, who are unable to care for themselves in the absence of the qualified member of the Armed Forces.

(E) QUALIFIED MEMBER OF THE ARMED FORCES.—The term ''qualified member of the Armed Forces'' means—

(i) a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces as described under section 10101 of title 10, United States Code, who has received notice to report to, or is serving on, active duty in the Armed Forces in support of a contingency operation as defined under section 101(a)(13) of title 10, United States Code; or

(ii) a member of the Armed Forces on active duty who is eligible for hostile fire or imminent danger special pay under section 310 of title 37, United States Code.

(2) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Labor may establish a program to authorize employees of business entities described under paragraph (3) to use sick leave, or any other leave available to an employee, during a covered period of service for purposes relating to, or resulting from, the giving of care by the employee to a family member under the designation of the employee as the caregiver for the family member.

(B) EXCEPTION.—Subparagraph (A) shall not apply to leave made available under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (29 U.S.C. 2601 et seq.).

(3) VOLUNTARY BUSINESS PARTICIPATION.—The Secretary of Labor shall solicit business entities to voluntarily participate in the program under this subsection.

(4) DESIGNATION OF CAREGIVER.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—A qualified member of the Armed Forces shall submit a written designation of the individual who is the caregiver for any family member of that member of the Armed Forces during a covered period of service to—

(i) the employing business entity; and

(ii) the uniformed service of which the individual is a member.

(B) DESIGNATION OF SPOUSE.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1)(A)(ii), an individual less than 21 years of age may be designated as a caregiver if that individual is the spouse of the qualified member of the Armed Forces making the designation.

(5) USE OF CAREGIVER LEAVE.—Leave may only be used under this subsection for purposes directly relating to, or resulting from, the giving of care by the employee to a family member under the designation of the employee as the caregiver for the family member.

(6) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Labor shall prescribe regulations to carry out this subsection.

(7) TERMINATION.—The program under this subsection shall terminate on December 31, 2010.

(c) GAO REPORT.—Not later than March 31, 2010, the Government Accountability Office shall submit a report to Congress on the programs under subsections (a) and (b) that includes—

(1) an evaluation of the success of each program; and

(2) recommendations for the continuance or termination of each program.

AMENDMENT NO. 2957 AS MODIFIED

DIVISION —MARITIME ADMINISTRATION

SEC. —001. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This division may be cited as the ''Maritime Administration Authorities Act of 2007''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this division is as follows:

Sec. —001. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—GENERAL

Sec. —102. Commercial vessel chartering authority.
Sec. —103. Maritime Administration vessel chartering authority.
Sec. —104. Chartering to state and local governmental instrumentalities.
Sec. —105. Disposal of obsolete government vessels.
Sec. —106. Vessel transfer authority.
Sec. —107. Sea trials for ready reserve force.
Sec. —108. Review of applications for loans and guarantees.

TITLE II—TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS

Sec. —201. Statutory construction.
Sec. —202. Personal injury to or death of seamen.
Sec. —203. Amendments to chapter 537 based on Public Law 109–163.
Sec. —204. Additional amendments based on Public Law 109–163.
Sec. —205. Amendments based on Public Law 109–171.
Sec. —206. Amendments based on Public Law 109–241.
Sec. —207. Amendments based on Public Law 109–364.
Sec. —208. Miscellaneous amendments.
Sec. —209. Application of sunset provision to codified provision.
Sec. —210. Additional Technical corrections.

TITLE I—GENERAL

SEC. —102. COMMERCIAL VESSEL CHARTERING AUTHORITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter III of chapter 575 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 57533. Vessel chartering authority

''The Secretary of Transportation may enter into contracts or other agreements on behalf of the United States to purchase, charter, operate, or otherwise acquire the use of any vessels documented under chapter 121 of this title and any other related real or personal property. The Secretary is authorized to use this authority as the Secretary deems appropriate.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The chapter analysis for chapter 575 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following:

''57533. Vessel chartering authority.''.

SEC. —103. MARITIME ADMINISTRATION VESSEL CHARTERING AUTHORITY.

Section 50303 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by—

(1) inserting ''vessels,'' after ''piers,''; and

(2) by striking ''control;'' in subsection (a)(1) and inserting ''control, except that the prior consent of the Secretary of Defense for such use shall be required with respect to any vessel in the Ready Reserve Force or in the National Defense Reserve Fleet which is maintained in a retention status for the Department of Defense;''.

SEC. —104. CHARTERING TO STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL INSTRUMENTALITIES.

Section 11(b) of the Merchant Ship Sales Act of 1946 (50 U.S.C. App. 1744(b)), is amended—

(1) by striking ''or'' after the semicolon in paragraph (3);

(2) by striking ''Defense.'' in paragraph (4) and inserting ''Defense; or''; and

(3) by adding at the end thereof the following:

''(5) on a reimbursable basis, for charter to the government of any State, locality, or Territory of the United States, except that the prior consent of the Secretary of Defense for such use shall be required with respect to any vessel in the Ready Reserve Force or in the National Defense Reserve Fleet which is maintained in a retention status for the Department of Defense.''.

SEC. —105. DISPOSAL OF OBSOLETE GOVERNMENT VESSELS.

Section 6(c)(1) of the National Maritime Heritage Act of 1994 (16 U.S.C. 5405(c)(1)) is amended—

(1) by inserting ''(either by sale or purchase of disposal services)'' after ''shall dispose''; and

(2) by striking subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) and inserting the following:

''(A) in accordance with a priority system for disposing of vessels, as determined by the Secretary, which shall include provisions requiring the Maritime Administration to—

''(i) dispose of all deteriorated high priority ships that are available for disposal, within 12 months of their designation as such; and

''(ii) give priority to the disposition of those vessels that pose the most significant danger to the environment or cost the most to maintain;''.

SEC. —106. VESSEL TRANSFER AUTHORITY.

Section 50304 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end thereof the following:

''(d) VESSEL CHARTERS TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS.—On a reimbursable or nonreimbursable basis, as determined by the Secretary of Transportation, the Secretary may charter or otherwise make available a vessel under the jurisdiction of the Secretary to any other department, upon the request by the Secretary of the department that receives the vessel. The prior consent of the Secretary of Defense for such use shall be required with respect to any vessel in the Ready Reserve Force or in the National Defense Reserve Fleet which is maintained in a retention status for the Department of Defense.''.

SEC. —107. SEA TRIALS FOR READY RESERVE FORCE.

Section 11(c)(1)(B) of the Merchant Ship Sales Act of 1946 (50 U.S.C. App. 1744(c)(1)(B)) is amended to read as follows:

''(B) activate and conduct sea trials on each vessel at least once every 30 months;''.

SEC. —108. REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS FOR LOANS AND GUARANTEES.

(a) PLAN.—Within 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Maritime Administration shall develop a comprehensive plan for the review of traditional applications and non-traditional applications.

(b) INCLUSIONS.—The comprehensive plan shall include a description of the application review process that shall not exceed 90 days for review of traditional applications.

(c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Administrator shall submit a report describing the comprehensive plan to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the House of Representatives Committee on Armed Forces.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) NONTRADITIONAL APPLICATION.—The term ''nontraditional application'' means an application for a loan, guarantee, or a commitment to guarantee submitted pursuant to chapter 537 of title 46, United States Code, that is not a traditional application, as determined by the Administrator.

(2) TRADITIONAL APPLICATION.—The term ''traditional application'' means an application for a loan, guarantee, or a commitment to guarantee submitted pursuant to chapter 537 of title 46, United States Code, that involves a market, technology, and financial structure of a type that has been approved in such an application multiple times before the date of enactment of this Act without default or unreasonable risk to the United States, as determined by the Administrator.

TITLE II—TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS

SEC. —201. STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION.

The amendments made by this title make no substantive change in existing law and may not be construed as making a substantive change in existing law.

SEC. —202. PERSONAL INJURY TO OR DEATH OF SEAMEN.

(a) AMENDMENT.—Section 30104 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by striking subsections (a) and (b) and inserting the following:

''(a) CAUSE OF ACTION.—A seaman injured in the course of employment or, if the seaman dies from the injury, the personal representative of the seaman may bring an action against the employer. In such an action, the laws of the United States regulating recovery for personal injury to, or death of, a railway employee shall apply. Such an action may be maintained in admiralty or, at the plaintiff's election, as an action at law, with the right of trial by jury.

''(b) VENUE.—When the plaintiff elects to maintain an action at law, venue shall be in the judicial district in which the employer resides or the employer's principal office is located.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall be effective as if included in the enactment of Public Law 109–304.

SEC. —203. AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 537 BASED ON PUBLIC LAW 109–163.

(a) AMENDMENTS.—Title 46, United States Code, is amended as follows:

(1) Section 53701 is amended by—

(A) redesignating paragraphs (2) through (13) as paragraphs (3) through (14), respectively;

(B) inserting after paragraph (1) the following:

''(2) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term 'Administrator' means the Administrator of the Maritime Administration.''; and

(C) striking paragraph (13) (as redesignated) and inserting the following:

''(13) SECRETARY.—The term 'Secretary' means the Secretary of Commerce with respect to fishing vessels and fishery facilities.''.

(2) Section 53706(c) is amended to read as follows:

''(c) PRIORITIES FOR CERTAIN VESSELS.—

''(1) VESSELS.—In guaranteeing or making a commitment to guarantee an obligation under this chapter, the Administrator shall give priority to—

''(A) a vessel that is otherwise eligible for a guarantee and is constructed with assistance under subtitle D of the Maritime Security Act of 2003 (46 U.S.C. 53101 note); and

''(B) after applying subparagraph (A), a vessel that is otherwise eligible for a guarantee and that the Secretary of Defense determines—

''(i) is suitable for service as a naval auxiliary in time of war or national emergency; and

''(ii) meets a shortfall in sealift capacity or capability.

''(2) TIME FOR DETERMINATION.—The Secretary of Defense shall determine whether a vessel satisfies paragraph (1)(B) not later than 30 days after receipt of a request from the Administrator for such a determination.''.

(3) Section 53707 is amended—

(A) by inserting ''or Administrator'' in subsections (a) and (d) after ''Secretary'' each place it appears;

(B) by striking ''Secretary of Transportation'' in subsection (b) and inserting ''Administrator'';

(C) by striking ''of Commerce'' in subsection (c); and

(D) in subsection (d)(2), by—

(i) inserting ''if the Secretary or Administrator considers necessary,'' before ''the waiver''; and

(ii) striking ''the increased'' and inserting ''any significant increase in''.

(4) Section 53708 is amended—

(A) by striking ''SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION'' in the heading of subsection (a) and inserting ''ADMINISTRATOR'';

(B) by striking ''Secretary'' and ''Secretary of Transportation'' each place they appear in subsection (a) and inserting ''Administrator'';

(C) by striking ''OF COMMERCE'' in the heading of subsection (b);

(D) by striking ''of Commerce'' in subsections (b) and (c);

(E) in subsection (d), by—

(i) inserting ''or Administrator'' after ''Secretary'' the first place it appears; and

(ii) striking ''financial structures, or other risk factors identified by the Secretary. Any independent analysis conducted under this subsection shall be performed by a party chosen by the Secretary.'' and inserting ''or financial structures. A third party independent analysis conducted under this subsection shall be performed by a private sector expert in assessing such risk factors who is selected by the Secretary or Administrator.''; and

(F) in subsection (e), by—

(i) inserting ''or Administrator'' after ''Secretary'' the first place it appears; and

(ii) striking ''financial structures, or other risk factors identified by the Secretary'' and inserting ''or financial structures''.

(5) Section 53710(b)(1) is amended by striking ''Secretary's'' and inserting ''Administrator's''.

(6) Section 53712(b) is amended by striking the last sentence and inserting ''If the Secretary or Administrator has waived a requirement under section 53707(d) of this title, the loan agreement shall include requirements for additional payments, collateral, or equity contributions to meet the waived requirement upon the occurrence of verifiable conditions indicating that the obligor's financial condition enables the obligor to meet the waived requirement.''.

(7) Subsections (c) and (d) of section 53717 are each amended—

(A) by striking ''OF COMMERCE'' in the subsection heading; and

(B) by striking ''of Commerce'' each place it appears.

(8) Section 53732(e)(2) is amended by inserting ''of Defense'' after ''Secretary'' the second place it appears.

(9) The following provisions are amended by striking ''Secretary'' and ''Secretary of Transportation'' and inserting ''Administrator'':

(A) Section 53710(b)(2)(A)(i).

(B) Section 53717(b) each place it appears in a heading and in text.

(C) Section 53718.

(D) Section 53731 each place it appears, except where ''Secretary'' is followed by ''of Energy''.

(E) Section 53732 (as amended by paragraph (8)) each place it appears, except where ''Secretary'' is followed by ''of the Treasury'', ''of State'', or ''of Defense''.

(F) Section 53733 each place it appears.

(10) The following provisions are amended by inserting ''or Administrator'' after ''Secretary'' each place it appears in headings and text, except where ''Secretary'' is followed by ''of Transportation'' or ''of the Treasury'':

(A) The items relating to sections 53722 and 53723 in the chapter analysis for chapter 537.

(B) Sections 53701(1), (4), and (9) (as redesignated by paragraph (1)(A)), 53702(a), 53703, 53704, 53706(a)(3)(B)(iii), 53709(a)(1), (b)(1) and (2)(A), and (d), 53710(a) and (c), 53711, 53712 (except in the last sentence of subsection (b) as amended by paragraph (6)), 53713 to 53716, 53721 to 53725, and 53734.

(11) Sections 53715(d)(1), 53716(d)(3), 53721(c), 53722(a)(1) and (b)(1)(B), and 53724(b) are amended by inserting ''or Administrator's'' after ''Secretary's''.

(b) REPEAL OF SUPERSEDED AMENDMENTS.—Section 3507 (except subsection (c)(4)) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006 (Public Law 109–163) is repealed.

SEC. —204. ADDITIONAL AMENDMENTS BASED ON PUBLIC LAW 109–163.

(a) AMENDMENTS.—Title 46, United States Code, is amended as follows:

(1) Chapters 513 and 515 are amended by striking ''Naval Reserve'' each place it appears in analyses, headings, and text and inserting ''Navy Reserve''.

(2) Section 51504(f) is amended to read as follows:

''(f) FUEL COSTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the availability of appropriations, the Secretary shall pay to each State maritime academy the costs of fuel used by a vessel provided under this section while used for training.

''(2) MAXIMUM AMOUNTS.—The amount of the payment to a State maritime academy under paragraph (1) may not exceed—

''(A) $100,000 for fiscal year 2006;

''(B) $200,000 for fiscal year 2007; and

''(C) $300,000 for fiscal year 2008 and each fiscal year thereafter.''.

(3) Section 51505(b)(2)(B) is amended by striking ''$200,000'' and inserting ''$300,000 for fiscal year 2006, $400,000 for fiscal year 2007, and $500,000 for fiscal year 2008 and each fiscal year thereafter''.

(4) Section 51701(a) is amended by striking ''of the United States.'' and inserting ''of the United States and to perform functions to assist the United States merchant marine, as determined necessary by the Secretary.''.

(5)(A) Section 51907 is amended to read as follows:

''§ 51907. Provision of decorations, medals, and replacements

''The Secretary of Transportation may provide—

''(1) the decorations and medals authorized by this chapter and replacements for those decorations and medals; and

''(2) replacements for decorations and medals issued under a prior law.''.

(B) The item relating to section 51907 in the chapter analysis for chapter 519 is amended to read as follows:

''51907. Provision of decorations, medals, and replacements.''.

(6)(A) The following new chapter is inserted after chapter 539:

"CHAPTER 541—MISCELLANEOUS

''Sec.

''54101. Assistance for small shipyards and maritime communities.''.

(B) Section 3506 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006 (46 U.S.C. 53101 note) is transferred to and redesignated as section 54101 of title 46, United States Code, to appear at the end of chapter 541 of title 46, as inserted by subparagraph (A).

(C) The heading of such section, as transferred by subparagraph (B), is amended to read as follows:

''§ 54101. Assistance for small shipyards and maritime communities''.

(D) Paragraph (1) of subsection (h) of such section, as transferred by subparagraph (B), is amended by striking ''(15 U.S.C. 632);'' and inserting ''(15 U.S.C. 632));''.

(E) The table of chapters at the beginning of subtitle V is amended by inserting after the item relating to chapter 539 the following new item:

''541. Miscellaneous ..... 54101''.

(b) REPEAL OF SUPERSEDED AMENDMENTS.—Sections 515(g)(2), 3502, 3509, and 3510 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006 (Public Law 109–163) are repealed.

SEC. —205. AMENDMENTS BASED ON PUBLIC LAW 109–171.

(a) AMENDMENTS.—Section 60301 of title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''2 cents per ton (but not more than a total of 10 cents per ton per year)'' in subsection (a) and inserting ''4.5 cents per ton, not to exceed a total of 22.5 cents per ton per year, for fiscal years 2006 through 2010, and 2 cents per ton, not to exceed a total of 10 cents per ton per year, for each fiscal year thereafter,''; and

(2) by striking ''6 cents per ton (but not more than a total of 30 cents per ton per year)'' in subsection (b) and inserting ''13.5 cents per ton, not to exceed a total of 67.5 cents per ton per year, for fiscal years 2006 through 2010, and 6 cents per ton, not to exceed a total of 30 cents per ton per year, for each fiscal year thereafter,''.

(b) REPEAL OF SUPERSEDED AMENDMENTS.—Section 4001 of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (Public Law 109–171) is repealed.

SEC. —206. AMENDMENTS BASED ON PUBLIC LAW 109–241.

(a) AMENDMENTS.—Title 46, United States Code, is amended as follows:

(1) Section 12111 is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(d) ACTIVITIES INVOLVING MOBILE OFFSHORE DRILLING UNITS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Only a vessel for which a certificate of documentation with a registry endorsement is issued may engage in—

''(A) the setting, relocation, or recovery of the anchors or other mooring equipment of a mobile offshore drilling unit that is located over the outer Continental Shelf (as defined in section 2(a) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331(a))); or

''(B) the transportation of merchandise or personnel to or from a point in the United States from or to a mobile offshore drilling unit located over the outer Continental Shelf that is not attached to the seabed.

''(2) COASTWISE TRADE NOT AUTHORIZED.—Nothing in paragraph (1) authorizes the employment in the coastwise trade of a vessel that does not meet the requirements of section 12112 of this title.''.

(2) Section 12139(a) is amended by striking ''and charterers'' and inserting ''charterers, and mortgagees''.

(3) Section 51307 is amended—

(A) by striking ''and'' at the end of paragraph (2);

(B) by striking ''organizations.'' in paragraph (3) and inserting ''organizations; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) on any other vessel considered by the Secretary to be necessary or appropriate or in the national interest.''.

(4) Section 55105(b)(3) is amended by striking ''Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating'' and inserting ''Secretary of Homeland Security''.

(5) Section 70306(a) is amended by striking ''Not later than February 28 of each year, the Secretary shall submit a report'' and inserting ''The Secretary shall submit an annual report''.

(6) Section 70502(d)(2) is amended to read as follows:

''(2) RESPONSE TO CLAIM OF REGISTRY.—The response of a foreign nation to a claim of registry under paragraph (1)(A) or (C) may be made by radio, telephone, or similar oral or electronic means, and is proved conclusively by certification of the Secretary of State or the Secretary's designee.''.

(b) REPEAL OF SUPERSEDED AMENDMENTS.—Sections 303, 307, 308, 310, 901(q), and 902(o) of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2006 (Public Law 109–241) are repealed.

SEC. —207. AMENDMENTS BASED ON PUBLIC LAW 109–364.

(a) UPDATING OF CROSS REFERENCES.—Section 1017(b)(2) of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (Public Law 109–364, 10 U.S.C. 2631 note) is amended by striking ''section 27 of the Merchant Marine Act, 1920 (46 U.S.C. 883), section 12106 of title 46, United States Code, and section 2 of the Shipping Act, 1916 (46 U.S.C. App. 802)'' and inserting ''sections 12112, 50501, and 55102 of title 46, United States Code''.

(b) SECTION 51306(e).—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 51306 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(e) ALTERNATIVE SERVICE.—

''(1) SERVICE AS COMMISSIONED OFFICER.—An individual who, for the 5-year period following graduation from the Academy, serves as a commissioned officer on active duty in an armed force of the United States or as a commissioned officer of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration or the Public Health Service shall be excused from the requirements of paragraphs (3) through (5) of subsection (a).

''(2) MODIFICATION OR WAIVER.—The Secretary may modify or waive any of the terms and conditions set forth in subsection (a) through the imposition of alternative service requirements.''.

(2) APPLICATION.—Section 51306(e) of title 46, United States Code, as added by paragraph (1), applies only to an individual who enrolls as a cadet at the United States Merchant Marine Academy, and signs an agreement under section 51306(a) of title 46, after October 17, 2006.

(c) SECTION 51306(f).—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 51306 of title 46, United States Code, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(f) SERVICE OBLIGATION PERFORMANCE REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to any otherwise applicable restrictions on disclosure in section 552a of title 5, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating, the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service—

''(A) shall report the status of obligated service of an individual graduate of the Academy upon request of the Secretary; and

''(B) may, in their discretion, notify the Secretary of any failure of the graduate to perform the graduate's duties, either on active duty or in the Ready Reserve component of their respective service, or as a commissioned officer of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration or the Public Health Service, respectively.

''(2) INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED.—A report or notice under paragraph (1) shall identify any graduate determined to have failed to comply with service obligation requirements and provide all required information as to why such graduate failed to comply.

''(3) CONSIDERED AS IN DEFAULT.—Upon receipt of such a report or notice, such graduate may be considered to be in default of the graduate's service obligations by the Secretary, and subject to all remedies the Secretary may have with respect to such a default.''.

(2) APPLICATION.—Section 51306(f) of title 46, United States Code, as added by paragraph (1), does not apply with respect to an agreement entered into under section 51306(a) of title 46, United States Code, before October 17, 2006.

(d) SECTION 51509(c).—Section 51509(c) of title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''MIDSHIPMAN AND'' in the subsection heading and ''midshipman and'' in the text; and

(2) inserting ''or the Coast Guard Reserve'' after ''Reserve)''.

(e) SECTION 51908(a).—Section 51908(a) of title 46, United States Code, is amended by striking ''under this chapter'' and inserting ''by this chapter or the Secretary of Transportation''.

(f) SECTION 53105(e)(2).—Section 53105(e)(2) of title 46, United States Code, is amended by striking ''section 2 of the Shipping Act, 1916 (46 U.S.C. App. 802),'' and inserting ''section 50501 of this title''.

(g) REPEAL OF SUPERSEDED AMENDMENTS.—Sections 3505, 3506, 3508, and 3510(a) and (b) of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (Public Law 109–364) are repealed.

SEC. —208. MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS.

(a) DELETION OF OBSOLETE REFERENCE TO CANTON ISLAND.—Section 55101(b) of title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting ''or'' after the semicolon at the end of paragraph (2);

(2) by striking paragraph (3); and

(3) by redesignating paragraph (4) as paragraph (3).

(b) IMPROVEMENT OF HEADING.—Title 46, United States Code, is amended as follows:

(1) The heading of section 55110 is amended by inserting ''**valueless material or**'' before ''**dredged material**''.

(2) The item for section 55110 in the analysis for chapter 551 is amended by inserting ''valueless material or'' before ''dredged material''.

(c) OCEANOGRAPHIC RESEARCH VESSELS AND SAILING SCHOOL VESSELS.—

(1) Section 10101(3) of title 46, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''on an oceanographic research vessel'' after ''scientific personnel''.

(2) Section 50503 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by striking ''An oceanographic research vessel'' and all that follows and inserting the following:

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms 'oceanographic research vessel' and 'scientific personnel' have the meaning given those terms in section 2101 of this title.

''(b) NOT SEAMEN.—Scientific personnel on an oceanographic research vessel are deemed not to be seamen under part G of subtitle II, section 30104, or chapter 303 of this title.

''(c) NOT ENGAGED IN TRADE OR COMMERCE.—An oceanographic research vessel is deemed not to be engaged in trade or commerce.''.

(3) Section 50504(b)(1) of title 46, United States Code, is amended by striking ''parts B, F, and G of subtitle II'' and inserting ''part B, F, or G of subtitle II, section 30104, or chapter 303''.

SEC. —209. APPLICATION OF SUNSET PROVISION TO CODIFIED PROVISION.

For purposes of section 303 of the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003 (Public Law 108–27, 26 U.S.C. 1 note), the amendment made by section 301(a)(2)(E) of that Act shall be deemed to have been made to section 53511(f)(2) of title 46, United States Code.

SEC. —210. ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.

(a) AMENDMENTS TO TITLE 46.—Title 46, United States Code, is amended as follows:

(1) The analysis for chapter 21 is amended by striking the item relating to section 2108.

(2) Section 12113(g) is amended by inserting ''and'' after ''Conservation''.

(3) Section 12131 is amended by striking ''commmand'' and inserting ''command''.

(b) AMENDMENTS TO PUBLIC LAW 109–304.—

(1) AMENDMENTS.—Public Law 109–304 is amended as follows:

(A) Section 15(10) is amended by striking ''46 App. U.S.C.'' and inserting ''46 U.S.C. App.''.

(B) Section 15(30) is amended by striking ''Shipping Act, 1936'' and inserting ''Shipping Act, 1916''.

(C) The schedule of Statutes at Large repealed in section 19, as it relates to the Act of June 29, 1936, is amended by—

(i) striking the second section ''1111'' (relating to 46 U.S.C. App. 1279f) and inserting section ''1113''; and

(ii) striking the second section ''1112'' (relating to 46 U.S.C. App. 1279g) and inserting section ''1114''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by paragraph (1) shall be effective as if included in the enactment of Public Law 109–304.

(c) REPEAL OF DUPLICATIVE OR UNEXECUTABLE AMENDMENTS.—

(1) REPEAL.—Sections 9(a), 15(21) and (33)(A) through (D)(i), and 16(c)(2) of Public Law 109–304 are repealed.

(2) INTENDED EFFECT.—The provisions repealed by paragraph (1) shall be treated as if never enacted.

(d) LARGE PASSENGER VESSEL CREW REQUIREMENTS.—Section 8103(k)(3)(C)(iv) of title 46, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''and section 252 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1282)'' after ''of such section''.

AMENDMENT NO. 3103, AS MODIFIED

At the end of subtitle E of title X, add the following:

SEC. 1070. PILOT PROGRAM ON COMMERCIAL FEE-FOR-SERVICE AIR REFUELING SUPPORT FOR THE AIR FORCE.

(a) PILOT PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Air Force shall, commencing as soon as practicable after the date of the enactment of this Act, conduct a pilot program to assess the feasability and advisability of utilizing commercial fee-for-service air refueling tanker aircraft for Air Force operations.

(b) PURPOSE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The purpose of the pilot program required by subsection (a) is to support, augment, or enhance the air refueling mission of the Air Force by utilizing commercial air refueling providers on a fee-for-service basis.

(2) ELEMENTS.—In order to achieve the purpose of the pilot program, the pilot program shall—

(A) demonstrate and validate a comprehensive strategy for air refueling on a fee-for-service basis by utilizing all appropriate aircraft in mission areas including testing support, training support to receivers, homeland defense support, deployment support, air bridge support, aeromedical evacuation, and emergency air refueling; and

(B) integrate fee-for-service air refueling described in paragraph (1) into Air Mobility Command operations.

(c) COMPETITIVE PROVIDERS.—The pilot program shall include the services of not more than three commercial air refueling providers selected by the Secretary for the pilot program utilizing competitive procedures.

(d) MINIMUM NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT.—Each provider selected for the pilot program shall utilize no fewer than two air refueling aircraft in participating in the pilot program.

(e) AIRCRAFT UTILIZATION.—The pilot program shall provide for a minimum of 1,200 flying hours per year per air refueling aircraft participating in the pilot program.

(f) DURATION.—The period of the pilot program shall be not less than five years after the commencement of the pilot program.

(g) REPORT.—The Secretary of the Air Force shall provide to the congressional defense committees an annual report on the fee-for-service air refueling program to include:

(1) missions flown;

(2) missions areas supported;

(3) aircraft number, type, model series supported;

(4) fuel dispersed;

(5) departure reliability rates; and

(6) any other data as appropriate for evaluating performance of the commercial air refueling providers.

AMENDMENT NO. 3107

(Purpose: To modify the purposes for which the Naval Aviation Museum Foundation at the National Museum of Naval Aviation at Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, may operate the National Flight Academy)

On page 508, between lines 3 and 4, insert the following:

SEC. 2854. MODIFICATION OF LEASE OF PROPERTY, NATIONAL FLIGHT ACADEMY AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NAVAL AVIATION, NAVAL AIR STATION, PENSACOLA, FLORIDA.

Section 2850(a) of the Military Construction Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (division B of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (as enacted into law by Public Law 106–398; 114 Stat. 1654A–428)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''naval aviation and'' and inserting ''naval aviation,''; and

(2) by inserting before the period at the end the following: '', and, as of January 1, 2008, to teach the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics disciplines that have an impact on and relate to aviation''.

AMENDMENT NO. 3082, AS MODIFIED

At the end of subtitle B of title II, add the following:

SEC. 214. GULF WAR ILLNESSES RESEARCH.

(a) FUNDING.—

(1) ADDITIONAL AMOUNT.—Of the amount authorized to be appropriated by section 201(1) for research, development, test, and evaluation, Army $15,000,000, may be allocated to Medical Advanced Technology (PE #0603002A) for the Army to carry out, as part of its Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs, a program for Gulf War Illnesses Research.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the program may be to develop diagnostic markers and treatments for the complex of symptoms commonly known as ''Gulf War Illnesses (GWI)'', including widespread pain, cognitive impairment, and persistent fatigue in conjunction with diverse other symptoms and abnormalities, that are associated with service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations in the early 1990s during the Persian Gulf War.

(c) PROGRAM ACTIVITIES.—

(1) Highest priority under the program shall be afforded to pilot and observational studies of treatments for the complex of symptoms described in subsection (b) and comprehensive clinical trials of such treatments that have demonstrated effectiveness in previous past pilot and observational studies.

(2) Secondary priority under the program may be afforded to studies that identify objective markers for such complex of symptoms and biological mechanisms underlying such complex of symptoms that can lead to the identification and development of such markers and treatments.

(3) No study shall be funded under the program that is based on psychiatric illness and psychological stress as the central cause of such complex of symptoms (as is consistent with current research findings).

(d) COMPETITIVE SELECTION AND PEER REVIEW.—The program shall be conducted using competitive selection and peer review for the identification of activities having the most substantial scientific merit, utilizing individuals with recognized expertise in Gulf War illnesses in the design of the solicitation and in the scientific and programmatic review processes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2325, AS MODIFIED

At the end of subtitle C of title X, add the following:

SEC. ___. PROVISIONS RELATING TO THE REMOVAL OF MISSILES FROM THE 564TH MISSILE SQUADRON.

(a) The Secretary of Defense shall submit to the Congressional Defense Committees a report on the feasibility of establishing an association between the 120th Fighter Wing of the Montana Air National Guard and active duty personnel stationed at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana. In making such assessment, the Secretary shall consider:

(1) An evaluation of the Air Force's requirement for additional F–15 aircraft active or reserve component force structure.

(2) An evaluation of the airspace training opportunities in the immediate airspace around Great Falls International Airport Air Guard Station.

(3) An evaluation of the impact of civilian operations on military operations at the Great Falls International Airport.

(4) An evaluation of the level of civilian encroachment on the facilities and airspace of the 120th Fighter Wing.

(5) An evaluation of the support structure available, including active military bases nearby.

(6) Opportunities for additional association between the Montana National Guard and the 341st Space Wing.

(b) Not more than 40 missiles may be removed from the 564th Missile Squadron until 15 days after the report required in subsection (a) has been submitted.

AMENDMENT NO. 2897, AS MODIFIED

On page 354, after line 24, add the following:

SEC. 1070. ESTABLISHMENT OF JOINT PATHOLOGY CENTER.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Defense may, to the extent consistent with the final recommendations of the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission as approved by the President, establish a Joint Pathology Center located at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, that shall function as the reference center in pathology for the Department of Defense.

(b) SERVICES.—The Joint Pathology Center, if established, shall provide, at a minimum, the following services:

(1) Diagnostic pathology consultation.

(2) Pathology education, to include graduate medical education, including residency and fellowship programs, and continuing medical education.

(3) Diagnostic pathology research.

(4) Maintenance and continued modernization of the Tissue Repository and, as appropriate, utilization of such Repository in conducting the activities described in paragraphs (1) through (3).

AMENDMENT NO. 2068, AS MODIFIED

At the end of subtitle A of title XV, add the following:

SEC. 1517. REPORTS ON MITIGATION OF EFFECTS OF EXPLOSIVELY FORMED PROJECTILES AND MINES.

(a) REPORT ON EXPLOSIVELY FORMED PROJECTILES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 60 days thereafter, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report, in both classified and unclassified forms, on explosively formed projectiles.

(2) CONTENT.—Each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) A comprehensive plan of action for improving capabilities to mitigate the effects of explosively formed projectiles (EFPs), including the development of technologies, training programs, tactics, techniques, and procedures, and an estimate of the funding required to execute the plan.

(B) Detailed descriptions of the effectiveness of any fielded EFP mitigation technologies, training programs, tactics, techniques, and procedures, and ways in which they could be improved.

(C) A description of the individual projects that comprise the plan of action.

(D) A schedule for completing and fielding each project.

(E) The contract delivery dates, progress towards completion, and forecast completion date for each project.

(F) A comprehensive description of any deviation from contract terms and an explanation of any cost and schedule variance and how such variance affects fielding deliverables, and a plan for addressing such deviations and variances.

(G) Recommendations for additional authorities, which if provided to the Secretary, would improve the ability of the Department of Defense to rapidly field counter EFP capabilities and protection against the effects of EFPs.

(H) An analysis of any industrial base issues affecting the plan outlined under subparagraph (A).

(I) Mechanisms for sharing counter EFP capabilities with appropriate coalition partners.

(J) The most current available data on the effects of EFPs on United States, coalition, and allied forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

(b) REPORT ON MINE RESISTANT AMBUSH PROTECTED VEHICLES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 30 days thereafter, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report on Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles.

(2) CONTENT.—Each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) The total requirement of all military services for MRAP vehicles, including MRAP I, spiral upgrades, and MRAP II variants.

(B) A comprehensive plan for transporting and fielding all variants to the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) area of operations.

(C) An assessment of completed production, transportation, and fielding of MRAP vehicles and a forecast of future production, transportation, and fielding functions.

(D) An explanation of any deviation between the planned and actual numbers of vehicles fielded for the reporting period.

(E) Funding required to execute production, transportation, and fielding, and an analysis of any industrial base issues affecting such functions.

(F) The required delivery schedule for each contract to procure MRAP vehicles.

(G) A comprehensive description and explanation of cost and schedule variance, and any deviation from contract terms, how that variance or deviation affects overall program performance, and corrective actions planned to address such variance and deviation.

(H) Recommendations for additional authorities, which if provided to the Secretary, would improve the ability of the Department of Defense to rapidly field MRAP vehicles.

(I) Plans for armor upgrades, and their impact on automotive performance and sustainment.

(J) An explanation of any safety issues or limitations on the vehicles.

(K) Anticipated short and long term sustainment issues, including an explanation of the maintenance concept for sustainment after the initial contractor logistic support period and the projected annual funding required.

(L) A detailed description of MRAP program costs, including research and development, procurement, maintenance, logistics, and end to end transportation costs.

(c) REPORT ON TACTICAL WHEELED VEHICLES STRATEGY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report on the near and long term tactical wheeled vehicle fleet modernization strategies of the Army and Marine Corps.

(2) CONTENT.—The report required under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) A description of the impact of the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle program on the current acquisition strategies and procurement plans of the Army and Marine Corps for the tactical wheeled vehicle fleet, including inventory mix, overall sustainment cost, and logistical and industrial base issues.

(B) Plans for the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle program, including an assessment of the continued validity of previously adopted Key Performance Parameters.

(C) A science and technology investment strategy, including a description of current technical barriers, near and long term technology objectives, coordination of activities of the various military departments, Defense Agencies, and commercial industry entities, and technology demonstration and transition plans to support the Long Term Armoring Strategy (LTAS).

(D) A strategy to fund and execute sufficient developmental and operational test and evaluation to ensure that deployed systems are operationally effective, including a description of the role of the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation in the development and execution of the Long Term Armoring Strategy.

(E) Plans to utilize the Army reset and recapitalization process to maintain the legacy tactical wheeled vehicle fleet.

(d) REPORT ON LONG TERM ARMORING STRATEGY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report, in classified and unclassified forms, on the Long Term Armoring Strategy of the Army and Marine Corps.

(2) CONTENT.—The report required under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) An estimate of the funding required to execute the strategy.

(B) Specific plans for balancing force protection, payload, performance, and deployability requirements across the range of wheeled vehicle variants.

(C) A science and technology investment strategy, including a description of current technical barriers, near and long term technology objectives, coordination of activities of the various military departments, Defense Agencies, and commercial industry entities, and technology demonstration and transition plans.

(D) A test and evaluation master plan, including a description of the role of the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation in the development and execution of LTAS.

(E) An analysis of industrial base or manufacturing issues related to achieving sufficient and sustainable production rates.

AMENDMENT NO. 3112

(Purpose: To express the sense of the Senate on the Air Force Logistics Center)

At the end of subtitle D of title III, add the following:

SEC. 342. SENSE OF SENATE ON THE AIR FORCE LOGISTICS CENTERS.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Senate makes the following findings:

(1) Air Force Air Logistics Centers have served as a model of efficiency and effectiveness in providing integrated sustainment (depot maintenance, supply management, and product support) for fielded weapon systems within the Department of Defense. This success has been founded in the integration of these dependent processes.

(2) Air Force Air Logistics Centers have embraced best practices, technology changes, and process improvements, and have successfully managed increased workload while at the same time reducing personnel.

(3) Air Force Air Logistics Centers continue to successfully sustain an aging aircraft fleet that is performing more flying hours, with less aircraft, than at any point in the last thirty years.

(4) The purpose of the Global Logistics Support Center is to apply an enterprise approach to supply chain management to eliminate redundancies and improve efficiencies across the Air Force in order to best provide capable aircraft to the warfighter.

(5) The Air Force is working diligently to identify means to create further efficiencies in the Air Force logistics network.

(b) SENSE OF SENATE.—It is the sense of the Senate that the Air Force should work closely with Congress as the Air Force continues to develop and implement the Global Logistics Support Center concept.

AMENDMENT NO. 3032, AS MODIFIED

On page 91, between lines 13 and 14, insert the following:

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on a date elected by the Secretary of Defense, which date may not be earlier than the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act. The Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register notice of the effective date of the amendments made by this section, as so elected.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than the effective date elected under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report setting forth the recommendations of the Secretary regarding the following:

(A) The appropriate role and mission of the Reserve Forces Policy Board.

(B) The appropriate membership of the Reserve Forces Policy Board.

(C) The appropriate procedures to be utilized by the Reserve Forces Policy Board in its interaction with the Department of Defense.

AMENDMENT NO. 2905, AS MODIFIED

On page 114, between lines 4 and 5, insert the following:

SEC. 583. PILOT PROGRAM ON MILITARY FAMILY READINESS AND SERVICEMEMBER REINTEGRATION.

(a) PILOT PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense shall carry out a pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of providing assistance and support to the Adjutant General of a State or territory of the U.S. to create comprehensive soldier and family preparedness and reintegration outreach programs for members of the Armed Forces and their families to further the purposes described in section 1781b(b) of title 10, United States Code, as added by section 582(a) of this Act.

(2) COORDINATION.—In carrying out the pilot program, the Secretary shall—

(A) coordinate with the Department of Defense Military Family Readiness Council (established under section 1781a of title, United States Code, as added by section 581 of this Act); and

(B) consult with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(3) DESIGNATION.—The pilot program established pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be known as the ''National Military Family Readiness and Servicemember Reintegration Outreach Program'' (in this section referred to as ''the pilot program'').

(b) ASSISTANCE PROVIDED.—The Secretary shall carry out the pilot program through assistance and support.

The Adjutant General of a State or territory of the United States.

(d) PURPOSE OF ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT.—

(1) The pilot program may develop programs of outreach to members of the Armed Forces and their family members to educate such members and their family members about the assistance and services available to them that meet the purposes of section 1781b(b) of title 10, United States Code, as added by section 582(a) of this Act, and to assist such members and their family members in obtaining such assistance and services. Such assistance and services may include the following:

(A) Marriage counseling.

(B) Services for children.

(C) Suicide prevention.

(D) Substance abuse awareness and treatment.

(E) Mental health awareness and treatment.

(F) Financial counseling.

(G) Anger management counseling.

(H) Domestic violence awareness and prevention.

(I) Employment assistance.

(J) Development of strategies for living with a member of the Armed Forces with post traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury.

(K) Other services that may be appropriate to address the unique needs of members of the Armed Forces and their families who live in rural or remote areas with respect to family readiness and servicemember reintegration.

(L) Assisting members of the Armed Forces and their families find and receive assistance with military family readiness and servicemember reintegration, including referral services.

(M) Development of strategies and programs that recognize the need for long-term follow-up services for reintegrating members of the Armed Forces and their families for extended periods following deployments, including between deployments.

(N) Assisting members of the Armed Forces and their families in receiving services and assistance from the Department of Veterans Affairs, including referral services.

(2) PROVISION OF OUTREACH SERVICES.—A recipient of a grant under this section shall carry out programs of outreach in accordance with paragraph (1) to members of the Armed Forces and their families before, during, between, and after deployment of such members of the Armed Forces.

(e) SELECTION OF GRANT RECIPIENTS.—

(1) APPLICATION.—An eligible entity seeking a grant under the pilot program shall submit to the Secretary an application therefor in such form and in such manner as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(2) ELEMENTS.—An application submitted under subparagraph (A) shall include such elements as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(3) PRIORITY.—In selecting eligible entities to receive grants under the pilot program, the Secretary shall give priority to eligible entities that propose programs with a focus on personal outreach to members of the Armed Forces and their families by trained staff (with preference given to veterans and, in particular, veterans of combat) conducted in person.

AMENDMENT NO. 3027, AS MODIFIED

At the end of title X, add the following:

SEC. 1070. REPORT ON FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A DOMESTIC MILITARY AVIATION NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than March 31, 2008, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report to determine the feasibility of establishing a Border State Aviation Training Center (BSATC) to support the current and future requirements of the existing RC–26 training site for counterdrug activities, located at the Fixed Wing Army National Guard Aviation Training Site (FWAATS), including the domestic reconnaissance and surveillance missions of the National Guard in support of local State, and Federal law enforcement agencies, provided that the activities to be conducted at the BSATC shall not duplicate or displace any activity or program at the C–26 training site or the FWAATS.

(b) CONTENT.—The report required under subsection (a) shall—

(1) examine the current and past requirements of RC–26 aircraft in support of local, State, and Federal law enforcement and determine the number of additional aircraft required to provide such support for each State that borders Canada, Mexico, or the Gulf of Mexico;

(2) determine the number of military and civilian personnel required to run a RC–26 domestic training center meeting the requirements identified under paragraph (1); and

(3) determine the requirements and cost of locating such a training center at a military installation for the purpose of preempting and responding to security threats and responding to crises; and

(4) include a comprehensive review of the number of intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance platforms needed for the National Guard to effectively provide domestic operations and civil support (including homeland defense and counterdrug) to local, State, and Federal law enforcement and first responder entities.

(c) CONSULTATION.—In preparing the report required under subsection (a), the Secretary of Defense shall consult with the Adjutant General of each State that borders Canada, Mexico, or the Gulf of Mexico, the Adjutant General of the State of West Virginia, and the National Guard Bureau.

AMENDMENT NO. 2905

Mr. SUNUNU. Madam President, I rise today in favor of the Sanders amendment, No. 2905, to the Department of Defense authorization bill, which would establish a pilot program aimed at providing essential care and services to National Guard soldiers returning home from duty.

Back in the fall of 2004, the New Hampshire National Guard was one of the first Guard units to recognize the unique difficulties encountered by guardsmen and women returning from combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. In response, the Guard led the way in addressing these concerns by establishing its own reunion and reentry program, which employs innovative solutions to cope with the difficult transition to life at home.

Under the reentry program, soldiers and their families receive multiple counseling sessions and an introduction to the array of services available to them within the first 36 hours of returning home. The program works to ensure that servicemembers and their families recognize that they are not alone and that the Guard is committed to providing the care and assistance they need after returning from deployment.

This program has proven to be enormously successful, and has become a model for other States, due in part because it removes the burden of seeking and requesting care from the individual soldier. I am proud of the leadership role New Hampshire's National Guard has taken in combating this very serious problem.

I am pleased the Senate adopted the Sanders amendment to provide support that will allow other States to establish programs similar to New Hampshire's.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, at this juncture, I think the Senator from Michigan and I might commend our staffs for doing a lot of diligent work through a good part of the weekend to achieve this package of amendments. I think this adds up to about 180 amendments we have done now. So much of that work is done by our magnificent professional staff, many of whom have been on the Armed Services Committee for numbers of years.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I thank my good friend, Senator WARNER, for that suggestion. This is a good moment to do that before we have a vote later on the bill. Our staffs, as always, put in an amazing amount of time—in the evenings, mornings, over weekends—in order for us to get through hundreds of amendments.

Actually, the Senator is right. I think there were 180 cleared amendments and about 35 amendments that

have been disposed of separately one way or another.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, over 180 amendments.

Mr. LEVIN. So I do not know if we set a record because my good friend from Virginia probably is the record-holder—and probably more than once. But, I say to the Senator, we are going to try to get to where you have been. We are going to try harder.

Mr. WARNER. Well, where have you been?

Mr. LEVIN. With you every time. But when you were chairman and you—

Mr. WARNER. We have both been chairman of this committee, Mr. President, three times.

Mr. LEVIN. One time each, I think, for 18 days.

But, in any event, I thank our staffs.

I thank my friend for raising this issue.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I thank the indulgence of our distinguished Presiding Officer and suggest the absence of a quorum.

I withhold the request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I, too, join in thanking our chairman and ranking member, Senator LEVIN and Senator WARNER, for all of their cooperation during the consideration of a number of amendments we have offered these past days. It is typical of their service and their thoughtfulness. They are serious legislators. We are fortunate to have them dealing with these issues of such importance and consequence for our national security. I am grateful to them both.

I wish to take a few moments.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, will the Senator from Massachusetts yield?

Mr. KENNEDY. Yes.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, the Senator from Massachusetts has been on this committee for more than two decades, and there is no one who works harder and more diligently. I wish there were more programs on which we had a concurrence of philosophy and policy, but nevertheless I say to the Senator, you are a very prodigious worker.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I thank the Senator.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, if I could add one word on that subject, the Senator from Massachusetts is not only about as diligent a Senator as one can imagine, but he has had great success on this particular bill. I do not know how he manages to keep all the balls in the air that he does, including the CHIP program, immigration, and so many other issues. But he has had an extraordinary success on this particular bill, and it is a real tribute to him—this bill—for many reasons.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I thank the Senator.

Mr. President, as was described earlier on the floor with the chairman of the committee, on last Friday, there are important provisions dealing with refugees, particularly the select refugees who have been the ones who have been so associated with the American effort in Iraq.

We have differences in this body on the overall policy in Iraq, but I think all of us admire those extraordinary individuals who worked, in many instances, as translators for the American servicemen and risked their lives. Many of them lost their lives in this effort. A number of others who had worked with American forces now have their lives threatened, for which there is a sense of urgency. The amendment was accepted by both Senator LEVIN and Senator WARNER. We are hopeful it will result in saving lives. Also, there are individuals who, by their religious beliefs, were being persecuted as well.

So this was a small amendment, but it will make a big difference. I thank them for their help and assistance on that amendment and a number of other items on our hate crimes legislation, and others.

AMENDMENT NO. 3058

Mr. President, one of the pending amendments is the amendment offered by Senator MIKULSKI and myself, and that is an amendment that affects workers. In this case, we are talking about Defense Department workers. Of those 640,000 Defense Department workers, we are talking about a third of those workers who have proudly served in the Armed Forces of our country. They have worn the uniform of our country, acquired various skills, and then have come back and now are serving in the Defense Department in a wide variety of areas—in information and information technologies, in supplies, in technology and safety equipment—a wide variety of areas. They are using their skills—which they had—their patriotism, their dedication to service to this country and are doing so with great skill and determination.

It means a lot to those who are in the Armed Forces to know they have a backup, first of all by their families, but secondly by skilled men and women who are going to make sure they have the best in technology, the best in terms of equipment, and that they are going to be able to do their job in the way they were trained. Those are the Defense Department employees.

Now, we have found in recent times as to those employees that their futures have been put at risk. They have been put at risk because of a change in the rules and regulations for what they call outsourcing, the bidding for various contracts. These workers are highly skilled, highly professional, and they are prepared to compete on a level playing field with any group of workers—public or private sector—and do so, and do so well, do it skillfully, and also do it in a way that is going to save the American taxpayer resources. But what is added to the bid in various contracts is the fact that these Federal employees have health insurance and also have some retirement benefits.

In this country now we are facing a health care crisis. We hear Democratic candidates for President talk about it, Republican candidates talk about it, business leaders, leaders of the trade union movement talk about it. We were spending $1.3 trillion 6 years ago; we are now spending $2.3 trillion. We have increased the spending by $1 trillion, and 8 million Americans have lost their health insurance—8 million. It would be more than that if we didn't have the SCHIP program. That is another issue for another time, when it will be more than that.

So we are in real danger of seeing middle-class families lose both their retirement in terms of their pensions, as well as their health insurance. Now we have the regulations of the Department of Defense that are accelerating that. Effectively, what they are saying is, if we have good competition between the government bid and the private bid, the fact that we have health insurance and retirement, it is going to make the total cost somewhat higher and therefore the award will go to the private bid. This is sending a powerful message to these private contractors: Don't even think of providing any services, health care, for the families of your workers. Don't think about retirement. Don't think about anything because you can win contracts against those who are working in the Defense Department who are providing those benefits. That is basically unfair.

This competition ought to be for the cost of providing the services. Who can do that more efficiently? We don't want to rush to the bottom—a race to the bottom—and that is what we are having at this time, and that is wrong. That is wrong, and it is unfair. If we continue that, we are going to find out we are going to have not tens of thousands, but we are going to have hundreds of thousands of people who are going to see that their insurance is lost.

This isn't just the employees. If we look at the private contractor, one private contractor was going for a bid, another was bidding for it, and at the present time, if that were the circumstance today, the responsible contractor who is looking out for their employees with health insurance for the families and with a retirement program, they would be somewhat higher than the cost of providing service by the irresponsible contractor, and they would lose out. So it isn't only the workers who are working in the Defense Department but also responsible contractors who are providing services for their employees and who respect their employees.

If we don't accept this amendment, we are going to see a continuing rush to the bottom where it is going to be virtually impossible to get these independent contractors to provide any of the kinds of services to these families who are working in this country. That isn't what we ought to have in terms of the Defense Department rules.

Finally, as I pointed out earlier, but it is worth mentioning again, some of the other provisions that basically work for the unfairness of those who are working in the Defense Department. If there is an unfair decision, the private contractors can appeal that, but the workers over here cannot. That isn't fair. This amendment is about fairness, treating people fairly.

Renew a contract without recompetition, they can do that. Private contractors can do it, but if the Federal workers have that contract, they can't do it. We find out for the most competitive bid, there are administrative rules and regulations that prohibit Federal employees from getting the lowest competitive bid. They know how to do it, they want to do it; nonetheless, they are denied the opportunity to do it.

Then we have these quotas that are set by OMB, which is not right. They establish so many contractors and so much is virtually prohibited, but it has grown into a practice at the present time.

So this amendment is very much about fairness. It is about how we are going to treat people who are part of the whole Defense establishment. And they are these workers, and they are indispensable. A great percentage of them have been a part of the military and have served with great distinction for many years. They want to continue that sense of patriotism, continue that sense of service, continue that sense of giving. The men and women who are in the Armed Forces know they can rely on the quality of the work that the individuals do because these individuals are highly motivated, highly trained, have been in the service, many of them have served for many years, come out of the service, have skills, and say: What I would like to do for the rest of my career is to be able to continue to give support to those who are on the front lines, and they do it. They do it with great distinction, and they do it with great expertise and with extraordinary patriotism.

All they are asking for is to have a fair system, to give them a fair shake. Give them some respect. Give them the respect they deserve, that they should have. Give some respect for their families as well.

So I hope very much we will have good support for this amendment. As I mentioned earlier in those particular provisions that we put up about disparities between the private contractors and the employees, we have had strong bipartisan support for just about every one of those provisions, but they have been put on appropriations in the past, and therefore at the time the appropriation expires, these provisions expire. Now we are back to try to revisit this once again. So there is a strong and compelling reason for this amendment.

I thank Senator LIEBERMAN and so many of our cosponsors, including Senator MIKULSKI who has spoken so well and who has been such a strong advocate, and so many of our colleagues who have supported the different provisions on both sides of the aisle. Hopefully, we will have a strong vote in an hour from now for those workers.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. 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. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, I rise to support the Kennedy amendment because, frankly, it makes fiscal sense. There has been in this administration a rush to contract. They never saw any function of government that somehow they didn't believe would be better off in the private sector. I am not opposed to privatization just for the sake of being opposed to privatization. I have no problem with contracting, if it is going to save taxpayers' money and we are still going to get quality work on behalf of taxpayers from those contractors working in government. But if we have learned anything over the last 6 years, we have learned that you don't always get a good deal when you contract.

I know we have spent a lot of time talking over the last few weeks about the contracting that went on in Iraq, and I will not dwell on that here, but it is exhibit A of how badly government sometimes does in the name of saving money when it enters into private contracts.

So what this amendment says is pretty simple, and it is kind of what auditors say over and over again until people want us to be quiet; that is, compete, compete, compete. Not only should these contracts be competitive among potential contractors, they must be competitive with the government workers who are currently doing the work. There have been many examples of where, in the name of saving money, someone was hired to do the job, and it ended up costing us more than had the government employees remained on the job. That is just the basics of this amendment.

This is nothing new. This has been in a number of Defense appropriations bills, and it is in effect for the Department of Defense. The A–76 rule, which this is called, is now currently the law within the Department of Defense. This will extend it, codify it, make it uniform across the Federal Government. If you are going to contract out, then the employees have a right to participate in that competition. And if the employees of government can show they can do the job, as they have been doing, and they can do it for less money than the private contractor, then they should get the award in that particular competition.

This is a way to not only make sure we are not getting rid of the expertise we have in government, it is also a way to reinforce how important competition is. We have had competitions that have masqueraded as real competitions in this administration a number of times. This will make sure we are getting the best value for that very precious taxpayer dollar. They are going to have to demonstrate that the contract is going to save money in order for the contract to be put out to a private entity as opposed to government employees.

I think it is a very solid amendment in terms of watching out for taxpayer money. I know it is characterized that this is to protect government employees. It is not. It is called protecting taxpayers' money. That is why I think this amendment is so important. That is why I hope my colleagues will join together to strike another blow on behalf of fiscal accountability and making sure we treat taxpayers' money with respect and deference and making sure we are spending it very wisely.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I wish to rise in support of the pending amendment by Senator KENNEDY on public-private competition. Sometimes this amendment is described as the Kennedy-Mikulski or the Mikulski-Kennedy amendment. Both Senators deserve a great deal of credit for their support.

The Department of Defense has allowed its workforce of civilian employees to atrophy to the point of a human capital crisis. Since fiscal year 2000, the number of contractor employees under DOD service contracts has roughly doubled, while the number of DOD civilian employees has remained virtually unchanged. As a result, the Department of Defense has found in area after area—acquisition management, financial management, even security and intelligence—it must now rely upon contractors to perform functions that were formerly performed by Federal employees.

These adverse trends have been exacerbated by an administration that has consistently pushed to have more Federal work performed in the private sector. In 2001, the Office of Management and Budget established a goal of subjecting half of the work performed by Federal employees to private sector competition within 4 years. While the administration subsequently backed off of this Government-wide goal, OMB continues to establish agency-specific goals, and to grade agencies on their performance in converting work to private sector performance.

The Kennedy-Mikulski amendment would end this artificial effort to drive contracts to the private sector by codifying a commonsense set of rules that govern competition between Federal employees and private contractors.

Some of these rules have already been enacted through appropriations acts in previous Congresses. The Kennedy-Mikulski amendment would make these rules permanent law. Others have

already been enacted for the DOD. The Kennedy-Mikulski amendment would make these provisions Government-wide.

I wish to focus on one provision of the amendment which addresses a fundamental element of fairness in competition between the private and public sectors. OMB circular A–76, which governs public-private competitions, establishes rules for what happens after one side or the other wins a competition. If the private sector wins a competition, the work stays in the private sector forever. If the public sector wins, however, the work must be subject to a new competition within 5 years. Attachment B to OMB circular A–76 specifically states that if the public sector competitor wins a competition, ''an agency shall complete another . . . competition of the activity by the end of the last performance period'' in the performance agreement.

This rule is fundamentally unfair. It also undermines the morale of Federal civilian employees by contributing to the view of civil servants as second-class citizens. At a time when the Department of Defense should be recruiting thousands of new civilian employees to address a human capital crisis, the rule is clearly contrary to the Department's own interests.

The Kennedy-Mikulski amendment would address this problem by stating that OMB may not require the Department of Defense to conduct a new public-private competition within any specified period of time after the public sector wins a competition. That is the right answer. DOD's human capital policies should be driven by the Department's human capital needs—not by arbitrary policies established by the Office of Management and Budget. So I hope our colleagues will support the Kennedy-Mikulski amendment.

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

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

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, last week, the Senate adopted a historic amendment offered by Senators WEBB, MCCASKILL, and others, to establish an independent commission to review the many problems with fraud, waste, and abuse that have arisen in Iraq relative to contracting and to give us recommendations on how we can avoid similar problems in the future. I wish to commend the Senators that were involved in this effort for the leadership they showed in drafting this amendment and getting it adopted by the Senate.

The Department of Defense faces huge problems in its acquisition system today. Over the last few years, we have seen an alarming lack of acquisition planning across the Department; the excessive use of contracts that make open-ended commitments of DOD funds; and a pervasive failure to perform contract oversight and management functions necessary to protect taxpayers' interest. These problems have been particularly acute in Iraq and Afghanistan, but they are in no way limited to Iraq and Afghanistan.

The contracting commission established pursuant to the Webb-McCaskill amendment should help us identify the sources of these problems and provide us with constructive recommendations to avoid similar problems in the future.

In addition to the commission language adopted last week, there are significant acquisition reform measures already in this bill, as it came to the floor, that will make improvements in the DOD acquisition system and to wartime contracting. Taken together, these provisions will make the bill that is now before the Senate, by far, the most significant acquisition reform measure to be considered by Congress since the enactment of the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act and the Federal Acquisition Reform Act more than 10 years ago.

For example, section 821 of the bill would require increased competition in large ''umbrella contracts'' awarded by the Department of Defense. The Senate Armed Services Committee held a hearing in April on the Department of Defense management of the $20 billion so-called LOGCAP contract, under which a company called KBR—until recently, a subsidiary of Halliburton—has provided services to U.S. troops in the field.

Here are some of the things we learned in our hearing:

The company was given work that appears to have far exceeded the scope of the contract; all of this added work was provided to the contractor without competition; the contractor resisted providing us with information that we needed to monitor and control costs; there were almost $2 billion of overcharges on the contract; and the contractor received highly favorable settlements on these overcharges.

When asked why the Army had waited 5 years to split the massive LOGCAP contract among multiple contractors, allowing for greater competition of the work to be performed under the contract, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics gave the following answer: ''I don't have a good answer for you.''

The provision in our bill would avoid the kind of abuses we get in sole-source contracts by ensuring that future contracts of this type provide for the competition of task and delivery orders unless there is a compelling reason not to do so. If our language stays intact, we should never again see the kind of abuses which existed with the Halliburton-KBR umbrella contracts.

Similarly, section 871 of the bill would require tighter regulation and control over private security contractors operating in areas of combat operations. Over the last 4 years, there has been a number of reports of abuses by private security contractors operating in Iraq. There have been allegations, even films, of contractors shooting recklessly at civilians as they drive down the streets of Baghdad and other Iraqi cities. Some of these contractors work for the Department of Defense, but many others work for other Federal agencies or for contractors of other Federal agencies.

Most recently, the Iraqi Government has complained about an incident in which employees of Blackwater allegedly opened fire on innocent Iraqis in downtown Baghdad. According to published reports, Blackwater employees shot into a crush of cars, killing at least 11 Iraqis and wounding 12. Blackwater officials insist their guards were ambushed, but witnesses described this shooting as unprovoked, and Iraq's Interior Ministry has concluded that Blackwater was at fault.

Last week, the Washington Post reported that senior military officials are deeply concerned about this shoot-out and other similar incidents which could undermine our efforts to combat terrorists and insurgents in Iraq. This is what the Washington Post article reported:

> ''The military is very sensitive to its relationship that they've built with the Iraqis being altered or even severely degraded by actions such as this event''. . . .
>
> ''This is a nightmare,'' said a senior U.S. military official. ''We had guys who saw the aftermath, and it was very bad. This is going to hurt us badly. It may be worse than Abu Ghraib, and it comes at a time when we're trying to have an impact for the long term''. . . .
>
> In interviews involving a dozen U.S. military and government officials, many expressed . . . concern over the shootings. . . .
>
> ''This is a big mess that I don't think anyone has their hands around yet,'' said another U.S. military official. ''It's not necessarily a bad thing these guys are being held accountable. Iraqis hate them, the troops don't particularly care for them, and they tend to have a know-it-all attitude, which means they rarely listen to anyone—even the folks that patrol the ground on a daily basis.''
>
> ''Their tendency is shoot first and ask questions later,'' said an Army lieutenant colonel serving in Iraq. Referring to the September 16 shootings, the officer added, ''None of us believe they were engaged, but we are all carrying their black eyes.''
>
> ''Many of my peers think Blackwater is oftentimes out of control,'' said a senior U.S. commander serving in Iraq. ''They often act like cowboys over here . . . not seeming to play by the same rules everybody else tries to play by.''

The provision in our bill would address this problem by ensuring that the Department of Defense and its combatant commanders are in a position to regulate the conduct of all armed contractors in the battle space, regardless of whether they are employed under contracts of the Department of Defense or other Federal agencies. Under the provision in our bill, private security contractors employed by any Federal agency or any contractor or subcontractor for a Federal agency would be

required for the first time to comply with DOD rules on the use of force and with orders, directions, and instructions issued by combatant commanders relating to force protection, security, health, safety, or relations and interaction with local nationals.

Other provisions in our bill would provide added protection for contractor employees who blow the whistle on fraud, waste, and abuse. They would require the DOD to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the billions of dollars it spends every year to purchase contract services. Our bill will tighten rules for the acquisition of major weapons systems; ensure that we get fair prices when we purchase spare parts for those weapons systems; enhance competition requirements for products purchased from Federal prison industries; and address abuses of undefinitized contract actions.

The root cause of these and all the other problems that we read and hear so much about, or at least most of the other problems, in the defense acquisition system is our failure to maintain an acquisition workforce with the resources and skills that are needed to manage the Department's acquisition system.

Earlier this year, the Acquisition Advisory Panel, chartered pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2004, reported that ''curtailed investments in human capital have produced an acquisition workforce that often lacks the training and resources to function effectively.'' And they went on:

> The Federal Government does not have the capacity in its current acquisition workforce necessary to meet the demands that have been placed on it.

The failure of Department of Defense and other Federal agencies to adequately fund the acquisition workforce, the panel concluded, is '''penny-wise and pound-foolish,' as it seriously undermines the pursuit of the good value for the expenditure of public resources.''

Senior DOD officials have recognized the deficiencies in the defense acquisition workforce, but they have been unable to obtain significant funds that are needed to remedy the problem. Section 844 of our bill will address this issue by establishing an acquisition workforce development fund to enable the Department of Defense to increase the size and quality of its acquisition workforce. In the first year, we will provide roughly $500 million for this purpose. It is a large sum of money, but it is a small investment to ensure the proper expenditure of more than $200 billion of taxpayers' money every year.

We look forward to working with the House conferees after we pass our bill, hopefully this evening, to make these important provisions on acquisition reform and the acquisition workforce the law of the land.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. STABENOW). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. 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. NELSON of Florida. Madam President, I want to speak on final passage of the bill. We are going to have that vote shortly. What is the parliamentary procedure we are in?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is currently considering the Kennedy amendment to the bill.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Madam President, if I may be recognized, I will use these remarks to tell the Senate that it has been a pleasure to work with the chairman of the full committee, Senator LEVIN, who has consistently given this Senator free rein as the chairman of the Strategic Subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee.

What it looked like last winter was that all the thorny issues of nuclear weapons and the follow-on nuclear weapons and the question of national missile defense, the strategic posture of the United States, would get us all wound up around the axle. But it didn't turn out that way, and I want to give credit to my colleague, Senator SESSIONS, the ranking member of our subcommittee, for working with me and the members of the committee in resolving these issues. What we worked out in subcommittee, basically, is what is in the bill.

Although the administration would like to go ahead and start building national missile defense sites in Eastern Europe, the fact is, they haven't even worked it out with the countries involved in Eastern Europe. So what we did was we put a fence around any funding other than the acquisition and the preparation of the land for such a site.

At the end of the day, there is going to have to be continued research and development should the need arise for locating those missiles in Eastern Europe because they are not the same version that is in the silos in Alaska. That is a three-stage version; this is a two-stage version. And it is not the same missile or rocket; therefore, it has to go through all of its subsequent testing.

Now, General Obering just had a successful test a couple of days ago, and for that we want to congratulate him, but if the threat is the Shahab missile from Iran shooting into Europe or into the United States with a nuclear weapon on top of the rocket, if that is the reason to have national missile defense in Eastern Europe, well, we just simply don't know that Iran is going to have that capability. And as we continue to look at this on down the road, that is going to be an evaluation as to whether at the end of the day we are going to need that national missile defense in Eastern Europe. But since we don't know all those answers, we have provided in this bill that if they concluded the agreement with those Eastern European countries, they can go about the process of acquiring the land, the site, and the preparation of the site.

We also noted in our committee that they have not had tremendous success with the airborne laser, and of the approximately $.5 billion that they wanted to continue that program, we cut that program by $200 billion and used that money elsewhere, in kinetic energy intercepts on the boost phase of an intercontinental ballistic missile.

So those are just some of the things in here, and I want to thank all the parties who worked with us to get a bipartisan resolution, which is the way a Defense bill ought to be managed and ought to be passed, and we have that this year, and I am very grateful.

Now, there is another part in here that Senator LEVIN and the ranking member of the full committee approved, and I want to thank him for that. That is the question of widows and orphans. Current law is that a servicemember pays for survivors benefits. They pay once they retire, and they pay for that benefit. It is like an insurance policy. On the other hand, there is another body of law in the Veterans' Administration where there are survivors benefits for widows and orphans. When the servicemember passes away, those two eligibilities, under current law, cancel out each other, and that is not the way we ought to be treating widows and orphans.

It was no less than President Lincoln who said, in his second inaugural address, that the mark of a country is how it treats the victims of war, the widows and orphans. And taking care of the widows and orphans, in fact, is a cost of defense. It is a cost of doing business in defense. Just like you buy tanks and airplanes and guns and materiel, and so forth, taking care of not only the veterans is a cost of war, but taking care of their survivors is a cost of war too. This Nation has long canceled out those two eligibilities, and it is time for us to change this.

Because we were down at the end of our discussion of this bill last week, I did not ask for a rollcall vote, as I had last year. Of course, the rollcall was something like 95 to 3 in favor of the widows and orphans, and we would have gotten some kind of a vote like that again. I was trying to accommodate my chairman and the ranking member in the crush of business, and they were kind enough to put it into the managers' package. So this will become a conference item, where it is always a question about money. A few years ago it was estimated that it would cost an additional $9 billion over 10 years. That is now down to somewhere in the range of about $7 billion or $8 billion over 10 years. So when we get into the conference committee, this Senator is going to try to find how

we can get conferees to accept this provision.

So I come to the floor of the Senate to congratulate Senator LEVIN and Senator WARNER, acting in the stead of Senator MCCAIN as the ranking member. What a pleasure it has been to deal with these gentlemen for the last 7 years as a member of this committee.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, first, let me commend the Senator from Florida. As chairman of the Strategic Subcommittee, with his ranking member, the members of that subcommittee have worked through some of the most difficult and thorny issues we faced on this bill this year, and he identified a few of them. He very modestly gives credit to others, but, truly, Senator NELSON deserves most of the credit for working out those very difficult issues on a bipartisan basis.

As a passionate defender of what we should do as a country for the survivors of those men and women we lose in war, I can only assure him we are going to do everything we can possibly do in conference because I assume that had that been brought to a rollcall vote, it would have been unanimous or nearly unanimous on the floor of the Senate. We appreciated his willingness to have that go as part of the managers' package, but for the purpose of that conference, I can assure my dear friend from Florida that there is an assumption on our part that would have been a unanimous or near unanimous vote by the Senate and so, obviously, it is the right thing to do.

I also have a longer statement later—because 5:30 has arrived—about our work as a committee, the subcommittee chairs, the ranking members, and the staff. I will save that statement for after our vote on final passage, which will come immediately after the vote on the Kennedy-Mikulski amendment, but I wanted to add that quick comment.

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I wish to associate myself with the remarks of our colleague and Senator SESSIONS, the ranking member. I can remember the days on the authorization bill when we would spend a week or more on the one issue, missile defense. I think both sides have pretty well reconciled that the present posture of the program is about where it should be.

Mr. LEVIN. I thank the Senator for that. The hour of 5:30 has arrived. I ask unanimous consent that the Kennedy-Mikulski amendment, No. 3109 be withdrawn and that there be 2 minutes of debate at this time prior to a vote in relation to the Kennedy-Mikulski amendment, No. 3058; that no amendment be in order to the amendment; that no further amendments be in order; that the debate time be equally divided and controlled in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote in relation to amendment No. 3058; that upon disposition of that amendment, the substitute amendment, as amended, be agreed to and that the Senate then vote on the passage of H.R. 1585; that all other provisions of the previous order relating to H.R. 1585 remain in effect and that on Tuesday, October 2, following a period of morning business, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 353, H.R. 3222, the Defense Department Appropriations Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. WARNER. No objection.

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

Amendment No. 3109 is withdrawn.

AMENDMENT NO. 3058

There are now 2 minutes of debate on the Kennedy amendment.

The Senator from Maryland is recognized.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I seek recognition in these 2 minutes seeking support on this amendment, joined by my colleagues, KENNEDY and AKAKA, who spoke Friday about why this amendment is important. It is important that this amendment be on this bill because we all remember the Walter Reed scandal. Remember the Walter Reed scandal, mold in the hotel and all that? I spoke on this floor more than a year and a half ago, with Paul Sarbanes, for an amendment that tried to deal with the contracting out at Walter Reed. I lost that amendment on the floor by two votes.

We went from 300 employees to 50 employees, and we only saved money after they had 6 different attempts to make sure they had contracting out. Let me tell you, if you want no more Walter Reeds, you want the Kennedy-Mikulski-Akaka amendment. This amendment saves taxpayers money. It says that any attempt at contracting out must save $10 million or 10 percent, so we meet the taxpayer mandate. It eliminates privatization quotas. If you are against quotas and OMB bounty hunters, this amendment is for you. If you want to make sure our contractors have healthy retirement benefits as part of the contract, this amendment is for you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired. Who yields time?

The Senator from South Dakota is recognized.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, the Kennedy-Mikulski amendment is intended to cause the A–76 process to become so cumbersome and expensive it would effectively eliminate the ability of the Federal Government to conduct any future A–76 competitions. What it specifically does is it mandates private contractors match Government health and retirement benefits.

DOD alone has saved taxpayers over $5 billion as a result of competitions completed between fiscal year 2001 and fiscal year 2006. DOD expects these savings to grow to over $9 billion after the completion of all planned competitions initiated in fiscal year 2007 are completed.

Right now the Government bidders win over 80 percent of the competitions. This can hardly be characterized as an unfair process, as supporters of this amendment portray it. It is designed to save taxpayer dollars. It has—$5 billion over the past 5 years.

This amendment makes it so cumbersome, by mandating the private contractors match Government health and retirement benefits, that the A–76 process will be completely undermined.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this amendment.

Mr. LEVIN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, is a request for a quorum call in order at this time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is in order. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The yeas and nays have been ordered and the clerk will call the roll.

The 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), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

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

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 358 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Akaka	Harkin	Nelson (FL)
Baucus	Inouye	Nelson (NE)
Bayh	Johnson	Pryor
Bingaman	Kennedy	Reed
Bond	Kerry	Reid
Boxer	Klobuchar	Rockefeller
Brown	Kohl	Salazar
Byrd	Landrieu	Sanders
Cantwell	Lautenberg	Schumer
Cardin	Leahy	Snowe
Carper	Levin	Specter
Casey	Lieberman	Stabenow
Conrad	Lincoln	Tester
Dorgan	McCaskill	Warner
Durbin	Menendez	Webb
Feingold	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murray	Wyden

NAYS—44

Alexander	Burr	Corker
Allard	Chambliss	Cornyn
Barrasso	Coburn	Craig
Bennett	Cochran	Crapo
Brownback	Coleman	DeMint
Bunning	Collins	Dole

Domenici	Inhofe	Sessions
Ensign	Isakson	Shelby
Enzi	Kyl	Smith
Graham	Lott	Stevens
Grassley	Lugar	Sununu
Gregg	Martinez	Thune
Hagel	McConnell	Vitter
Hatch	Murkowski	Voinovich
Hutchison	Roberts	

NOT VOTING—5

Biden	Dodd	Obama
Clinton	McCain	

The amendment (No. 3058) was agreed to.

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I rise today to thank my colleagues for their robust debate about this important piece of legislation.

I would also like to highlight a provision included in this bill based on the Stop Arming Iran Act, which I introduced in January of this year. The provision seeks to end the Iranian Government's acquisition of sensitive military equipment by blocking the Pentagon's sale of F–14 fighter jet parts.

It is the sensitive job of the Department of Defense to demilitarize and auction off surplus military equipment. However, recent investigations and reports have uncovered a frightening trend regarding the sale of F–14 Tomcat aircraft parts. U.S. customs agents have discovered F–14 parts being illegally shipped to Iran by brokers who bought F–14 surplus equipment from Department of Defense auctions.

Other than the United States, Iran is the only nation to fly the F–14. The United States allowed Iran to buy 79 F–14s before its revolution in 1979. Fortunately, most of Iran's F–14s are currently grounded for lack of parts. As the F–14 is retired from active service in the United States, a slew of parts are about to be processed by the Pentagon.

We know that Iran is pursuing a nuclear weapons capability. We know that the Department of State has identified Iran as the most active state sponsor of terrorism. We know that the sale of spare parts for F–14s could make it more difficult to confront the nuclear weapons capability of Iran. And yet F–14 parts are still being sold by the DOD.

Iran's F–14s, especially with the parts to get more of them airborne, greatly strengthen its ground war potential, harming our national and global security. Our country should be doing everything possible to deny the brutal regime in Tehran access to spare parts for their F–14 fleet.

The Department of Defense will tell you that it is already taking action to control the sale of F–14 parts. They now say that every F–14 part is frozen and cannot be sold. However, they will not commit to keeping this freeze in place and admit that the Pentagon can choose to rescind or make exceptions to this policy at any time. I have identified three large-scale changes to the Pentagon's policy on F–14 parts in just the last year. And history has shown us that these rules are not enough.

The Department has been caught still selling F–14 parts, even when its rules forbid it. It has sold F–14 parts to companies that have turned out to be fronts for the Iranians. More recently, the DOD sold sensitive technology, including classified F–14 parts, to undercover GAO investigators.

This provision will make it crystal clear to the Department of Defense that it may not sell any F–14 parts to anyone for any reason. There should be no chance for the parts to make their way to the Iranians.

I am very encouraged that both the Senate and House Armed Services Committees have included the Stop Arming Iran provision in both versions of the Defense authorization bill. I commend my colleagues for allowing this important legislation into today's bill.

The provision fixes a very specific but very important problem: the sale of F–14 components to a state sponsor of terrorism. We cannot—and with the passage of this bill, we will not—allow that to happen.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

• Mr. DODD. Madam President, I wish to explain my vote against ending debate on the Defense authorization bill. I voted this way for two simple reasons—first, this bill does not do anything to end the war, and second, it does not provide adequate support for the families of our returning wounded warriors.

A few weeks ago, I filed an amendment based on a key recommendation of the Dole-Shalala Wounded Warriors Commission—to expand the Family and Medical Leave Act to allow the families of wounded military personnel to take up to 6 months of unpaid leave to care for their loved ones. Now, because the Senate voted to shut off debate, this critically important amendment will not be considered. Such an expansion of the FMLA is of the utmost importance to our wounded warriors, and I will ask at the end of my statement to have a letter from Senator Bob Dole to Chairman LEVIN and Ranking Member MCCAIN, detailing the tremendous importance of this provision, be printed in the RECORD.

On September 11, 2007, I announced that I would not support legislation dealing with Iraq unless it included a firm and enforceable deadline for withdrawing U.S. combat forces from Iraq—one linked to an explicit cut off of funds after a date certain. Sadly, Republican stalling tactics made it impossible for such a provision to receive an up-or-down vote under regular Senate procedures. Therefore, I could not, in good conscience, call for an end to debate on a bill that has not addressed that issue or the hardships our soldiers and their families face both at home and abroad, and the very security of our Nation.

That said, I commend Chairman LEVIN and Ranking Member MCCAIN for their hard work in making sure this legislation does include many beneficial and important provisions, such as a 3.5-percent pay raise for our men and women in uniform and additional funding to purchase Mine Resistant Armor Protected vehicles. These are important steps in making sure our Armed Forces are appropriately compensated and equipped to defend our Nation. But as long as another year passes without an effective plan to end the war and support our military families, I am afraid that this Congress's work will be incomplete.

Madam President, I ask to have the letter to which I referred printed in the RECORD.

The letter follows.

Hon. CARL LEVIN,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. JOHN MCCAIN,
Ranking Member, Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN LEVIN AND RANKING MEMBER MCCAIN, I would like to thank you, once again, for your continued efforts to improve the treatment of our returning combat troops, exemplified by your shepherding of the Wounded Warrior Assistance Act of 2007 through the Senate in July. This important measure provided a good first step; but as you know, much more remains to be done and I appreciate your willingness to consider the recommendations made by the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors.

As you know, I, along with former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala, recently released the findings of the Commission. One specific finding of this report is currently pending as an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act currently being debated on the Senate floor. Notably, the Dodd-Clinton-Dole-Graham amendment (S. Amdt #2647) increases Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) job protection benefits to the families of our injured soldiers from the current 12 weeks to 6 months. These families are facing significant challenges to help their loved ones heal, and the last thing they need to worry about is losing their jobs in the process.

There are two very critical points to be made with respect to this recommendation by the Commission. First, the use of already existing FMLA authority is vital to minimizing the delay in implementation of this needed benefit. The FMLA has existed for 14 years and has a proven track record of success. It is understood by those using the benefits, those charged with its oversight, and the employers working within its framework. Second, the length of the benefit has been carefully crafted to best balance the impact on employers on one side and the average time it takes for most injured personnel to regain self-sufficiency. While other pending amendments have either sought to depart from the existing FMLA structure by using other legislative vehicles not intended to extend to families of service members such as the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), or extended job protection benefits beyond six months, neither are supported by the Commission's findings and may actually hinder the efforts to implement the Commission's work.

The Administration will have a different approach, but it will be some time before the Administration's comprehensive proposal will be acted on.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. I know that you share my belief that it is essential that we supply all necessary and prudent tools to our military families to deal with the hardships of helping their wounded warriors regain self-sufficiency following a severe injury. The Dodd-Clinton-Dole-Graham amendment passes this test. If I may be of any further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

God Bless America,

BOB DOLE.●

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, I will vote against H.R. 1585, the National Defense Authorization Act. I support many of the provisions in this bill, which authorizes the activities of the Department of Defense, including important research, development and procurement funding to improve our Armed Forces and the operations and maintenance funding necessary to ensure the smooth running of the military services over the coming year. I support these activities, which not only benefit those servicemembers currently serving overseas in Afghanistan and Iraq, but also help build a strong and effective military for the future. I applaud the fine work of Senator LEVIN and the Committee on Armed Services for their efforts in putting together a bill that is, in most ways, a good piece of legislation.

However, H.R. 1585 also includes title XV, which provides authorization for the funding of continued operations in Iraq for the coming year. In my view, this provision constitutes a ''poison pill.''

I have stated before that the Congress should not continue to write blank checks for the prosecution of this apparently endless war in Iraq. That is what title XV does. In effect, it provides a congressional authorization to fund the continuation of President Bush's policy in Iraq for another year, without any strings attached. I offered an amendment to clarify that nothing in the bill constitutes a specific authorization for U.S. troops to remain in Iraq, but the committee was unable to clear the amendment. Other amendments offered to the bill that would have placed limits on the number of troops or otherwise limited the mission of U.S. forces in Iraq were defeated during the floor debate on H.R. 1585. This is regrettable.

Continuing to prosecute this war at the current rate is straining our military to the breaking point. Many units and individuals are enduring their third and fourth rotation to Iraq, and because no limits have been placed on the mission or force levels, there is no end in sight. More and more military analysts are warning that the U.S. Armed Forces are at risk for becoming a 'hollow force,' as happened after the Vietnam conflict. That is irresponsible, and it puts our Nation at risk.

There are no provisions in this bill to require the U.S. President or the Iraqi government to meet any benchmarks or withdraw any troops, or even to put limits on sending still more troops to Iraq, if any could be found. It is time for Congress to start reining in this runaway horse, before our military is completely exhausted and our nation made vulnerable.

I support our troops. I do not want them to lack for anything needed to do their job or to keep them safe. But I cannot and will not agree to leave them in Iraq forever, with no limits placed on their mission, no provision to ensure that they at least get as much time at home as they do on the battlefield, with no benchmarks or goals set for the Iraqi Government that might trigger a return of our troops, and no assurances by our commander in Iraq that this war is making the United States any safer. That is a bitter poison pill I cannot swallow.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the substitute amendment, as amended, is agreed to.

The amendment (No. 2011), as amended, was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on engrossment of the amendment and third reading of the bill.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill, as amended, pass?

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

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), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

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

The result was announced—yeas 92, nays 3, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 359 Leg.]

YEAS—92

Akaka	Cardin	Dorgan
Alexander	Carper	Durbin
Allard	Casey	Ensign
Barrasso	Chambliss	Enzi
Baucus	Cochran	Feinstein
Bayh	Coleman	Graham
Bennett	Collins	Grassley
Bingaman	Conrad	Gregg
Bond	Corker	Hagel
Boxer	Cornyn	Harkin
Brown	Craig	Hatch
Brownback	Crapo	Hutchison
Bunning	DeMint	Inhofe
Burr	Dole	Inouye
Cantwell	Domenici	Isakson
Johnson	McConnell	Shelby
Kennedy	Menendez	Smith
Kerry	Mikulski	Snowe
Klobuchar	Murkowski	Specter
Kohl	Murray	Stabenow
Kyl	Nelson (FL)	Stevens
Landrieu	Nelson (NE)	Sununu
Lautenberg	Pryor	Tester
Leahy	Reed	Thune
Levin	Reid	Vitter
Lieberman	Roberts	Voinovich
Lincoln	Rockefeller	Warner
Lott	Salazar	Webb
Lugar	Sanders	Whitehouse
Martinez	Schumer	Wyden
McCaskill	Sessions	

NAYS—3

Byrd	Coburn	Feingold

NOT VOTING—5

Biden	Dodd	Obama
Clinton	McCain	

The bill (H.R. 1585), as amended, was passed.

(The bill will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.)

Mr. WARNER. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. LEVIN. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I voted against the fiscal year 2008 defense authorization bill because it does nothing to bring to a close the open-ended military mission in Iraq, which has overburdened our military, weakened our national security, and cost the lives of thousands of American soldiers.

There were provisions in the bill which I strongly supported, including language I proposed that will make it easier for family members and other trusted adults to take leave to care for children and dependents when their loved ones are deployed. I am also pleased that the Senate approved two amendments I cosponsored. One was an amendment by Senator WEBB creating a Commission on Wartime Contracting to examine waste, fraud and abuse in Iraq and Afghanistan, including the misuse of force by private security contractors. The other was an amendment by Senator SANDERS to ensure that money allocated for research on gulf war illnesses is spent wisely.

But on balance, I could not vote for a bill that defies the will of so many Wisconsinites and so many Americans by allowing the President to continue one of the greatest and most tragic foreign policy blunders in the history of our Nation.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I was pleased today to vote, along with my Senate colleagues, for the passage of H.R.1585, the Defense Authorization Bill for Fiscal Year 2008. I thank the managers of this bill, Chairman LEVIN and Ranking Member MCCAIN, for working so diligently and in such a collegial manner toward passage of a bill that addressed so many complicated and potentially divisive issues. It is to their credit that we have been able to move this bill along which is so vital to the support of our brave men and women in our armed services.

This bill was passed out of committee with a number of provisions to improve

the lives of our military members and the effectiveness and readiness of our armed services which I, as a senior member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and chairman of the Subcommittee on Readiness, worked to ensure were a part of the bill language. They include important acquisition reforms such as a series of provisions that would help the DOD manage its oversight of contract services and the creation of a Chief Management Officer for the Department of Defense. I also was able to work with my colleagues to incorporate language that establishes a Director of Corrosion and Control Policy and Oversight in addition to other provisions that further my efforts to establish effective corrosion control in all branches of our services. H.R. 1585 also contained my legislation to establish a National Language Council to develop and implement a long-term and comprehensive language strategy.

In addition to the provisions that I initiated and supported in the underlying language, I was able to successfully introduce and cosponsor a number of amendments during the Senate's consideration of the Defense Authorization Act. As chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I was particularly pleased to see that language from the Dignified Treatment of Wounded Warrior Act which addresses shortfalls in the quality of health care provided to our servicemembers was included as an amendment to this bill. Similarly, I was pleased that my amendment related to the Wounded Warrior Act was passed by the Senate. This legislation will enhance the quality of care that members of our Armed Forces receive once they transition to veteran status, improve the capability of the Department of Veterans Affairs to care for veterans with traumatic brain injuries, and improve access to VA mental health and dental care. In addition, my amendment addresses the issue of homelessness among newly discharged servicemembers and recognizes the importance of the National Guard and Reserve in the VA's outreach programs.

This bill also includes an amendment I offered to end the disparate treatment of employees who accepted discontinuation of service retirement following a reduction in force. My amendment ensures that these Federal employees would be able to return to work at DOD and continue to earn toward retirement. It is vital that this Nation have a viable plan to produce individuals who are capable of effective communication in today's global environment. I also applaud the inclusion of the fair competition amendment, introduced by Senator KENNEDY which I cosponsored, which will minimize the harmful effects of the current A–76 process for outsourcing Federal jobs to private contractors by removing several unfair advantages that contractors currently have in the contract competition process.

I was disappointed, however, that the Webb amendment which I was proud to cosponsor was not agreed to by the Senate. The Webb amendment would have lessened the burden placed on our soldiers and their families by setting a minimum time between deployments in order to ensure that members of our Armed Forces have as much time at home with their loved ones as they fight overseas for this Nation.

I was also disappointed that the Levin-Reed amendment which would have set a clear and definitive deadline for the withdrawal of forces from Iraq was not passed. One of the key elements of stabilizing the ongoing chaos in Iraq is for the Iraqi Government to begin to take more responsibility for ensuring their own nation's security and assume primary combat role in protecting and defending their nation. This will not occur without the development and implementation of a coherent exit strategy. The Levin-Reed amendment offered just such a plan.

As a senior member of the Senate Armed Services and chairman of the Subcommittee on Readiness and Management, I will continue to work with my Senate colleagues to change the course of this war by insisting that the administration provide to this Congress and the people of our nation with a comprehensive exit strategy.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1327

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 172, S. 1327, a bill to create temporary district court judgeships, that the bill be read a third time, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SESSIONS. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 535

Mr. LEAHY. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 211, S. 535, the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Act; that the substitute amendment be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time, passed; the title amendment be agreed to; the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. COBURN. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, the bill we have just adopted is the 46th consecutive annual Defense authorization bill that has come out of our committee and been brought to the Senate for debate and passage. It has been no secret that this is one of the largest and most complex and important pieces of legislation that comes before the Senate every year. Every year since 1961, it has been a challenge to get it passed. Thankfully, because of its vital importance to our Nation, we have always found a way to do so. This year was particularly difficult, as we continue to debate the war in Iraq. Today is the 19th and final day of debate on this bill. Only two other annual Defense authorization bills have required longer to pass. In 1969, the Senate debated the bill for 37 days. In 1970, it was debated for 28 days. History shows that in time of war, the Senate acts as it should and takes the necessary time to carefully consider this bill and its impact on our Nation.

We had over 400 amendments that were filed to this bill. We were able to work with all Senators and pass several large packages of managers' amendments while we were wrestling with Iraq-related amendments. All told, we acted on a total of 214 amendments during the bill's consideration.

Whenever we reach the point of final passage of legislation, we take a moment to thank Members and staff. To some this may seem to be a routine matter. It is not. All of us who make up the Senate should honor its customs and traditions. They are really the foundation of this Senate.

With that as my motivation, I want to take a moment to express my thanks to those who worked so hard and cooperated so well to bring us to final passage of this bill.

First, my thanks go to Senator MCCAIN who is serving as our ranking member for the first time this year. Senator MCCAIN's leadership and determination helped forge this bill through the committee and on to final passage.

Next, I thank and acknowledge our former chairman, Senator WARNER. Senator WARNER has made innumerable contributions to this bill. This bill would not be here but for the work of Senator WARNER. Working within arm's reach of Senator WARNER each year for the past 28 years has been truly one of the highlights of my Senate career.

He is a good friend of mine. More importantly, he is a good friend to national defense and to the people who depend upon it and who work for it in this country.

To our majority leader, Senator REID, and his floor staff, a special word of thanks for giving us the time and the tools to get this bill through the Senate.

To all of our committee members who, again, worked on a bipartisan basis, we appreciate their work. We do not often take the time to express it. I am afraid this will kind of have to be that moment. People do not realize our committee has one quarter of the Senate as its members. We work together in the committee. Our differences on the bill did not divide us. We reported the bill by a unanimous vote.

To Charlie Armstrong in the Office of Senate Legislative Counsel, he did his work skillfully. He proved over 400 times, with those 400 amendments, that he knows how to draft amendments.

To our committee staff members, they truly earned the thanks and recognition of the entire Senate for their

time and their efforts on this legislation.

I want to mention two of the members of our staff who lead our staff and one woman who has served on our committee staff for the past 19 years.

To Rick DeBobes, our committee staff director, he serves us so brilliantly and well and so unselfishly 24/7. He is within earshot, so I will not embarrass him and have him blush other than to say he is so totally indispensable not just to me but to the Senate and all of the staff that work so well with him. Our gratitude.

To Senator MCCAIN's new Republican staff director, Mike Kostiw, his leadership is so effective that it is quite difficult to believe this is Mike's first year.

To Cindy Pearson, our assistant chief clerk and security manager, a special word of thanks and encouragement. Cindy has been serving the committee for the last 19 years. She is the consummate professional in every aspect of her work. She is away from us right now as she undergoes treatment for breast cancer. We want her to know she is ever present in our thoughts and in our prayers. We all look forward to welcoming Cindy Pearson back to the committee family soon.

So Rick's and Mike's and all the other committee staff members' long and hard work and personal sacrifices, day in and day out, to get this bill enacted again this year paid off. They are the backbone of the Senate. They and other people who work for us in this Senate make it possible to turn our ideas into policies and into legislation.

I thank them all. I know I thank them for their expertise and their dedication on behalf of all the members of the committee. They brought us again through to the point of conference with the House. We are hopeful to bring back promptly a conference report. But in the meantime, thanks to them, their professionalism, and their hard work. We are where we are at.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a list of the entire Armed Services Committee staff be printed in the RECORD.

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

ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE STAFF

Richard D. DeBobes, Staff Director; Michael V. Kostiw, Republican Staff Director; June M. Borawski, Printing and Documents Clerk; Leah C. Brewer, Nominations and Hearings Clerk; Joseph M. Bryan, Professional Staff Member; William M. Caniano, Professional Staff Member; Pablo E. Carrillo, Minority Investigative Counsel; Jonathan D. Clark, Counsel; Ilona R. Cohen, Counsel; David G. Collins, Research Assistant; Fletcher L. Cork, Staff Assistant; Christine E. Cowart, Chief Clerk; Daniel J. Cox, Jr., Professional Staff Member; Madelyn R. Creedon, Counsel; Kevin A. Cronin, Staff Assistant; Marie F. Dickinson, Administrative Assistant for the Minority; Gabriella Eisen, Counsel; Evelyn N. Farkas, Professional Staff Member; Richard W. Fieldhouse, Professional Staff Member; Creighton Greene, Professional Staff Member.

Gary J. Howard, Systems Administrator; Paul C. Hutton, IV, Research Assistant; Mark R. Jacobson, Professional Staff Member; Gregory T. Kiley, Professional Staff Member; Jessica L. Kingston, Staff Assistant; Michael J. Kuiken, Professional Staff Member; Gerald J. Leeling, Counsel; Peter K. Levine, General Counsel; Derek J. Maurer, Minority Counsel; Thomas K. McConnell, Professional Staff Member; Michael J. McCord, Professional Staff Member; William G.P. Monahan, Counsel; David M. Morriss, Minority Counsel; Lucian L. Niemeyer, Professional Staff Member; Michael J. Noblet, Research Assistant; Bryan D. Parker, Minority Investigative Counsel; Christopher J. Paul, Professional Staff Member; Cindy Pearson, Assistant Chief Clerk and Security Manager; John H. Quirk V, Security Clerk; Benjamin L. Rubin, Staff Assistant.

Lynn F. Rusten, Professional Staff Member; Brian F. Sebold, Staff Assistant; Arun A. Seraphin, Professional Staff Member; Travis E. Smith, Special Assistant; Robert M. Soofer, Professional Staff Member; Sean G. Stackley, Professional Staff Member; William K. Sutey, Professional Staff Member; Kristine L. Svinicki, Professional Staff Member; Diana G. Tabler, Professional Staff Member; Mary Louise Wagner, Professional Staff Member; Richard F. Walsh, Minority Counsel; Breon N. Wells, Receptionist; Dana W. White, Professional Staff Member.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I yield the floor. I see my dear friend Senator WARNER is here. Again, I cannot say too often what it means to have as a partner JOHN WARNER of Virginia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I very much value the friendship and the working relationship we have had together. It would be interesting if somebody wanted to try to look at records. I suppose since this is our 29th bill we have worked on, that might be a bit of a record. But I think also both of us have been chairman three times. That might be a bit of a record too.

But I say to the Senator from Michigan, I give you a most sincere and warm congratulations for your achieving this bill. This is the 19th day the bill was on the floor, and our good friend, the ranking member, was on the floor many of those days. He has called in each day to our distinguished chief of staff, Mike Kostiw, and has talked with me and other members of the staff. So he is very much hands on.

But I think we probably got through with a little less contention this time than in years past. I think that reflects a lot of credit on the distinguished chairman and the distinguished ranking member and the wonderful staff and very active membership by each and every one of the, as you say, 25 members of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

We work well together as a team. People are very proud to be on this committee. They believe they are serving a most noble cause; that is, the men and women of the Armed Forces, and their families, who tonight are on two battlefronts and, indeed, in many other places of personal danger throughout the world, for the sole purpose of guarding freedom and, most importantly, the freedom we have here at home.

So I thank the chairman. I thank all who made it possible, and say, also, how well our two staffs worked together in a bipartisan way to achieve, as you say, a consensus on almost 200 of those amendments. So I think we have done our job, I say to the Senator. It is at a critical time in the course of our country. Again, I wish the men and women of the Armed Forces and their families only the best.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate insists on its amendment and requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, my chairman has overlooked a minor item.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with each Senator given 10 minutes.

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

The Senator from Ohio.

COSTA RICA AND TRADE POLICY

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise to speak in this Chamber about a story unfolding right now in Costa Rica.

This country of 4 million people is having a national referendum on October 7—next week—on the Central American Free Trade Agreement, the trade deal this Congress passed by a narrow margin a couple of years ago.

CAFTA stipulates that the last signatory country must approve the deal no later than 2 years after the first signatory country implements the agreement.

So over the past 2 years, the United States, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic enacted the NAFTA expansion.

The Costa Rican people have resisted it.

My colleagues have seen news reports this weekend about a massive rally of fair traders—people who want trade but under different rules—against CAFTA in Costa Rica. Some 150,000 citizens in a country of 4 million people spoke out expressing their opposition to the agreement—150,000 people—and most thought that a conservative estimate.

The pro-CAFTA government gave up efforts to pass CAFTA in the legislature after continued protest against it, including a 2-day general strike last October.

Their is strong opposition to a NAFTA-style agreement. In fact, the issue of whether to approve CAFTA has stirred up such political upheaval that the Government chose to go to a public

referendum instead of going to the legislature. Legislators not unlike our peers in Congress did not want to face voters in their home district if they voted for the pact.

The agreement must be implemented as domestic law—meaning Costa Rica has to enact new laws in order for the trade agreement to take effect. That bothers hundreds of thousands of Costa Ricans because they have in place today strong laws on health, on the environment, on education, on privatization, on generic drugs, on all the kinds of issues that have helped to build the middle class in Costa Rica.

Costa Rica is a progressive country. More than a third of its land is protected in national parks. More than 90 percent of its electricity comes from renewals. Costa Rica's high literacy rates are well known, and it has a strong health care system. Its life expectancy is not too different than our own in this country.

Costa Rica's citizens have also seen what NAFTA—the North American Free Trade Agreement—did to Mexico's middle class, and what especially it has done to Mexican farmers, small peasant family farmers.

These factors have created strong resistance to entering into an agreement that can handcuff policymakers from setting progrowth, prodevelopment policies in their own country.

As this Chamber knows, NAFTA/CAFTA-style deals are about a whole lot more than just tariffs and quotas. These agreements are top-down pacts that lock in new rules on investment, on food safety, on services, and on procurement.

This month, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development issued a report warning developing countries to be wary of bilateral and regional free-trade deals as they are currently written. They warned them against signing these agreements.

The U.N. report cited NAFTA as an example of a trade agreement that may have short-term benefits but does long-term harm. You hear a lot of talk from the Bush administration that free trade is necessary to address poverty. You hear that the ''people,'' as they say, of these mostly poor countries want trade deals like NAFTA.

But what we are seeing in Costa Rica right now is what we are seeing around the globe when it comes to trade deals that purely and simply give too much power to multinational corporations. What we are seeing is a loud and clear demand for change.

We see it in the WTO negotiations, which continue to falter as developing countries resist WTO expansion. We see it in Ohio—in Lorain and Mansfield, in Youngstown and Lima, in Dayton and Chillicothe—where hard-working men and women who have made America the strongest Nation in the world are betrayed by Washington's trade policy.

Presidents from both parties have entered into trade agreements, agreements such as NAFTA, promising they would create millions of new jobs and enrich communities. Instead, too many of these agreements, too often, have cost millions of jobs and devastated communities.

Two years ago, when I served in the House, we created a bipartisan coalition against the Central American Free Trade Agreement. Religious organizations, labor unions, environmentalists, small businesses, human rights advocates, and small manufacturing companies were part of this bipartisan opposition.

The opposition that was evident in Washington and, more importantly, in congressional districts around the country caused the Bush administration to make deals and promises and—in the words of one sympathetic lawmaker to the Bush administration—helped us so that we ''twist[ed] arms until they break into a thousand pieces.''

The Bush administration got what it wanted when it pushed NAFTA through. But we won the debate. Today in Costa Rica, we are seeing similar scare tactics taken by the pro-CAFTA administration.

A memo was leaked to the Costa Rican press, and it has caused an uproar for good reason. In this memo, the Costa Rican Vice President and a Member of Congress outlined a plan to President Arias that uses fear, threats to local officials, and attacks on CAFTA opposition as tactics to win the referendum.

The Second Vice President, one of the memo's authors, had to resign from his government office while officials investigate whether any laws had been broken.

The memo states clearly:

> The mayor that does not win his canton—
>
> Which is their political jurisdiction—
>
> The mayor that does not win his canton (precinct) will not get a penny from the government in the next three years.

It is pretty simple. The memo says the government then needs to ''stimulate fear'' among Costa Ricans. It even lists the kinds of fear that are effective: Stimulate fear. Create fear of the loss of jobs if CAFTA is not approved. Stimulate a fear of violence and civil strife. Stimulate a fear of Chavez and Castro if Costa Rica does not approve CAFTA.

Specifically, there has been an informational campaign in Costa Rica that if this agreement fails, then the United States will punish Costa Rica by revoking the existing trade benefits that Costa Rica has under the Caribbean Basin Initiative. That is simply patently false.

Costa Rica will continue to benefit from CBI because it is the law. It is a permanent program. Its existence depends on the U.S. Congress, not an edict from the Bush administration.

These tactics should sound familiar to my colleagues who recall the CAFTA debate. These tactics make it very clear that what is at stake—in Costa Rica this week and when this Chamber takes up issues of trade and globalization—is that there are very different competing ideologies. There is the NAFTA ideology and there is the fair trade ideology.

In truth, I believe the defeat of this referendum may actually do more to improve Costa Rican-U.S. relations because it is clear that there is a fair trade movement on the rise in this Chamber, in the House of Representatives, and surely across the land. Look at elections last year in the Presiding Officer's State of Rhode Island, in Ohio, in Pennsylvania, in Missouri, and in Minnesota and Virginia and Montana, because it is clear there is a fair trade movement on the rise in this country and in Costa Rica.

We have reason to hope. If the referendum is defeated, we can create a new trade agreement that benefits workers and communities, small businesses, religious folks, people who care about an economy that works for more of us, that helps us to create a solid, strong middle class, not just supporting the multinational corporations.

We have a choice. The people of Costa Rica have a choice there this week. We can continue with the fair trade model or we can reject the NAFTA and CAFTA models and work together on a new trade deal, a fair trade deal.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

BURMA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, for the past week the world watched the people of Burma rise up against the oppressive regime that rules that country.

Then, the tyrannical junta that has held power for some 40 years, the State Peace and Development Council, brought out its soldiers and it brought out its guns. They arrested, brutalized, and killed many who bravely stood up to the misrule of this junta.

So while last week the streets were filled with brave monks adorned in saffron robes demonstrating for freedom, today those same streets are occupied by uniformed thugs and lined with barbed-wire barricades. For now the people of Burma have largely fallen silent. But the silence in Burma is a deafening one that we can still hear. Even if the freedom-loving people of Burma had been temporarily quieted, the rest of us can still lend our voices to their cause.

Earlier today, Senator KERRY and I introduced a sense-of-the-Senate resolution condemning the SPDC for its brutality in snuffing out these cries for

freedom. We have already been joined by scores of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle, and I know we will be joined by many more. The House of Representatives is slated to pass a similar measure later this week. In this way, the entire Congress of the United States will be able to speak, when the Burmese citizen, the Buddhist monk, the democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi herself are forced to be silent.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me and join Senator KERRY on this resolution.

I yield the floor.

TRIBUTE TO MAYER MITCHELL

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Mayer Mitchell, a great American and human being who passed away on Wednesday, September 26, 2007. A highly successful businessman and remarkable philanthropist, Mayer Mitchell was a personal friend, and along with the entire city of Mobile, I mourn his passing.

Mayer was born in New Orleans in 1933 and grew up in Mobile, AL. He earned his bachelor of science degree in economics at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Finance in 1953. He then served as an Army first lieutenant in Korea, earning a commendation ribbon with medal pendant for meritorious service.

Returning home to Mobile with his wife Arlene in 1958, Mayer founded, with his brother Abe, the Mitchell Company, a commercial and residential real estate development firm. He went on to serve as its chairman and chief executive officer for the next three decades, selling his interest in the Mitchell Company in 1986.

The company's final total under the oversight of the Mitchell brothers was remarkable, with 25,000 single family homes, 20,000 apartments and 175 shopping centers built throughout the Southeast.

In fact, the current Mitchell Company that descended from a partnership of Mayer and his brother remains the largest private firm in Mobile and is among the top 40 in Alabama. Mayer's business success earned him an induction into the Alabama Business Hall of Fame in 2006.

Mayer Mitchell leaves a legacy of tremendous philanthropy, touching the lives of many residents of south Alabama. Mayer was a tireless proponent of education and health care, serving more than 32 years on the University of South Alabama's Board of Trustees, including a term as chairman.

He was awarded the University of South Alabama's National Alumni Association Distinguished Service Award in 2005 and an honorary doctorate of humane letters in 2007.

The Mitchell family's philanthropy reached all aspects of the campus at the University of South Alabama, from business and medicine to athletics. Mayer will forever be remembered as a legendary figure in the growth of the University. The Mitchell Cancer Institute, the Mitchell College of Business and the Mitchell Center sports and performance complex, proudly bear the family name.

To date, the Mitchell family holds the distinction of having contributed more than any other single family to a public university in Alabama State history.

The Mitchell Cancer Institute alone is a powerful legacy, providing state-of-the-art cancer care to people throughout the gulf coast region. Mayer always explained his deep commitment to cancer treatment through a personal connection. At the age of 36, he was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease and was given 6 months to live. After 2 years of treatments, Mayer made an extraordinary recovery.

This victory not only shaped his life, but shaped the future of the Mobile region as well. He never forgot that he had to leave Mobile for his own cancer treatment in Rochester, NY, and he vowed to make certain Mobile had its own cancer center in the future.

This experience shaped his generosity and will to persevere in the form of improved quality of health care for every resident in south Alabama.

Although Mayer Mitchell and his family were critical to the tremendous growth of the University of South Alabama, this was not the only object of Mayer's patronage.

A strong friend to Israel, he served a term as president of the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee and served on the board of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and the Jewish Seminary of America, which awarded him an honorary doctorate.

Mayer supported several other schools and numerous social and religious organizations. His philanthropic service included work with Alabama Power Company, Wright School, Bishop State Community College, Leukemia Society of America, USA Foundation, AmSouth Bank, Altus Bank, Mobile Area United Way, Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, Mobile Jewish Welfare Fund, Mobile Federation of Jewish Charities, Mobile County Real Estate Association, Archives of American Art, Anti-Defamation League and the Banc Corporation.

His honors include: Jewish Welfare Fund Man of the Year, Outstanding Young Men of America, Prichard Honorary Citizen of the Year, Mobile County Realtor of the Year, and numerous high honors from the Boy's Club of Mobile, Bishop State Community College, University of Rochester, New Orleans Chapter of Hadassah, Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, Mobile Kiwanis Club and the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association.

Mayer is loved and will be missed by his wife of 54 years, Arlene; his son Richard; his three daughters, Melinda Wertheim, Joy Grodnick and Lisa Bukstein; and eight grandchildren.

He was an inspiration to many and will be remembered for his dedication and many contributions to Mobile and the University of South Alabama.

I ask the entire Senate to join me in recognizing and honoring the life of Mayer Mitchell.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I ask the indulgence of the Senator from Vermont. I know Senator SESSIONS wishes to add a few words of tribute to Mr. Mitchell, and then Senator SANDERS will have his 10 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I thank my colleague Senator SHELBY for recalling the remarkable facts of the life of Mayer Bubba Mitchell, one of Mobile's great citizens, a national leader, as well as a local leader, someone who has friends throughout the country and the world. It is remarkable, the extent of his reach and impact. He had a clear vision. He wanted his life to be a life that made the world a better place. He worked at that. He had a strong will to do that. Senator SHELBY and I were talking about that this morning. It was remarkable. He had an ability to get things accomplished. To me, one of his most remarkable characteristics was the fact that he could have many different activities going on, but he always seemed to complete each one of them and get it done successfully.

At a final AIPAC banquet he attended, realizing it would be his last—it was recalled at his funeral service Friday—he asked these questions about himself but really applying to others. I think it would apply to all of us in the Senate. Knowing that he would not be back, he asked: Have I done enough? Have I done my best? Have I made a difference? All of us ought to ask those questions more and would probably be better performers when we do.

His wonderful partner Arlene is such a fabulous person, so well liked, a former Mobilian of the year. She is so gracious. His son Richard spoke so movingly at his memorial service. His son-in-law Jimmy Grodnick likewise, married to his wonderful daughter Joy, made remarks. His grandchildren read from the Talmud such wonderful passages that reflected his values. His brother Abe, who has been a partner in business and in so many of these activities, told me afterwards it wasn't over. He still had things he wanted to do and he would continue to work at them. I know that is exactly what Mayer would have liked.

The business school I visited at the University of South Alabama is so well endowed by the Mitchell family. The athletics center, the Mitchell Center, is where his memorial service was held, the sports complex. And perhaps in the long term, the greatest financial investment he and his family made is in the Mitchell Cancer Center that will be a place for research as well as treatment of those who have suffered with

cancer, because he felt so blessed, having been allowed to survive what many said at the time was a fatal disease.

So many people came from all over the country to that service, it was really remarkable, including the Republican leader in the Senate, MITCH MCCONNELL, who himself came down and was an honorary pallbearer. He was on a first-name basis with Presidents. Indeed, I am aware that President Bush called him twice in recent months. Foreign leaders, Senators, and Congressmen were on a first-name basis with him. His life is a testament to what can happen when a person focuses his life on making a positive difference in the world and living a good life. He accomplished those things. Probably outside of a public official, he was on a first-name basis with more Senators than maybe any other person in our country. There may be some others, but not many would know as many and be as well respected as he was over the years.

I appreciate the opportunity to make these remarks. Not only did he serve on the board, chairman of the board of the University of South Alabama for 32 years, he gave hours and hours of his time and attention and ideas and ability to making that the great university it is. So he not only gave money, he gave of his time and of himself to make it the great university it is. Gordon Moulton, the president, certainly reflected that in his remarks.

I thank the Chair and Senator SHELBY for his excellent remarks and yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, Mayer was a wonderful man who a lot of us got to know because of his leadership role in the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. This was a wonderful gentleman, the exemplification of the American dream. He worked extremely hard, made a great success of himself for his family, for his community, for his country. He loved America. He was devoted to Israel and devoted to the strength of the United States-Israel relationship. He was a great American patriot. I don't want to take the time to describe it now, but I am personally grateful for him for the ways in which he stuck with me at tough times in my own career. He didn't just stick with me, but he sort of worked at it to make sure everything came out all right. He was a good friend, a good man. God bless his soul.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT ZACHARY TOMCZAK

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to SSG Zachary Tomczak and his heroic service to our country. As a member of the Army's 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division based in North Carolina, Staff Sergeant Tomczak was serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. On September 25, 2007, he was killed in action in Baghdad.

A Huron native, Zachary joined the Army in June 2002 and took great pride in serving his country. His graduation from Ranger School at Fort Benning, GA, in May is described by his father as ''one of the proudest moments for him and for me.'' His captain remembers him as ''a leader, mentor, warrior, Ranger, hero.'' Zachary was on his fourth tour of duty in Iraq and had earned the Purple Heart and Bronze Star Medal, among other awards.

A hard worker, Zachary enjoyed hands-on projects and worked for a construction company during high school. He also enjoyed spending time four-wheeling, pheasant hunting, and deer hunting. Friends and family will remember Zachary's love for life and easygoing personality.

Sergeant Tomczak gave his all for his soldiers and his country. Our Nation owes him a debt of gratitude, and the best way to honor his life is to emulate his commitment to our country. Mr. President, I join with all South Dakotans in expressing my deepest sympathy to the family of Staff Sergeant Tomczak. He will be missed, but his service to our Nation will never be forgotten.

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS CHRISTOPHER PFEIFER

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I rise to express my sympathy over the loss of United States Army PFC Christopher Pfeifer of Nebraska. Private First Class Pfeifer died on September 25 from injuries he sustained near Kamu, Afghanistan, when insurgents attacked his unit on August 17. He was 21 years old.

Private First Class Pfeifer grew up in the small town of Spalding, NE, where he played eight-man football at Spalding Academy, as well as the drums in the band. He was assigned to the 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team based in Schweinfurt, Germany. All the flags in Spalding, a town of about 600 people, are at half-mast in honor of Private First Class Pfeifer.

Private First Class Pfeifer is remembered as a devoted husband, son, and brother. Sadly, he was denied the chance to become a proud father; his wife Karen gave birth to a baby girl the day after his death.

All of Nebraska is proud of Private First Class Pfeifer's service to our country, as well as the thousands of other brave Americans serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In addition to his wife and newborn daughter, he is survived by his parents, Mike and Dar, his brother Aaron, and his sister Nicki.

I ask my colleagues to join me and all Americans in honoring PFC Christopher Pfeifer.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am here today to talk about health insurance. Congress is well aware of the ever increasing number of the uninsured. Not to mention the fact that health costs continue to rise at an alarming rate. Make no mistake, the numbers are sobering.

But I am not here to dwell on the past and present. I stand here today to talk about the future. I stand here to discuss ways to expand access to health insurance and to change the inequities in the tax treatment of health insurance.

During the debate on SCHIP, I engaged in a colloquy with Senators BURR, COBURN, MARTINEZ, CORKER, and BENNETT. During that exchange, I explained that, currently, a taxpayer who receives health insurance through his or her employer is not taxed on the cost of the health coverage. I also explained that individuals who do not receive health coverage through their employer generally do not receive a tax benefit. Similarly, a tax benefit is not afforded to people who are not employed and purchase health insurance on the individual market.

I noted that Republicans and Democrats alike agree that Congress should ''level the playing field'' and expand access to health insurance. The question is how. Senators BURR, COBURN, MARTINEZ, CORKER, and DOLE have introduced a proposal that would eliminate the exclusion for employer-provided health coverage. It would provide a flat tax credit to all Americans who purchase ''qualifying health insurance.'' I commend the Senators for their leadership, and I intend to work with them on ways to expand access to health insurance.

Senators WYDEN and BENNETT have also introduced a proposal that would expand access to health insurance. Senators GREGG, BILL NELSON, and ALEXANDER have cosponsored the proposal. Most recently, Senators STABENOW, LANDRIEU, and COLEMAN cosponsored the legislation. This bipartisan legislation is a ''patient-driven'' approach to reforming our health care system. I want to stress, a ''patient-driven'' approach to reforming health care.

A ''patient-driven'' approach means the patient can shop for their own health care in a competitive marketplace, which will allow them to choose the type of health insurance that meets their needs. Many in the Democratic Party, including several of the Democratic Presidential candidates, want a government-run single-payer health care system that is not ''patient-centered.'' This is a nonstarter and is bad policy. Recent polling shows that the American public thinks so. That is, the majority of Americans do not want a government-run system.

I want to reform the health care system through the Tax Code. I want to cap or eliminate the exclusion for employer-provided health coverage and offer Americans a choice between a tax credit and a deduction for health insurance. I want to condition these tax subsidies on States undertaking certain insurance reforms. I want to give the States the flexibility to decide what

types of reforms are best for their constituencies.

This ''patient-driven'' approach—with insurance reforms and changes in the tax treatment of health insurance—should make health insurance more affordable. And it should significantly reduce the number of the uninsured.

During my tenure in the Senate, I have sought to build bridges between Republicans and Democrats. I believe that there are times where Republicans and Democrats need to come together to produce results.

An example of my efforts to work in a bipartisan manner is the bipartisan SCHIP legislation that was overwhelmingly passed by this body. In the spirit of bipartisanship, I join Senator WYDEN in cosponsoring the Healthy Americans Act. The Healthy Americans Act is a ''patient-driven'' approach to reforming our health care system.

While I support this ''patient-driven'' approach, I have serious concerns about a number of the provisions of the Healthy Americans Act. For example, like many of the Democratic Presidential candidates, the act would require all individuals to buy health insurance. I support accessibility to private insurance and differ with my colleagues on this point. Also, Senator WYDEN's approach is more regulatory than I would prefer.

In addition, I am not endorsing the repeal of the noninterference clause in Medicare Part D. That is not going to be on the table. So my cosponsorship is not an endorsement of these elements. Instead, I am cosponsoring the Healthy Americans Act to add my voice to the call for significant changes in our health care system.

What we have here is Republicans and Democrats coming together to solve a problem. This is what bipartisanship is all about. We are all on the same page when it comes to the big picture; that is, reforming our health care system and expanding access to health insurance.

We have serious problems, and we need serious people to solve them. So let's put politics aside, roll up our sleeves and work in a bipartisan way to reform our health care system.

Make no mistake, my cosponsorship of the Healthy Americans Act is only one step in the process. I intend to work with Senators BURR, COBURN, MARTINEZ, CORKER, and DOLE on their health care reform proposal. I intend to work with Chairman BAUCUS and members of the Senate Finance Committee on small business health reforms, along with more comprehensive health care reform proposals like the Healthy Americans Act. Let's get serious.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I wish today to pay tribute to the contributions of Hispanic Americans as we commemorate Hispanic Heritage Month. This occasion welcomes the opportunity to celebrate the achievements made by Hispanic Americans to enrich the culture and day-to-day life of the United States.

Today, there is no denying the strength and impact of Hispanic Americans, who are now more than 40 million strong. In my home State of New Mexico, 44 percent of the total population is made up of people of Hispanic descent, which according to the Census Bureau, is the largest proportion of any State in the Union. What has truly been remarkable to me over the years is the extent to which the Hispanic community has thrived in every facet of civic life.

For instance, I am proud to call attention to the remarkable achievement of PFC José F. Valdez, one of 48 Hispanic American Medal of Honor recipients. Born and raised in Governador, NM, José served during World War II near Rosenkrantz, France. He heroically saved the lives of his fellow comrades by engaging in a firefight which allowed the soldiers to escape after an enemy counterattack. Similar tales of bravery are prevalent in the history of Hispanic Americans, who have served with distinction in every U.S. military campaign including our current engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In the areas of science, medicine, sport, art, business, and public service, the various achievements of the Hispanic community are immeasurable. This year, Hispanic Business magazine celebrated its 25th anniversary by profiling 500 of the largest Hispanic-owned companies in the United States, a nearly tenfold increase from the magazine's initial listing in 1982. These companies boast total revenues of $36.6 billion, which is a sizable contribution to the American economy.

Twenty-five of these top-ranked companies join me in calling New Mexico their home. At the top of this list is Manuel Lujan Agencies from Albuquerque, NM, which has also been awarded ''Most Admired Company'' by New Mexico's top 100 private companies. Also included in this list is Centinel Bank of Taos in Taos, NM, which is one of the very few minority-owned financial institutions in the United States. I am pleased that Manuel Lujan Agencies and Centinel Bank of Taos are joined by such firms as Roses Southwest Papers, Applied Tech Associates, Networx and Sparkle Maintenance Inc. The fact, is Hispanics in New Mexico today lead a growing number of firms that help set the pace for a growing economy in my State, and many of them are firms involving high technology, construction, and service industries.

While there is no doubt that Hispanics have fought to protect our freedoms and made advancements in the corporate world, they are also leaving their imprint on the world of entertainment through sports and the arts. Of the athletes currently playing in the National Football League, 24 players are of Hispanic descent. These players are represented on 16 teams across the country, and during a recent football matchup, Grammy winners Gloria Estefan and the musical group Ozomatli performed the national anthem at the halftime show in honor of this month's celebration. In my home State, music legends like Al Hurricane and the popular Tobias Rene add to the rich cultural contributions being made to our society.

I encourage Americans to take this moment to remember all of the areas of our society that have been influenced by the Hispanic community. I would also like you to recall the sacrifices Hispanics have made to preserve the liberties and freedom that make America a beacon of hope to millions around the world. These men and women have stood up as proud Americans and volunteered to protect their families and communities during the global war on terror. Our Nation is stronger because of these men and women. They deserve the gratitude of the Nation for their sacrifices.

The tradition of Hispanic Heritage Month dates back almost 40 years. In 1968, Congress started by designating a week to celebrate Hispanic heritage. By the early 1980s, we decided to extend the designation to cover a month starting on September 15. The extra time has been a necessary and appropriate change to allow us to recognize the long record of contributions Hispanic Americans have made to our communities and to our Nation. I call on the American people to join with all children, families, organizations, communities, churches, cities, and States across the Nation to observe the month with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

COMMENDING JIM NICHOLSON

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, it is my distinct pleasure to recognize my friend and fellow Coloradan Jim Nicholson. Although it is with sadness that his resignation takes effect this week, I would like to take this time to commend him for his service as the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Jim is a veteran's veteran. As a West Point graduate, Army Ranger, highly decorated Vietnam war veteran, and 4 years of service as the ambassador to the Holy See, Jim was well prepared and highly qualified for the duties as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Jim was nominated by President Bush to serve as Secretary in December of 2004 and was subsequently confirmed unanimously by the Senate. The confidence bestowed upon Jim Nicholson by the President and all of those who gather here speaks to his unassailable ability to assist our veterans. Sworn into office on February 1, 2004, Jim readily assumed his role as the primary advocate for veterans.

Jim accepted control of the VA at an extremely difficult time and has proven himself to be the right man for the

job. He was asked to serve his country in a new capacity and brought with him a great sense of honor and duty. In this time of war, Jim has worked tirelessly to ensure that the VA meet the current needs of those veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Although there is great urgency in caring for our recently wounded service men and women, Jim has also understood the crucial need to continue to provide the utmost care for our veterans and warriors of past generations. Under his leadership, the VA has earned higher marks for medical services than the private health care industry for customer satisfaction, according to the American Customer Satisfaction Index, for the seventh consecutive year. He has helped to give all our veterans the care they deserve, as they have sacrificed so much for all of us.

I have personally worked with Jim for years. I would especially like to thank him for the instrumental role he played in reinvigorating the construction of a new VA hospital in Aurora on the Fitzsimons campus. Without his support, this project would not have progressed to the point it is at today. This hospital will prove to be a great asset for our veterans in Colorado, and Secretary Nicholson should be commended for his efforts.

As we celebrate the service of Secretary Nicholson, I had also like to take this opportunity to thank his family, notably his wife Suzanne, whose endless support is undoubtedly valued and is greatly appreciated. Jim Nicholson has served this country with honor and valor in many capacities. I will certainly miss Secretary Nicholson, and wish him and his family the best of luck in the future. I thank him for his exceptional service on behalf of all our veterans.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE U.S. ARMY SPACE AND MISSILE DEFENSE COMMAND

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I recognize the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command, an organization that is headquartered in Huntsville, AL.

On this day, October 3, 1957, the Army activated the Redstone Anti-Missile Missile Systems Office. With a staff of 5 military and 19 civilians, this organization set the foundation of the Army's space and missile defense programs. From these beginnings, they have become an international organization of more than 2,000 military and civilians devoted to providing around-the-clock space and missile defense research and development and operational capabilities. I wish to express my congratulations to the Army community in northern Alabama for their splendid record of achievement in space and missile defense and to ask my colleagues to join me in saluting them for their contributions to the security of our Nation and her warfighters.

This organization and the U.S. Army have led the Nation in space and missile defense from the 1957 authorization to proceed with the Nike Zeus system to the deployed hit-to-kill national and theater missile defense systems today. Along the way, the Army's missile defense team has achieved a number of significant milestones: the first successful intercept of an intercontinental ballistic missile, ICBM, in 1962; the first deployed ballistic missile defense system in the United States in 1975: the first non-nuclear intercept of an ICBM in 1984; the first kinetic energy intercept of a tactical missile in 1987; and the first directed energy intercepts of rockets in flight in 1996. Their battletested products are currently deployed around the world defending our Nation, our service members, and our allies.

In 1957, missile defense brought a new facet to the Army's exploration of space in the 1950s. As missions changed, it remained constant. In the 1970s, the Army returned to space exploration with a precedent setting tactical exploration program. From the 1970s through Operation Desert Storm, the first space war, space has become an integral element of the warfighter's life. Since then, this organization has become the focal point for Army Space. They provide research and development to expand the possibilities provided by space. They have established a brigade of space soldiers dedicated to space superiority and the application of space technology. And today, space soldiers and technologies continue to provide battlefield communications, satellite imagery and analysis, three-dimensional visualization, guidance information, precise early warning of threat missiles, and a host of other space-based capabilities tailored for the warfighter.

Together with their Government and industry teammates, the future of space and missile defense rests in the hands of the men and women who work in this Army organization in Huntsville and Colorado Springs, as well as other locations throughout the world.

Mr. President, I salute Huntsville, the surrounding area, and the hard-working men and women of this great region of our country. Most importantly, I wish to extend a warm and hearty congratulations to the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command team for a job well done, and best wishes for its continued success during the next 50 years and beyond. Secure the high ground.

NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, this past Saturday was National Public Lands Day. On September 29, hundreds of thousands of citizens from across the country volunteered to give their time to improve our public lands. These volunteers cleared obstructed trails, picked up litter, planted trees, removed invasive species, and taught young Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts about camping. I commend all volunteers for their commitment.

Now in its 14th year, National Public Lands Day has become the largest grassroots volunteer effort on behalf of our public parks, rivers, lakes, forests, rangelands, and beaches. Last year, an estimated $11 million worth of labor intensive work was carried out, and this year it is expected that $12 million of improvements were added to America's public lands.

On Wednesday, September 27, the front page of USA Today displayed a picture of Coeur d'Alene, ID, with a headline that read ''No end in sight for Idaho's growth.'' The article went on to provide a breakdown of how Idaho's economy has remained strong despite the current slump in the housing market. It reads, ''[An] ingredient in Idaho's boom has been the ''amenities business''—hiking, hunting, fishing, skiing, whitewater rafting—that attracts tourists and new residents, from billionaires to young outdoor enthusiasts.''

Today Idaho is experiencing a new brand of tourists and a new brand of neighbors moving in down the street. These people are focused on the vigorous quest for a quality of life that includes the enjoyment of the outdoors. What ties the third generation Idahoan to a newcomer is an appreciation for the resources and the value that multiple uses contribute to our livelihoods and communities.

The USA Today article also points out that ''[t]he federal government owns about two-thirds of the land in Idaho, mostly national forests. The state has 21 million acres of roadless wilderness, about the size of South Carolina and more than any state except Alaska.'' Public lands have much to offer and are very beneficial for Idaho.

There are a myriad of different resources that can be responsibly harvested or extracted from our public lands. From sustainably managed forests to livestock use to oil and geothermal potential, these lands hold the resources Americans rely on to achieve the standard of living that we have today.

Using the resources on our own public lands, as opposed to relying on foreign resources, affords us the opportunity to fund schools, highways, and national defense, all the while easing the financial burden on the taxpayers.

There are those, however, who would prefer to see land management agencies take more of a preservationist role, prohibiting access to our national forests, parks, beaches, and rangelands and leaving nature to run its course. This is not a value that many Idahoans hold, and neither do I.

We must actively manage our lands so that the recreational and resource benefit can be utilized by every American citizen. Under certain circumstances, active management includes limited access in specific areas;

however, we must be cautious not to be overly restrictive of public access to public lands. The same holds true for natural resource management. We cannot use a one-size-fits-all management style when there are so many differing opinions on how to best utilize our domestic natural resources.

In closing, I want to again say thank you to the volunteers for their tremendous efforts to ensure that the public lands we enjoy today will be enjoyed by many, for years to come.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

RETIREMENT OF RICK DIEGEL

• Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize the distinguished career of a man who has devoted his life to improving the welfare of working men and women.

Rick Diegel hails from Texas, where he worked as a journeyman wireman and foreman. He served his country in the U.S. Air Force from 1964 to 1968, and is a veteran of the Vietnam War. He also served three terms as the mayor pro-tem of the City of Ingleside, Texas, and was elected business manager of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 278 in Corpus Christie in 1977. He held this post until 1983, when he was appointed to the International Office of IBEW as the director of their Committee on Political Education. In 1998, he became director of the Political/Legislative Department, a position he has held to this day.

For nearly four decades, Rick has fought to improve the working and living standards for our Nation's workers. As director at the International Office, Rick spearheaded the modern political program of the union, and transformed the way that unions effect legislative change. He worked to get more IBEW members elected to office than any other union, and he established a full-time grassroots mobilization program at IBEW to give even a louder voice to workers' needs.

Throughout his career, Rick has been a forceful advocate for the approximately 750,000 members who work in a wide variety of fields, including utilities, construction, telecommunications, broadcasting, manufacturing, railroads and government. Rick has served as a powerful champion for the labor movement, not only because he was a skillful advocate on behalf of workers, but also because he encouraged workers to make their individual voices heard. Rick understood the importance of workers engaging in the political process to elect members who made workers' rights a priority.

Rick Diegel is a dear friend and an invaluable ally in the fight to support America's workers. He has left an indelible mark on the country he has served his entire life, and he has improved the lives of millions of workers. I wish him a retirement full of health and happiness.•

HONORING MICHAEL HOOFFSTETTER

• Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I wish today to recognize a fellow New Mexican, Michael Hooffstetter, for his hard work and advocacy on behalf of individuals living with Parkinson's disease.

Michael is in Washington this week receiving a very prestigious award from the Parkinson's Action Network, the Milly Kondracke Award. The award's namesake was a well-known Parkinson's advocate who worked tirelessly to increase awareness of this disease and support Federal funding for research until her death in 2004. The award is presented annually to an advocate who demonstrates the incredible strength of spirit and commitment to advocacy that Milly demonstrated. I am very pleased that this year's recipient is Michael Hooffstetter.

Each of the last several years, Michael and others from New Mexico have come to Washington and met with me to discuss programs that help those suffering with Parkinson's disease. As the New Mexico State coordinator for the Parkinson's Action Network, Michael speaks candidly about his disease, the treatments he has undergone, and the effect it has had on him and his family. Michael's Air Force service has given him a special interest in the Department of Defense Neurotoxin Exposure Treatment and Research Program. I have always appreciated his honesty and insight and admire him for his advocacy.

Michael Hooffstetter has helped many people by dedicating his time and efforts through the Parkinson's Action Network. I congratulate him for this award.•

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

• Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I wish today to congratulate the New Mexico affiliates of Habitat for Humanity on the completion of their 500th house. This house was built for Frances Marquez and her daughter, 11-year-old Amanda Marquez in San Pedro, NM, which is located right outside of Española. The Española and Los Alamos affiliate of Habitat for Humanity gathered 100 people from Espanola Valley to volunteer on this project and bring a real sense of community to the Marquez family's new home.

This particular house was a very special project. It involved the community not only through the volunteers who built the house, but also through the suggestions of Northern New Mexico College surveying students who helped draft the plans for the house. Drafting instructor Jeff Toomey brought this project to his class in order to give them a real-world lesson on drafting plans for a client. Thanks to their input, this house was specially designed to meet the needs of the Marquez family.

Habitat for Humanity is responsible for the creation and rehabilitation of over 150,000 homes since its 1976 inception. In my home State of New Mexico, there are 18 affiliates of Habitat for Humanity who have improved the lives of families and communities by striving to provide safe and affordable housing. As a Senator, I am always looking for ways to help New Mexico communities be the best that they can be, and thanks to organizations like Habitat for Humanity, this common goal can be accomplished.•

TRIBUTE TO GRACE PALEY

• Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I wish to acknowledge the recent passing of Grace Paley. Grace, who called Vermont her home, was a renowned and award-winning short story writer, a political activist, a wife and mother.

Although she spent much of each year in Thetford, VT, and we considered her an adopted Vermonter, her fiction was set in the apartments, streets and neighborhoods of New York City. Grace Paley was not attracted to the bright lights or famous personalities or glitter of New York; however, she was attracted to the quotidian lives and the interpersonal and ethical problems faced by people very like ourselves. As Grace once said, ''I'm not writing a history of famous people, I am interested in a history of everyday life.'' She wrote about them in her two most noted collections of stories, ''The Little Disturbances of Man'' and ''Enormous Changes at the Last Minute.'' And she wrote beautifully, and with great sensitivity to both the spoken language and to human relationships. Her work gathered enormous critical acclaim. She was one of the great short fiction writers of our age.

Her home in Thetford, VT, was not some weekend getaway, some means of unwinding from the hectic pace of life in the big city. For Grace, Thetford—and the State of Vermont—was a place where she could carry on her longstanding struggle for peace and for social justice. She was an active, a very active, presence in the local community. Whether it was through her longstanding commitment to bringing peace to the world or her many local readings of her fiction, Grace Paley was a presence in our lives—and a beloved local figure. She never sought the spotlight, but she did not shy away from it when she felt her cause was just. She lived her convictions and served as a model for generations of women, of Vermonters, of activists.

In recognition of her contributions to Vermont, Grace Paley was awarded the title of ''Vermont State Poet'' in 2003, a position that had been held previously by Robert Frost, among others. She was also awarded the title of ''New York State Writer'' by Mario Cuomo in

1986. It is a fitting testimony to the quality and importance of her literary work that both States, which she called home, chose to honor her in this fashion.

Grace Paley will be sorely missed, but her work, her passion for peace and justice, and her love of her fellow Vermonters will not be forgotten.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a treaty which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE DURING ADJOURNMENT

ENROLLED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS SIGNED

Under authority of the order of the Senate of January 4, 2007, the following enrolled bills and joint resolutions, previously signed by the Speaker of the House, were signed on September 28, 2007, during the adjournment of the Senate, by the President pro tempore [Mr. BYRD].

H.R. 976. An act to amend title XXI of the Social Security Act to extend and improve the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3668. An act to provide for the extension of transitional medical assistance (TMA), the abstinence education program, and the qualifying individuals (QI) program, and for other purposes.

H.J. Res. 43. Joint resolution increasing the statutory limit on the public debt.

H.J. Res. 52. Joint resolution making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2008, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Under authority of the order of the Senate of January 4, 2007, the Secretary of the Senate, on September 29, 2007, during the adjournment of the Senate, received a message from the House of Representatives announcing that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 3625. An act to make permanent the waiver authority of the Secretary of Education with respect to student financial assistance during a war or other military operation or national emergency.

Under authority of the order of the Senate of January 4, 2007, the enrolled bill was subsequently signed on September 29, 2007, by the President pro tempore [Mr. BYRD].

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. BYRD, from the Committee on Appropriations:

Special Report entitled ''Further Revised Allocation to Subcommittees of Budget Totals from the Concurrent Resolution for Fiscal Year 2008'' (Rept. No. 110–186).

By Mr. KENNEDY, from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

Report to accompany S. 1693, a bill to enhance the adoption of a nationwide interoperable health information technology system and to improve the quality and reduce the costs of health care in the United States (Rept. No. 110–187).

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. JOHNSON (for himself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. KERRY, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. SALAZAR, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. VITTER, and Mr. VOINOVICH):

S. 2119. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of veterans who became disabled for life while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. DODD, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. KERRY, Mrs. CLINTON, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. NELSON of Florida, and Mr. CARDIN):

S. 2120. A bill to authorize the establishment of a Social Investment and Economic Development Fund for the Americas to provide assistance to reduce poverty, expand the middle class, and foster increased economic opportunity in the countries of the Western Hemisphere, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. LAUTENBERG, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 2121. A bill to provide funding and incentives for caregiver support and long-term care assistance; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. OBAMA, and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 2122. A bill to amend title V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to reduce class size through the use of highly qualified teachers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. GREGG (for himself, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. DODD, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. DOMENICI, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SMITH, Mrs. CLINTON, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BROWN, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. SUNUNU, and Mr. PRYOR):

S. 2123. A bill to provide collective bargaining rights for public safety officers employed by States or their political subdivisions; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BAUCUS (for himself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 2124. A bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to convey certain land in the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, Montana, to Jefferson County, Montana, for use as a cemetery; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. SHELBY:

S.J. Res. 19. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States which requires (except during time of war and subject to suspension by Congress) that the total amount of money expended by the United States during any fiscal year not exceed the amount of certain revenue received by the United States during such fiscal year and not exceed 20 per centum of the gross national product of the United States during the previous calendar year; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. Res. 338. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Passport Month; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. KERRY (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. LUGAR, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. DODD, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. REID, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. SUNUNU, Mrs. HUTCHISON, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. Res. 339. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate on the situation in Burma; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. MARTINEZ (for himself, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. SALAZAR):

S. Res. 340. A resolution recognizing the efforts and contributions of outstanding Hispanic scientists in the United States; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 334

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. COLEMAN), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) were added as cosponsors of S. 334, a bill to provide affordable, guaranteed private health coverage that will make Americans healthier and can never be taken away.

S. 335

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 335, a bill to prohibit the Internal Revenue Service from using private debt collection companies, and for other purposes.

S. 469

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the name of the Senator from New Jersey

(Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 469, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the special rule for contributions of qualified conservation contributions.

S. 557

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. ENSIGN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 557, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the depreciation classification of motorsports entertainment complexes.

S. 667

At the request of Mrs. CLINTON, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 667, a bill to expand programs of early childhood home visitation that increase school readiness, child abuse and neglect prevention, and early identification of developmental and health delays, including potential mental health concerns, and for other purposes.

S. 741

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the names of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. LOTT) were added as cosponsors of S. 741, a bill to amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to establish a grant program to ensure waterfront access for commercial fishermen, and for other purposes.

S. 759

At the request of Mrs. CLINTON, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 759, a bill to prohibit the use of funds for military operations in Iran.

S. 803

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 803, a bill to repeal a provision enacted to end Federal matching of State spending of child support incentive payments.

S. 969

At the request of Mr. DODD, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 969, a bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act to modify the definition of supervisor.

S. 1015

At the request of Mr. COCHRAN, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. LUGAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1015, a bill to reauthorize the National Writing Project.

S. 1070

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1070, a bill to amend the Social Security Act to enhance the social security of the Nation by ensuring adequate public-private infrastructure and to resolve to prevent, detect, treat, intervene in, and prosecute elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and for other purposes.

S. 1120

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. LUGAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1120, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide grants for the training of graduate medical residents in preventive medicine and public health.

S. 1139

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1139, a bill to establish the National Landscape Conservation System, and for other purposes.

S. 1239

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) 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. 1382

At the request of Mr. REID, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) and the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 1382, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide the establishment of an Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Registry.

S. 1494

At the request of Mr. DOMENICI, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1494, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the special diabetes programs for Type I diabetes and Indians under that Act.

S. 1568

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mrs. HUTCHISON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1568, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to encourage private philanthropy.

S. 1577

At the request of Mr. KOHL, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1577, a bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to require screening, including national criminal history background checks, of direct patient access employees of skilled nursing facilities, nursing facilities, and other long-term care facilities and providers, and to provide for nationwide expansion of the pilot program for national and State background checks on direct patient access employees of long-term care facilities or providers.

S. 1627

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) were added as cosponsors 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. 1661

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) 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. 1718

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WEBB) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1718, a bill to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to provide for reimbursement to servicemembers of tuition for programs of education interrupted by military service, for deferment of students loans and reduced interest rates for servicemembers during periods of military service, and for other purposes.

S. 1733

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1733, a bill to authorize funds to prevent housing discrimination through the use of nationwide testing, to increase funds for the Fair Housing Initiatives Program, and for other purposes.

S. 1773

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1773, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to regulate payroll tax deposit agents.

S. 1791

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1791, a bill to amend the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 to reauthorize, and increase funding for, the biodiesel fuel education program.

S. 1843

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1843, a bill to amend title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 to clarify that an unlawful practice occurs each time compensation is paid pursuant to a discriminatory compensation decision or other practice, and for other purposes.

S. 1895

At the request of Mr. REED, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. LUGAR) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1895, a bill to aid and support pediatric involvement in reading and education.

S. 1930

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1930, a bill to amend the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 to prevent illegal logging practices, and for other purposes.

S. 1951

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the names of the Senator from Montana

(Mr. TESTER), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER), the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) 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 name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1954, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to pharmacies under part D.

S. 1970

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1970, a bill to establish a National Commission on Children and Disasters, a National Resource Center on Children and Disasters, and for other purposes.

S. 2067

At the request of Mr. MARTINEZ, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2067, a bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act relating to recreational vessels.

S.J. RES. 13

At the request of Mr. GREGG, his name was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 13, a joint resolution granting the consent of Congress to the International Emergency Management Assistance Memorandum of Understanding.

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. SUNUNU) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 13, supra.

S. RES. 319

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 319, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the United States Transportation Command on its 20th anniversary.

AMENDMENT NO. 2068

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2068 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. 2905

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2905 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. 3024

At the request of Mr. TESTER, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3024 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. 3032

At the request of Mr. SESSIONS, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 3032 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. 3058

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 3058 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.

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3058 proposed to H.R. 1585, supra.

AMENDMENT NO. 3078

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, her name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3078 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. 3082

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 3082 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.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. OBAMA, and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 2122. A bill to amend title V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to reduce class size through the use of highly qualified teachers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I am pleased today to join my colleague, Senator MURRAY, in introducing legislation—the Facilitating Outstanding Classrooms Using Size Reduction (FOCUS) Act of 2007—that will provide $2 billion in funding to help, States and school districts hire 100,000 new teachers to reduce class size, particularly in the early grades.

When a teacher is responsible for a classroom of 25, 30, or more students, how can we expect each student to receive enough time and attention? One pillar of our education system should be small classes. The body of research around class size has consistently shown that smaller classes improve student performance, including reading and mathematics, in the early grades as well as in subsequent years when students are placed in larger classes. Research also shows that at the end of fifth grade, students who were in small classes in first through third grades were about half a school year ahead of students from larger classes in all core subjects—reading, language arts, math, and science. Additionally, studies have found that students from small classes earn better grades in high school, take more advanced courses, and are more likely to take college-entrance exams. They are also more likely to graduate from high school than students in larger classes.

Small classes also enable teachers to teach better. Any teacher will tell you that small classes make a difference. Small classes allow teachers to spend more time on instruction, get to know their students better, spend less time on discipline problems, and better identify students who need individually tailored assistance. The difference between teaching large classes and teaching small classes is substantial, and the pedagogy required for each differs.

I have stood with Senator MURRAY on previous legislation to reduce class size in our Nation's schools, and I am proud to stand with her again today in support of a class size reduction bill. The bill we offer today strengthens our earlier efforts to reduce class size. First—the FOCUS Act would provide a dedicated funding stream for class size reduction. The No Child Left Behind Act incorporated the Class Size Reduction Program into title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The Murray-Biden FOCUS Act would create a separate funding stream in title V for the class size reduction initiative—ensuring that efforts to reduce class size would not have to compete

for funding with a broad array of other teacher and administrator professional development and training funds.

Another provision that has been added are instructions that States and schools districts allocate their funding in a manner that creates a continuum of small classes for students as they progress from kindergarten to third grade and beyond. Research has shown that the benefits of attending small classes are the greatest for students in kindergarten through third grade, with further benefits accruing to those students for each additional year spent in small classes. The ultimate goal is that a student in the kindergarten grade matriculates through first, second, and third grades—each with an average class size of 18 students or less.

The bill also establishes a Web-based National Clearinghouse on Class Size that would provide research, best practices, and resources for small classroom instruction. This information needs to be broadly available and easily accessible to the education community as well as the public.

Additionally, the legislation requires an independent evaluation to be conducted to determine the impact and effectiveness of the initiative and the National Center for Education Statistics to report on average class size data. It is imperative that we understand, objectively, how these funds are spent, and what outcomes are achieved.

Mr. President, the ultimate success of our education system depends on teachers. Ask any teacher if it matters whether they are teaching a class of 18 students or 25 students and you will get the same answer every time: absolutely. Smaller classes will provide teachers with the resources they need to create the opportunities for learning that our students deserve.

By Mr. GREGG (for himself, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. DODD, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. DOMENICI, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SMITH, Mrs. CLINTON, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BROWN, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. SUNUNU, and Mr. PRYOR):

S. 2123. A bill to provide collective bargaining rights for public safety officers employed by States or their political subdivisions; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, it is a privilege to join Senator GREGG today in reintroducing the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act, to guarantee that all firefighters, police officers, emergency medical personnel, and other first responders across the country have fundamental collective bargaining rights. The issue is one of basic respect for this valuable workforce, and I urge all of my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill.

The first responders of our State and local governments are on the front lines of the effort to keep America safe. They perform difficult, exhausting work, day and night, to preserve and protect our communities. In this post-9/11 era, they have an indispensable role in homeland security as well. It is vital to our national interest to ensure that these essential public services are carried out as effectively as possible.

Strong partnerships between first responders and the cities and States they serve are vital to public safety. Studies show that cooperation between public safety employers and employees improves the quality of services communities receive and reduces worker fatalities. These strong, cooperative partnerships are built on bargaining relationships. Every New York City firefighter, emergency medical technician, and police officer who responded to the disaster at the World Trade Center on 9/11 was a union member under a collective bargaining agreement, and those agreements strengthened their ability to respond in that time of crisis.

Unfortunately, many first responders across the country do not have basic workplace protections. Twenty-nine States and the District of Columbia guarantee all public safety workers the right to bargain collectively, but 21 States deny some or all of their public safety workers this fundamental right.

Our Nation's first responders have earned the right to be treated with respect. The Cooperation Act will ensure that they receive that respect and will benefit from the same protections enjoyed by many other workers across the country. The bill gives public safety officers the right to bargain over wages, hours, and working conditions, and ensures that these rights are enforceable in State court. It also provides an efficient and effective means to resolve disputes in labor-management conflicts.

The Cooperation Act accomplishes these important goals in reasonable, moderate ways. States that already have collective bargaining in place for public safety workers are not affected by the bill. States that do not currently provide these protections may establish their own collective bargaining systems or ask the assistance of the Federal Labor Relations Authority in doing so. This approach respects existing State laws and gives each State full authority to decide how it will comply with the basic standards.

America's public safety workers are prepared to put their lives on the line for their community each and every day. They deserve a voice at the table in the life-and-death decisions about their work. It is essential for their safety, the safety of our communities, and the safety of our entire Nation. It is a matter of basic fairness for these courageous men and women to have the same rights that have long benefited so many other Americans. I urge Congress to act quickly to provide these fundamental protections.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 338—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL PASSPORT MONTH

Mrs. FEINSTEIN submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 338

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;

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 wealth 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 Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Passport Month; and

(2) calls 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.

SENATE RESOLUTION 339—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE ON THE SITUATION IN BURMA

Mr. KERRY (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. LUGAR, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. DODD, Mr. DURBIN, Mr.

COLEMAN, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. REID, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. SUNUNU, Mrs. HUTCHISON, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 339

Whereas hundreds of thousands of Burmese citizens, including thousands of Buddhist monks and students, engaged in peaceful demonstrations against the policies of the ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), demanding that the State Peace and Development Council release all political prisoners, including Nobel Peace Prize laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and urging that the government agree to a meaningful tripartite dialogue with Suu Kyi, the National League for Democracy (NLD), and the ethnic minorities towards national reconciliation;

Whereas the State Peace and Development Council violently dispersed the peaceful demonstrators, killing at least 10 (and reportedly more than 200) unarmed protesters, including a number of monks and a Japanese journalist, and arrested hundreds of others, and continues to forcibly suppress peaceful protests;

Whereas the National League for Democracy won a majority of seats in the parliamentary elections of 1990, but the State Peace and Development Council refused to uphold the results or to negotiate a transition to civilian rule and subsequently placed Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest;

Whereas Aung San Suu Kyi has spent most of the past 18 years under house arrest or in jail, and is currently being held in government custody, cut off from her followers and the international community;

Whereas 59 world leaders, including 3 former presidents of the United States, have called on the State Peace and Development Council to release Aung San Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners;

Whereas the State Peace and Development Council has destroyed more than 3,000 villages, systematically and violently repressed ethnic minorities, displaced approximately 2,000,000 Burmese people, and arrested approximately 1,300 individuals for expressing critical opinions;

Whereas the United States Department of State's 2006 Reports on Human Rights Practices found that Burma's junta routinely restricts its citizens' freedoms of speech, press, assembly, association, religion, movement, and traffics in persons, discriminates against women and ethnic minorities, forcibly recruits child soldiers and child labor, and commits other serious violations of human rights, including extrajudicial killings, custodial deaths, disappearances, rape, torture, abuse of prisoners and detainees, and the imprisonment of citizens arbitrarily for political motives;

Whereas the Government of Burma relies heavily on the unconditional military and economic assistance provided by the People's Republic of China;

Whereas on September 30, 2006, the United Nations Security Council officially included Burma on its agenda for the first time;

Whereas on January 13, 2007, China and Russia vetoed a United Nations Security Council Resolution calling on Burma to release all political prisoners, allow a more inclusive political process and unhindered humanitarian access, and end human rights abuses, and on September 26, 2007, China blocked a United Nations Security Council Statement from condemning the State Peace and Development Council crackdown against the peaceful demonstrators;

Whereas the prevalence of tuberculosis in Burma, with nearly 97,000 new cases detected annually, is among the highest in the world, malaria is the leading cause of mortality in Burma, with 70 percent of the population living in areas at risk, at least 37,000 died of HIV/AIDS in Burma in 2005, and over 600,000 are currently infected, and the World Health Organization has ranked Burma's health sector as 190th out of 191 nations;

Whereas the failure of the State Peace and Development Council to respect the human rights and meet the most basic humanitarian needs of the Burmese people has not only caused enormous suffering inside Burma, but also driven hundreds of thousands of Burmese citizens to seek refuge in neighboring countries, creating a threat to regional peace and stability; and

Whereas the State Peace and Development Council continues to restrict the access and freedom of movement of international humanitarian organizations to deliver aid throughout Burma: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate—

(1) to strongly condemn the use of violence against peaceful protestors in Burma, and to call on the Government of Burma to refrain from further violence, release the demonstrators it has arrested, immediately cease attacks against ethnic minorities, release Aung Sang Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners, and begin a meaningful tripartite political dialogue with Suu Kyi, the National League for Democracy, and the ethnic minorities;

(2) to call on the People's Republic of China to remove objections to efforts by the United Nations Security Council to condemn the actions taken by the Government of Burma against the peaceful demonstrators;

(3) to call on the People's Republic of China and all other nations that have provided military assistance to the Government of Burma to suspend such assistance until civilian democratic rule is restored to Burma;

(4) that the Government of Burma should engage in a peaceful dialogue with opposition leaders and ethnic minorities to implement political, economic, and humanitarian reforms that will improve the living conditions of the Burmese people and lead to the restoration of civilian democratic rule;

(5) to recognize and welcome the many constructive statements issued by various nations, and particularly the statement issued by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on September 27, 2007, which demanded an immediate end to violence in Burma, the release of all political prisoners, and a political solution to the crisis;

(6) that the United States and the United Nations should strongly encourage China, India, and Russia to modify their position on Burma and use their influence to convince the Government of Burma to engage in dialogue with opposition leaders and ethnic minorities towards national reconciliation;

(7) to support the United Nations mission to Burma led by Ibrahim Gambari, and to call on the Government of Burma to allow the mission freedom of movement and access to top government leaders in order to prevent additional violence and to further peaceful dialogue towards national reconciliation; and

(8) that the United States should work with the international community to pressure the Government of Burma to lift all restrictions on humanitarian aid delivery and then allow international humanitarian aid organizations to work to alleviate suffering and improve living conditions for the most vulnerable populations.

SENATE RESOLUTION 340—RECOGNIZING THE EFFORTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUTSTANDING HISPANIC SCIENTISTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Mr. MARTINEZ (for himself, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. SALAZAR) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 340

Whereas the purpose of the National Hispanic Scientist of the Year Award is to recognize outstanding Hispanic scientists in the United States who promote a greater public understanding of science and motivate Hispanic youth to develop an interest in science;

Whereas the 7th annual National Hispanic Scientist of the Year Gala will be held at the Museum of Science & Industry in Tampa, Florida, on Saturday, October 6, 2007;

Whereas proceeds from the National Hispanic Scientist of the Year Gala support scholarships for Hispanic boys and girls to participate in the Museum of Science & Industry's Youth Enriched by Science Program, known as the ''YES! Team''; and

Whereas a need to acknowledge the work and effort of outstanding Hispanic scientists in the United States has led to the selection of Dr. Louis A. Martin-Vega as the honoree of the 7th annual National Hispanic Scientist of the Year Award, in recognition of his accomplishments developing foundation-wide programs aimed at integrating research and education in science and engineering and in increasing the participation of women and underrepresented minorities in these fields; and

Whereas Dr. Martin-Vega is also to be commended for his years of leadership in engineering education at such fine institutions as the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez, the University of Florida, Florida Institute of Technology, Lehigh University, the University of South Florida, and North Carolina State University, and for his service at the National Science Foundation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes efforts to educate, support, and provide hope for the Hispanic community, including efforts to honor outstanding Hispanic scientists in the United States at the annual National Hispanic Scientist of the Year Gala and to organize a ''Meet the Hispanic Scientist Day''; and

(2) congratulates the 2007 National Hispanic Scientist of the Year designated by the Museum of Science & Industry, for ongoing dedication to improving the quality of, and access to, science and engineering research and education.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3112. Mr. CHAMBLISS (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. INHOFE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2011 proposed by Mr. NELSON of Nebraska (for Mr. LEVIN) 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.

SA 3113. Mr. CHAMBLISS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1585, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3114. Mrs. HUTCHISON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her

to the bill H.R. 1585, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3115. Mr. SESSIONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2011 proposed by Mr. NELSON of Nebraska (for Mr. LEVIN) to the bill H.R. 1585, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 3112. Mr. CHAMBLISS (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. INHOFE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2011 proposed by Mr. NELSON of Nebraska (for Mr. LEVIN) 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; as follows:

At the end of subtitle D of title III, add the following:

SEC. 342. SENSE OF SENATE ON THE AIR FORCE LOGISTICS CENTERS.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Senate makes the following findings:

(1) Air Force Air Logistics Centers have served as a model of efficiency and effectiveness in providing integrated sustainment (depot maintenance, supply management, and product support) for fielded weapon systems within the Department of Defense. This success has been founded in the integration of these dependent processes.

(2) Air Force Air Logistics Centers have embraced best practices, technology changes, and process improvements, and have successfully managed increased workload while at the same time reducing personnel.

(3) Air Force Air Logistics Centers continue to successfully sustain an aging aircraft fleet that is performing more flying hours, with less aircraft, than at any point in the last thirty years.

(4) The purpose of the Global Logistics Support Center is to apply an enterprise approach to supply chain management to eliminate redundancies and improve efficiencies across the Air Force in order to best provide capable aircraft to the warfighter.

(5) The Air Force is working diligently to identify means to create further efficiencies in the Air Force logistics network.

(b) SENSE OF SENATE.—It is the sense of the Senate that the Air Force should work closely with Congress as the Air Force continues to develop and implement the Global Logistics Support Center concept.

SA 3113. Mr. CHAMBLISS 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; as follows:

At the end of title I, add the following:

Subtitle E—Joint and Multiservice Matters

SEC. 161. SENSE OF SENATE ON THE JOINT CARGO AIRCRAFT.

It is the sense of the Senate that the Army and the Air Force should pursue an integrated maintenance and sustainment strategy for the Joint Cargo Aircraft that takes maximum advantage of capabilities organic to the United States Government.

SA 3114. Mrs. HUTCHISON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her 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; as follows:

SEC. . Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense may conduct a pilot program to operate a shared facility that will provide health care services to beneficiaries of both the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense. The purpose of conducting the pilot program will be to determine the effectiveness of operating a shared facility with the Department of Defense.

SA 3115. Mr. SESSIONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2011 proposed by Mr. NELSON of Nebraska (for Mr. LEVIN) 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; as follows:

On page 91, between lines 13 and 14, insert the following:

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on a date elected by the Secretary of Defense, which date may not be earlier than the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act. The Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register notice of the effective date of the amendments made by this section, as so elected.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than the effective date elected under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report setting forth the recommendations of the Secretary regarding the following:

(A) The appropriate role and mission of the Reserve Forces Policy Board.

(B) The appropriate membership of the Reserve Forces Policy Board.

(C) The appropriate procedures to be utilized by the Reserve Forces Policy Board in its interaction with the Department of Defense.

NOTICE OF HEARING

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS AND FORESTS

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 Subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

The hearing will be held on Thursday, October 11, at 10 a.m., in the Thomas & Mack Moot Court at the William S. Boyd School of Law at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, located at 4505 Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas, Nevada.

The purpose of the hearing is to consider the major environmental threats to the Great Basin in the 21st century.

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 it to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510–6150, or by e-mail to rachel_pasternack@energy.senate.gov

For further information, please contact Scott Miller at (202) 224–5488 or Rachel Pasternack at (202) 224–0883.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Daniel Gutman and Jordan Anderson of my staff be granted floor privileges for the duration of today's session.

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that MAJ John Muller, an Army fellow in my office, be granted the privilege of the floor for duration of consideration of H.R. 1585.

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

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator REID, I ask unanimous consent that Jacqueline Beatty-Smith, a Brookings Fellow in his office, be granted the privileges of the floor during consideration of the Defense Appropriations Act.

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

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE ACCESS ACT OF 1999

On Tuesday, September 18, 2007, the Senate passed H.R. 1124, as amended, as follows:

H.R. 1124

Resolved, That the bill from the House of Representatives (H.R. 1124) entitled ''An Act to Extend the District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999'', do pass with the following amendment:

On page 2, after line 11, insert:

SEC. 2. MEANS TESTING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3(c)(2) of the District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999 (113 Stat. 1324; Public Law 106–98) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (E), by striking ''and'' after the semicolon at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (F), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(G) is from a family with a taxable annual income of less than $1,000,000.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 5(c)(2) of the District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999 (113 Stat. 1328; Public Law 106–98) is amended by striking ''through (F)'' and inserting ''through (G)''.

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

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

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES—H.R. 1585

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, with respect to H.R. 1585, the Chair appoints Mr. LEVIN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. BYRD, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. REED of Rhode Island, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mr. BAYH, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. WEBB, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. SESSIONS, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. GRAHAM, Mrs. DOLE, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. MARTINEZ, and Mr. CORKER conferees on the part of the Senate.

REMOVAL OF INJUNCTION OF SECRECY—TREATY DOCUMENT 110–8

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, as in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that the injunction of secrecy be removed from the following treaty transmitted to the Senate on October 1, 2007, by the President of the United States:

Protocols of 2005, the Convention concerning Safety of Maritime Navigation and to the Protocol concerning Safety of Fixed Platforms on the Continental Shelf (Treaty Document 110–8).

I further ask that the treaty be considered as having been read the first time; that it be referred, with accompanying papers, to the Committee on Foreign Relations and ordered to be printed; and that the President's message be printed in the RECORD.

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

The message of the President is as follows:

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Protocol of 2005 to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (the ''2005 SUA Protocol'') and the Protocol of 2005 to the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf (the ''2005 Fixed Platforms Protocol'') (together, ''the Protocols''), adopted by the International Maritime Organization Diplomatic Conference in London on October 14, 2005, and signed by the United States of America on February 17, 2006. I also transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Protocols.

The Protocols are an important component in the international campaign to prevent and punish maritime terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and promote the aims of the Proliferation Security Initiative. They establish a legal basis for international cooperation in the investigation, prosecution, and extradition of those who commit or aid terrorist acts or trafficking in weapons of mass destruction aboard ships at sea or on fixed platforms.

The Protocols establish the first international treaty framework for criminalizing certain terrorist acts, including using a ship or fixed platform in a terrorist activity, transporting weapons of mass destruction or their delivery systems and related materials, and transporting terrorist fugitives. The Protocols require Parties to criminalize these acts under their domestic laws, to cooperate to prevent and investigate suspected crimes under the Protocols, and to extradite or submit for prosecution persons accused of committing, attempting to commit, or aiding in the commission of such offenses. The 2005 SUA Protocol also provides for a ship-boarding regime based on flag state consent that will provide an international legal basis for interdiction at sea of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems and related materials, and terrorist fugitives.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Protocols, subject to certain understandings that are described in the accompanying report of the Department of State.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *October 1, 2007.*

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL PASSPORT MONTH

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 338, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 338) supporting the goals and ideals of National Passport Month.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today in support of this resolution that would designate the month of September as ''National Passport Month.''

Travel book publishers, along with travel editors from some of the most prestigious media outlets in the United States and many student travel organizations, have designated September as ''National Passport Month'' as part of a campaign to educate the public about the importance of having a passport.

This resolution supports the goals and ideals of ''National Passport Month'' and calls on the Federal Government, States, schools, businesses and the people of the United States to observe the month of September with programs and activities that will encourage Americans to get their passports and see the world.

Since 2000, the number of passport applications received by the U.S. State Department has increased by 66 percent. This year, the State Department is expected to issue a record 17 million passports, up from last year's record of 12 million.

This surge in passport applications has led to longer processing times, averaging 6 to 8 weeks. As a result, there have been significant increases in public requests for expedited processing.

The designation of September as ''National Passport Month'' will serve as an important reminder for the American people to plan ahead and begin their passport application process early.

Despite the significant increase in the number of passport applications being processed, fewer than 23 percent of Americans have passports.

This number is far too low. International travel provides a unique perspective of the world and is an invaluable opportunity to interact with the global community and experience world cultures first hand.

I want to encourage the American people to get their passports and see the world.

The designation of September as ''National Passport Month'' will not only encourage the American people to avoid delays and get their passports early, but it will also acknowledge the positive impact of international travel in promoting understanding, tolerance, acceptance, and goodwill throughout the world.

On September 5, 2007, the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously agreed to an identical resolution introduced by Congresswoman BARBARA LEE. It is my hope that this body will do the same. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 338) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 338

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;

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 wealth 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 Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Passport Month; and

(2) calls 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.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE ON BURMA

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 339, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 339) expressing the sense of the Senate on the situation in Burma.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I support the resolution offered by Senator KERRY on the current crisis in Burma.

In his April 16, 1963, letter from a jail cell in Birmingham, AL, Dr. King wrote that ''freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor, it must be demanded by the oppressed.''

The people of Burma, are demanding freedom. They are peacefully marching in the streets to demand freedom from an oppressor that is one of the world's worst human rights abusers. They are demanding freedom from a government that restricts the basic freedoms of speech and assembly, engages in human trafficking, discriminates against women and ethnic minorities, uses children as soldiers and laborers, imprisons arbitrarily, abuses prisoners and detainees, and rapes and tortures.

This military junta is now engaged in an attempt to violently suppress the Burmese people who refuse to be silenced anymore. Those who have taken to the streets are doing so at great personal risk. Thousands were killed in a similar uprising in the summer of 1988. This brutal regime is responsible for the destruction of 3,000 villages and the displacement of 2 million people. The people of Burma are saying enough is enough.

Dr. King also wrote from his jail cell that ''injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.'' That is why this resolution is so important and why I am so proud to be a cosponsor. It sends a strong message to those marching in the streets of Rangoon and Mandalay that the United States is witness to what is happening. It also says that the United States is working to rally the international community behind the Burmese people as they strive for justice after years of oppression.

This resolution recognizes that we can all play a positive role in bringing justice and peace to Burma, and that we must work with the international community to pressure the Burmese Government to lift restrictions on humanitarian aid. It also calls on the United Nations to play a unique role in furthering dialogue toward reconciliation and concurs with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations decision to demand an end to the violence, the release of all political prisoners, and a political solution to the crisis. Finally, this resolution rightly urges that China end its military assistance to the Burmese regime, and that it no longer block the efforts of the United Nations Security Council to condemn the oppressive action of the Burmese junta.

I want to end with a quote from the icon of freedom in Burma, Aung San Suu Kyi: ''We will prevail because our cause is right, because our cause is just . . . History is on our side. Time is on our side.''

We must continue to stand beside the people of Burma in that cause.

Mr. SMITH. I wish today to denounce the savage actions of Burma's military government. During this past week, a familiar pageantry of riot police and soldiers deployed to stop the peaceful demonstrations of Burmese monks and citizens. These protestors demanded an end to the dictatorship which has governed Burma for most of the past 4½ decades. They carried no weapons, incited no violence, and made no demands beyond those which constitute basic human freedoms.

Their military junta reacted as that government always has: with silence, with threats, and then at last with violence. I had hoped that the course of these protests would not conform to Burma's old pattern of repression. So often in this decade we have seen the forces of peaceful revolution triumph over the institutional relics of an earlier, more brutal age. In Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan the old regime was toppled with barely a hint of violence. Elsewhere, like Lebanon, strident democratic blows were struck against the ruling order. I remember not two decades ago, when the Soviet Union peacefully dissolved, its citizens having had finally enough of communism, misery, and the KGB.

Sadly, these bloodless successes are not always the norm. Events in Uzbekistan and Belarus have shown us—as did Tiananmen Square 18 years ago—that governments which are serious about holding power do not topple easily. They draw on their full arsenal of modern repression, from electronic surveillance and torture to indiscriminate beatings and murder. This is what has happened in Burma. We hoped for a bloodless success, and we are rewarded with a bloody failure. For me, this is particularly hard to bear.

I have been involved with Burmese political issues throughout my tenure in the Senate. I have cosponsored numerous bills and resolutions condemning Burma's military tyranny and its human rights record. Congress after Congress, session after session, I have pushed for stricter sanctions on the Burmese regime. In 2003, I was a cosponsor of S. 1215, the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act, which cut off all imports to the United States from Burma and authorized support for Burmese democratic activists. I likewise supported H.R. 2330, the House version of that act which was eventually passed into law. Just this past summer, as I have done repeatedly before, I cosponsored a bill renewing the sanctions of the Freedom and Democracy Act. In October 2001, I voted for S.A. 1933 to the Foreign Operations bill, denying Burma outside aid unless Rangoon changed its behavior. And in March 2005, I introduced S. Res. 91, which urged China to stop enabling Burma with military support.

It is clear, however, that there is a limit to what my colleagues and I can effect from our seats in Washington. The regime which rules Burma is nearly impervious to outside pressure. The true wielders of influence—such as China and India—have been effectively silent thus far on the junta's latest brutalities. And so today, the Burmese protests have ended much the way I feared they would. There has been no peaceful overthrow of the government. There is now only the sight of thousands of soldiers patrolling the streets, the monks locked in their monasteries, Internet and broadcast communication nearly cut off. We will probably never know how many dissidents were thrown into jail over the past week. We have only the haziest idea of how many Burmese were killed. A regime deserter—a government intelligence officer—claims that thousands were killed. We do know that Japan has confirmed the death of one of its nationals, a photographer who was caught up in last

week's events. And we also know that Burma's emblem of democracy, the activist Aung San Suu Kyi, remains under house arrest. She was allowed to speak with the U.N.'s special envoy last Sunday, the first foreigner she has met in 10 months. She has languished under house arrest for the past 4 years, and under severe travel restrictions before then. Her father, Aung San, was another famous Burmese leader and revolutionary who was murdered before his dream of an independent Burma realized. I can only pray that history does not repeat itself.

I imagine that Aung San Suu Kyi herself, however, would have more mixed feelings. Her father fell shortly before achieving a free nation. I imagine that such is her dedication, his daughter might readily accept the same bargain. Ten years ago, when her husband was dying of cancer in London, Suu Kyi was offered the opportunity to go visit him. It was an agonizing choice. On the one hand, she was compelled to be with her husband in the last days of his life, a man she had been prevented from seeing for years. On the other, she had absolutely no doubt that once she left the country the regime would not allow her to return. It is not inappropriate to acknowledge here that the generals ruling Burma are clever, having survived many threats to their rule. But their semblance of cleverness does not detract from their barbarity. There was much of both in their offer to Suu Kyi. They dangled her dying husband in front of her as incentive to leave Burma, possibly the cruelest bait imaginable. She declined.

I cannot begin to imagine how heartrending that decision was. Aung San Suu Kyi has sacrificed almost everything for her country. I have little doubt that at some point, perhaps not far in the future, the regime will decide to take her life as well. As long as the military junta is in power, Suu Kyi and other brave Burmese who dream of freedom face a bleak fate. Watching the monks' showdown with police over the past week, she must have hoped against hope that this time would be different. It would not be like 1988. Today there is the Internet, satellite television, and digital cameras to shame the generals into restraining their response. Sadly, and perhaps predictably, they did not.

In a few more weeks, the world will go back to its other interests. The U.N. envoy will make desultory progress in achieving his political solution, and he will go home. But the Burmese people know, as I do, that a political solution is unlikely. The military junta has stayed in power through brute force, though it sought legitimacy from Burma's monasteries. After last week's beatings and killings of those monks, that relationship is shattered. Stripped of its last veneer of legitimacy, the government will fall back on its guns. But for its weapons, and its will to rule, this regime would long ago have gone the way of other bunker regimes, and today be little missed.

The one weapon it does not have, however, is time. Sooner or later, all tyrannies collapse. The effort of repression is ultimately self-immolating; and then the regime's only lasting historical legacy will be the misery it has inflicted. For the Burmese people, who suffer through this misery and resist the best they can, life will be unbearably harsh. I believe they will continue to resist regardless. My colleagues and I will assist them however we can, in whatever small way is open to us. And one day, when the orange robes of the monks line the streets once more and the troops are nowhere to be found, we shall have victory, and a new day will break over Burma. They—and I—await that day.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, en bloc, and that any statements relating to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 339) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 339

Whereas hundreds of thousands of Burmese citizens, including thousands of Buddhist monks and students, engaged in peaceful demonstrations against the policies of the ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), demanding that the State Peace and Development Council release all political prisoners, including Nobel Peace Prize laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and urging that the government agree to a meaningful tripartite dialogue with Suu Kyi, the National League for Democracy (NLD), and the ethnic minorities towards national reconciliation;

Whereas the State Peace and Development Council violently dispersed the peaceful demonstrators, killing at least 10 (and reportedly more than 200) unarmed protesters, including a number of monks and a Japanese journalist, and arrested hundreds of others, and continues to forcibly suppress peaceful protests;

Whereas the National League for Democracy won a majority of seats in the parliamentary elections of 1990, but the State Peace and Development Council refused to uphold the results or to negotiate a transition to civilian rule and subsequently placed Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest;

Whereas Aung San Suu Kyi has spent most of the past 18 years under house arrest or in jail, and is currently being held in government custody, cut off from her followers and the international community;

Whereas 59 world leaders, including 3 former presidents of the United States, have called on the State Peace and Development Council to release Aung San Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners;

Whereas the State Peace and Development Council has destroyed more than 3,000 villages, systematically and violently repressed ethnic minorities, displaced approximately 2,000,000 Burmese people, and arrested approximately 1,300 individuals for expressing critical opinions;

Whereas the United States Department of State's 2006 Reports on Human Rights Practices found that Burma's junta routinely restricts its citizens' freedoms of speech, press, assembly, association, religion, movement, and traffics in persons, discriminates against women and ethnic minorities, forcibly recruits child soldiers and child labor, and commits other serious violations of human rights, including extrajudicial killings, custodial deaths, disappearances, rape, torture, abuse of prisoners and detainees, and the imprisonment of citizens arbitrarily for political motives;

Whereas the Government of Burma relies heavily on the unconditional military and economic assistance provided by the People's Republic of China;

Whereas on September 30, 2006, the United Nations Security Council officially included Burma on its agenda for the first time;

Whereas on January 13, 2007, China and Russia vetoed a United Nations Security Council Resolution calling on Burma to release all political prisoners, allow a more inclusive political process and unhindered humanitarian access, and end human rights abuses, and on September 26, 2007, China blocked a United Nations Security Council Statement from condemning the State Peace and Development Council crackdown against the peaceful demonstrators;

Whereas the prevalence of tuberculosis in Burma, with nearly 97,000 new cases detected annually, is among the highest in the world, malaria is the leading cause of mortality in Burma, with 70 percent of the population living in areas at risk, at least 37,000 died of HIV/AIDS in Burma in 2005, and over 600,000 are currently infected, and the World Health Organization has ranked Burma's health sector as 190th out of 191 nations;

Whereas the failure of the State Peace and Development Council to respect the human rights and meet the most basic humanitarian needs of the Burmese people has not only caused enormous suffering inside Burma, but also driven hundreds of thousands of Burmese citizens to seek refuge in neighboring countries, creating a threat to regional peace and stability; and

Whereas the State Peace and Development Council continues to restrict the access and freedom of movement of international humanitarian organizations to deliver aid throughout Burma: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate—

(1) to strongly condemn the use of violence against peaceful protestors in Burma, and to call on the Government of Burma to refrain from further violence, release the demonstrators it has arrested, immediately cease attacks against ethnic minorities, release Aung Sang Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners, and begin a meaningful tripartite political dialogue with Suu Kyi, the National League for Democracy, and the ethnic minorities;

(2) to call on the People's Republic of China to remove objections to efforts by the United Nations Security Council to condemn the actions taken by the Government of Burma against the peaceful demonstrators;

(3) to call on the People's Republic of China and all other nations that have provided military assistance to the Government of Burma to suspend such assistance until civilian democratic rule is restored to Burma;

(4) that the Government of Burma should engage in a peaceful dialogue with opposition leaders and ethnic minorities to implement political, economic, and humanitarian reforms that will improve the living conditions of the Burmese people and lead to the restoration of civilian democratic rule;

(5) to recognize and welcome the many constructive statements issued by various nations, and particularly the statement issued by the Association of Southeast Asian

Nations on September 27, 2007, which demanded an immediate end to violence in Burma, the release of all political prisoners, and a political solution to the crisis;

(6) that the United States and the United Nations should strongly encourage China, India, and Russia to modify their position on Burma and use their influence to convince the Government of Burma to engage in dialogue with opposition leaders and ethnic minorities towards national reconciliation;

(7) to support the United Nations mission to Burma led by Ibrahim Gambari, and to call on the Government of Burma to allow the mission freedom of movement and access to top government leaders in order to prevent additional violence and to further peaceful dialogue towards national reconciliation; and

(8) that the United States should work with the international community to pressure the Government of Burma to lift all restrictions on humanitarian aid delivery and then allow international humanitarian aid organizations to work to alleviate suffering and improve living conditions for the most vulnerable populations.

RECOGNIZING THE EFFORTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF HISPANIC SCIENTISTS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 340, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 340) recognizing the efforts and contributions of outstanding Hispanic scientists in the United States.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

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

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

The resolution (S. Res. 340) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 340

Whereas the purpose of the National Hispanic Scientist of the Year Award is to recognize outstanding Hispanic scientists in the United States who promote a greater public understanding of science and motivate Hispanic youth to develop an interest in science;

Whereas the 7th annual National Hispanic Scientist of the Year Gala will be held at the Museum of Science & Industry in Tampa, Florida, on Saturday, October 6, 2007;

Whereas proceeds from the National Hispanic Scientist of the Year Gala support scholarships for Hispanic boys and girls to participate in the Museum of Science & Industry's Youth Enriched by Science Program, known as the ''YES! Team''; and

Whereas a need to acknowledge the work and effort of outstanding Hispanic scientists in the United States has led to the selection of Dr. Louis A. Martin-Vega as the honoree of the 7th annual National Hispanic Scientist of the Year Award, in recognition of his accomplishments developing foundation-wide programs aimed at integrating research and education in science and engineering and in increasing the participation of women and underrepresented minorities in these fields; and

Whereas Dr. Martin-Vega is also to be commended for his years of leadership in engineering education at such fine institutions as the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez, the University of Florida, Florida Institute of Technology, Lehigh University, the University of South Florida, and North Carolina State University, and for his service at the National Science Foundation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes efforts to educate, support, and provide hope for the Hispanic community, including efforts to honor outstanding Hispanic scientists in the United States at the annual National Hispanic Scientist of the Year Gala and to organize a ''Meet the Hispanic Scientist Day''; and

(2) congratulates the 2007 National Hispanic Scientist of the Year designated by the Museum of Science & Industry, for ongoing dedication to improving the quality of, and access to, science and engineering research and education.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2007

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m., Tuesday, October 2; that on Tuesday, following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and that there then be a period for the transaction of morning business for 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two sides, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final portion; that following morning business, the Senate proceed to H.R. 3222, as provided for under a previous order; that on Tuesday, the Senate stand in recess from 12:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. in order to accommodate the respective party conference meetings.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, if there is no further business, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:50 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, October 2, 2007, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. DAVID A. RUBENSTEIN, 6677

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be vice admiral

REAR ADM. BERNARD J. MCCULLOUGH III, 4147

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR REGULAR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be lieutenant commander

STEPHEN T. VARGO, 7730

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING JEAN PICKER FIRSTENBERG, AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Ms. PELOSI. Madam Speaker, I rise today in tribute to a great American pioneer, Jean Picker Firstenberg, the outgoing President and CEO of the American Film Institute. Her 27-year tenure has marked AFI as one of America's greatest national cultural and educational resources. Under Jean Picker Firstenberg's visionary leadership, AFI has fulfilled its mission of excellence in screen education and the recognition and celebration of excellence in the art of film, television and digital media.

From the moment she joined AFI in 1980, Firstenberg was effective from the start, acquiring an 8-acre campus in Los Angeles, and accrediting the AFI Conservatory through the National Association of Schools of Art and Design.

In the 1980s, Firstenberg incorporated television and video into AFI's work, and established the AFI Los Angeles International Film Festival, AFI FEST, which has become a world-renowned annual event.

In the 1990s, she embraced the digital revolution, starting with the AFI-Apple Computer Center for Film and Videomakers, and adding the AFI Media and Technology division, the AFI Digital Content Lab, and Virtual AFI Web sites (AFI.com, AFIFEST.com, and SILVERDOCS.com.

Firstenberg has brought the art and science of storytelling to children through the AFI K–12 Screen Education Center that utilizes the advantages of digital and Internet technology to teach core subjects in America's schools, and to the general public through the AFI Showcase at the Disney-MGM Studios Theme Park in Orlando, Florida that depicts AFI programs and projects to millions of guests each year.

Firstenberg has celebrated the diverse talents and creativity of American filmmakers in the innovative AFI's 100 Years . . . 100 Movies series she began in 1998. Millions of Americans have revisited old favorites and discovered new classics with the AFI series, which includes 100 Years . . . 100 Stars (1999), 100 Years . . . 100 Laughs (2000), 100 Years . . . 100 Thrills (2001), 100 Years . . . 100 Passions (2002), Years . . . 100 Heroes & Villains (2003),100 Years . . . 100 Songs, (2004), 100 Years . . . 100 Quotes (2005), and 100 Years . . . 100 Cheers (2006).

Another milestone, reached in 2003, was the opening of the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center in Silver Spring, MD, a state-of-the-art center for the moving image arts. It hosts SILVERDOCS, a film festival for aspiring documentary filmmakers, and anchors a revitalized community.

Firstenberg has continually embraced new media and blazed a trail for others to follow. She is rightfully proud of 27 years of funding the Directors Workshop for Women. Most of the women directors working in the film industry today come from this program.

As she prepares to take leave of her day-to-day responsibilities at AFI, she will continue her service in her capacity as a lifetime trustee and through her legacy as a mentor, entrepreneur and role model. She will do so with the love and support of her family, particularly her daughter, Debra and her husband Michael Kusma, and their children Rachel, Sarah, and Christopher; her son Doug, his wife Suzanne, and their children Samantha, Drew, and Lindy; and her brother David Picker, and his wife, Sandy. Firstenberg's commitment to excellence and ethics in filmmaking is best captured by her AFI Conservatory graduates who describe her this way: "She has made AFI a place committed to the notion that television and film are more than commerce or technology—they are our investment in the future; in fact, our legacy. That we are to be held responsible for the images we perpetuate in the culture. And that one institute would take on the task of encapsulating the hard truths and dreams of a nation by preparing the storytellers of its future."

Madam Speaker, I ask the Congress of the United States to recognize the vision, talent and contributions that Jean Picker Firstenberg has made to enrich our cultural heritage and to encourage future generations to capture the imagination and innovation of the American people.

IN HONOR OF THE 85TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BOROUGH OF FRANKLIN LAKES, NEW JERSEY

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, tomorrow, the people of Franklin Lakes, New Jersey and their neighboring communities throughout Bergen County will celebrate the 85th anniversary of the Borough. A full day of rides, demonstrations, music, and great carnival food will mark the birthday celebration, which culminates in a fireworks display.

From as far back as the 17th Century, people have been drawn to this picturesque area. The Lenape Indians first traveled here to fish and make winter camp. Later as Dutch settlers pushed west, they, too, made what we now know as Franklin Lakes their home.

In 1876, the Walker Atlas shows that the community had grown from its first business—Daniel Youman's Grist Mill on Franklin Lake—to a thriving community of shops, schools, mills, hotels, and about 100 residences. In years to follow, rail and road expansion would bring even more people to the Franklin Lakes area. And, in 1922, Franklin Lakes officially incorporated, detaching itself from Franklin Township and electing its first Mayor, William V. Pulis.

Between 1876 and 1980, Franklin Lakes grew to a whopping 8,500 people. And, today, nearly 10,500 people live there. Though it has grown in size and stature, it has always maintained its sense of neighborly quiet. The sense of friendship and community is evident in every nook and cranny of Franklin Lakes. It is my hope that the people of Franklin Lakes will maintain this vision for another 85 years into the future and then some, and I congratulate them all on this milestone occasion.

TRIBUTE TO TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE SENFRONIA THOMPSON

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a friend of mine, a maverick, a community visionary, a leader, and a true Texan who has achieved an extraordinary milestone this year.

Senfronia Thompson set history this year by becoming the first woman and the first African-American legislator in the state of Texas to serve for 34 years. This milestone is an accomplishment for all Texas women and all Texas African-Americans.

In 1973, Senfronia Thompson was elected to the Texas State House of Representatives from Houston. She has continued to serve her constituents in honor ever since. She now ranks as the longest-serving woman and the longest-serving African-American in Texas State legislature history.

I had the pleasure of serving beside Senfronia Thompson, a native Houstonian and a champion of civic participation, when we were both freshman legislators together in 1973. It was an honor to serve with her then and it is an honor for me to be able to celebrate her accomplishment today.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Madam Speaker, on Thursday, September 27, 2007, I missed three rollcall recorded votes due to unforeseen circumstances.

On rollcall vote No. 914, on a Motion to Adjourn, I would have voted "No." On rollcall vote No. 922, on a Motion to Recommit with

Instructions, I would have voted "No." On roll-call vote No. 923, on Final Passage of the Small Business Investment Expansion Act of 2007, I would have voted "Aye."

TMA, ABSTINENCE EDUCATION, AND QI PROGRAMS EXTENSION ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 26, 2007

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, this bill allows the extension of some important programs, specifically Transitional Medical Assistance and the Medicare Qualifying Individual Program.

But it unfortunately ties these necessary provisions to yet another ill-considered extension of the federal abstinence-only program.

Keeping federal abstinence-only programs in the form they've taken for the past ten years is an embarrassment to Congress, an insult to taxpayers and a disservice to the health of American young people.

We all support promoting abstinence as the healthiest choice for young people. But the abstinence-only programs we've been funding are a mistake. They contain serious misinformation and, most importantly, are not effective in improving adolescent health.

In 2004 a report I released looked at federally-funded abstinence-only programs and found that the vast majority of the most popular curricula had significant scientific and medical errors. Kids were being taught that HIV can be spread by tears and sweat, that condoms don't help protect against STDs, and that pregnancy occurs one in every seven times a couple uses condoms.

In 2006, GAO found that HHS still wasn't reviewing the medical accuracy of curricula used in the biggest federal abstinence-only programs. GAO also said there was no reliable evidence that these programs improve participants' health.

In 2007, HHS released the results of an evaluation it had commissioned itself on the effectiveness of federally-funded abstinence-only programs. In this randomized, controlled study—the gold standard of research—the abstinence-only programs had no impact on whether teens had sex. They had no impact on the age of first sex. They had no impact on the number of partners. And they had no impact on rates of pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease.

It's not surprising, in light of all this, that eleven states have decided they'd rather not receive federal abstinence-only money at all.

This program is broken. We've given abstinence-only programs one billion dollars in the past decade. $500 million of that has been through this program. And that doesn't include the matching money states have put in. And for all that money, all we've been able to show the taxpayers are glaring medical errors and zero impact on adolescent health.

Language passed by the House in August would have required programs to contain medically accurate information; mandated that programs be based on models proven effective in improving adolescent pregnancy, HIV, or sexually transmitted disease rates; and given states the option of offering more comprehensive health information.

I want to be clear. I do not think we should fund any abstinence-only programs. I don't think that we should be funding federal programs that are specifically premised on withholding crucial and age-appropriate health information from young people.

But I am heartened by Chairman DINGELL's statement that he will continue to fight for the House changes, because I believe they will move us closer to a responsible federal position on sex education. I offer Mr. DINGELL my full support in ensuring that federally-funded programs actually improve the health and well-being of American youth.

IN HONOR OF THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HOUSE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of the 125th anniversary of The House of the Good Shepherd retirement community in Hackettstown, New Jersey. For over a century, this community has provided seniors with a place to call home.

In 1882, five Episcopal Congregations founded The House with a 20–room rental building in Orange, New Jersey, rented for the sum of $400. Less than a decade later, they had outgrown that building and a new home was built in Orange housing three dozen women. In the 1960s, they expanded their offering to 175 residences on a wooded, 15–acre site in Hackettstown. The Musconetcong River and Stephens State Park offer a serene and quiet atmosphere. And, the excellent staff offer a loving and friendly environment for the seniors who live there.

The House of the Good Shepherd is equipped to offer its residents a variety of care options from independent apartments to assisted living suites to skilled nursing residences. It is an active community where seniors to go live their golden years to the fullest.

This year's anniversary is somewhat bittersweet for the residents of this community as their Executive Director of more than ten years has announced his retirement. Fred Heleine has ministered to and served the needs of these seniors admirably and with love and compassion since 1995, and as he said in announcing his retirement to his extended family of The House of the Good Shepherd, "I leave The House with much gratitude for the privilege of having been there." I know that the gratitude is mutual, and I join the community in thanking Fred for his fine service.

This Sunday, at a gala celebration fitting of such a momentous milestone, the residents and staff of The House of the Good Shepherd will be joined by members of the extended community. To mark this special anniversary, they will present their first annual "Distinguished Friend of The House" award to Claudia Conway, a longtime resident of Hackettstown and supporter of The House.

Ms. Conway's service has been remarkable, particularly her participation on the Foundation Advisory Council, and she was a natural choice for this first award. But her dedication to The House not only speaks volumes of her goodness and compassion, but also of the worthiness of her cause. The House of the Good Shepherd is a phenomenal community and I wish it the best for another century of service.

HONORING GOLDY LEVI

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a dear friend of mine, Goldy Levi, on his eightieth birthday. Not only is Goldy Levi a wonderful man who is greatly liked, he is an upstanding citizen and a pillar of the Dallas community. He is a true Texan who has achieved an extraordinary milestone this year.

Longevity is a cause for celebration, especially when it has been accomplished with such great ease. Goldy Levi has been a long time Dallas resident and I am honored to be blessed with his friendship. It is a true pleasure for me to be able to celebrate this milestone with him today.

IN RECOGNITION OF MASTER WAN KO YEE

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Master Artist Wan Ko Yee, a distinguished scholar who resides in the 9th District of California. His areas of expertise include literature, painting, sculpting, calligraphy, music, martial arts, and traditional medicine. As a professor at Auburn University, Master Yee is a well renowned author, researcher, and philosopher. He has created exceptional work exhibited throughout the world. His work reflects Buddhist themes and the ideas of tolerance and peace between nations. He is recognized as a pioneer in creating multi-colored sculptures.

In 2003, the United States Congress displayed selected work from Master Yee during an art exhibition held in the Gold Room in the House Office Building. He has been recognized by the Royal Academy of Arts of the United Kingdom, and the Organization of American States.

I commend Master Wan Ko Yee's artistic contributions and his efforts to promote peace through the arts and cultural exchange.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN McCUE

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today with my colleague Representative MIKE THOMPSON of California in honor of John McCue, who is retiring as CEO of the non-

profit organization Becoming Independent, after 21 years of work on its behalf. Mr. McCue has been hugely influential in establishing and expanding the programs that Becoming Independent offers, and this hard work has been reflected by the remarkable success of participants in the program.

Mr. McCue was born in Hartford, Connecticut, and received his Bachelor's degree from California State University, Fullerton in 1971. He has 36 years of experience in disability services, and has a credential in adult education. Mr. McCue joined Becoming Independent in 1981 as a program director before becoming CEO in 1986. In 1991 he received his Master of Public Administration degree from Sonoma State University.

During Mr. McCue's tenure as CEO, Becoming Independent has dramatically expanded the range of services available to persons with disabilities in Sonoma County, while retaining a high quality of service and satisfaction among program participants. Becoming Independent focuses on helping provide individuals with the skills they need to live fulfilling lives through community living support services, which enable individuals with disabilities to live on their own with dignity and responsibility. Vocational education is also a major emphasis in the organization, and with the assistance of Becoming Independent's employment services, hundreds of participants have found rewarding jobs all over Sonoma County. This success has been reflected in the annual gains they have charted in participant employment and earned wages.

In addition to his leadership at Becoming Independent, Mr. McCue has been active in local and state organizations, focusing on benefiting individuals with disabilities. He has been a longtime member of the California Rehabilitation Association, and served as Chair of the Board of Directors from 2004–2005. He is also a board member of the Nonprofits Insurance Alliance of California. He is active in Sonoma County and beyond as a member of the North Bay Housing Coalition, North Bay Developmental Disabilities Services, and Leadership Santa Rosa, among many others.

Madam Speaker, at this time it is appropriate that we thank John McCue for his many years of service to the people of Sonoma County and his work with Becoming Independent. His leadership has been instrumental in providing superb services to individuals with disabilities to help them gain their independence.

IN HONOR OF THE SERVICE OF THE MEN AND WOMEN VOLUNTEERS AT THE RAMSEY AMBULANCE CORPS

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the men and women who volunteer their time, skills, and energy to the people of Ramsey, New Jersey through their dedicated service to the Ramsey Ambulance Corps.

Since 1953, when the Ramsey Ambulance Corps got its first ambulance and responded to its first calls, the faithful volunteers of this organization have been an integral part of the community. From its birth more than 50 years ago, the Corps has blossomed to a strong and steady group that today responds to more than 1100 calls for help a year.

And, the Ramsey Ambulance Corps volunteers do far more than respond to calls for ambulance assistance. They also loan important medical equipment, like wheelchairs and crutches, to people in need. They operate a bike corps for special events. They train people in emergency medical services, like CPR. And, they help with important search and rescue efforts.

This weekend, I will join these fine public servants and their neighbors at the dedication of two new ambulances. One will be dedicated to Mr. Lawrence R. Inserra, Sr. His family, a pillar of the community, generously donated the funds to purchase one of these new ambulances. The Inserra Family is in its third generation running a local supermarket chain of more than 20 stores in North Jersey and nearby New York. They have used their wealth to make North Jersey a better place to work, live, and raise a family, including through an endowed chair in Italian and Italian American Studies at my alma mater, Montclair State University.

The other will be dedicated to one of the committed leaders of the Ambulance Corps, Michael F. Adams. In addition to being a life member of the Ramsey Ambulance Corps, the Ramsey Police Reserve, and the Ramsey Rescue Squad, he is also completing his thirty-third term as the Borough of Ramsey's Emergency Management Coordinator. As a CERT Program Manager and Instructor and head of the Ramsey Citizen Corps Council, he is one of the Borough's leading advocates for citizen preparedness.

I commend these fine citizens for their commitment to their community and the example of service that they demonstrate daily.

HONORING JOHN McCUE

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today with my colleague Representative WOOLSEY in honor of John McCue, who is retiring as CEO of the non-profit organization Becoming Independent, after 21 years of work on its behalf. Mr. McCue has been hugely influential in establishing and expanding the programs that Becoming Independent offers, and this hard work has been reflected by the remarkable success of participants in their programs.

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Madam Speaker, at this time it is appropriate that we thank John McCue for his many years of service to the people of Sonoma County and his work with Becoming Independent. His leadership has been instrumental in providing superb services to individuals with disabilities to help them gain their independence.

TRIBUTE TO SKIP RICH

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, I would like to take this moment to recognize the extensive career of Skip Rich. Mr. Rich spent over 30 years serving Cole County as its Collector of Revenue, but will retire on October 3, 2007.

Skip Rich was first appointed as collector in 1977, and he was re-elected to that position every term thereafter. His record as collector has been outstanding. He has presided over notable increases in county collections and he was instrumental in starting the Cole County employee retirement system.

Skip Rich has also honorably served our country in uniform. He is a Marine who served a tour of duty in Vietnam and who later joined the Missouri Army National Guard. In that position, he held the rank of command sergeant major for over 14 years and received over twenty awards and service medals.

Having devoted his life to public service, Mr. Rich's leadership will indisputably be missed. He plans to spend his retirement traveling with his wife, Eva, and spending time with his three children and four grandchildren. I trust that Members of the House will join me in wishing Skip Rich and his family the best of luck in their future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO NICHOLAS BENSON

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam Speaker, I would first like to acknowledge everything that the National Heritage Fellowship has meant to this country over the past 25 years. It has been a vital inspiration for those who practice traditional arts and Americans owe so much of our nation's artistic diversity to the Fellowship.

I also speak today to honor the achievements of Nicholas Benson. In Rhode Island, a place where there is no shortage of history, the contributions of Mr. Benson's family stand out for their beauty, charm and authenticity. Mr. Benson oversees a stone carving shop that has been in his family for three generations and has been operating continuously for over three hundred years.

Thankfully, the contributions of Nicholas Benson and his family have not been limited to Rhode Island. From the Civil Rights Memorial in Montgomery, Alabama to the World War II Memorial here in Washington, DC, his work is a part of our history. In a country where so much of our history is recorded through art, I am reminded of something John Adams wrote to his wife Abigail in l780,

''I must study politics and war, that our sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. Our sons ought to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history and naval architecture, navigation, commerce and agriculture in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry and porcelain.''

Nicholas, in producing three generations of outstanding artists, your family has surpassed even the dreams of John Adams himself. I would like to congratulate you once again. It is my hope that this fellowship allows you to further your craft and to continue the work of your family. You are an inspiration to us all.

IN HONOR OF BERGEN TECHNICAL SCHOOL'S PARTNERSHIP WITH STATE FARM TO PROMOTE SAFE TEEN DRIVING

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend the faculty, staff, and students at Bergen Technical High School who have partnered with State Farm to promote safe teen driving.

Far too many young people lose their lives senselessly to motor vehicle accidents, largely because of their youth and inexperience behind the wheel. In fact, 14 percent of all motor vehicle deaths are teen drivers and car crashes is the number one killer of teens today. State Farm has developed a phenomenal program called Project Ignition, committed to reversing this trend and saving teens on the road. This popular program partners with local schools to develop ad campaigns to promote safe driving in ways that really speak to young people.

Bergen Technical High School is one of only 25 schools nationwide chosen to participate in this program. Their visual graphic design program is creating a series of public service announcements for television, posters, and more to speak to teens about the importance of driving responsibly and safely. Streetwise, the name of their program, promotes six character education pillars—respect, responsibility, citizenship, fairness, caring, and trustworthiness—in ways that really resonate with their target audience.

Today, the participants in this innovative program celebrated their work while trying to break the Guinness Book of World Records record for the longest message/graffiti scroll using their Streetwise message. They will be joined by fellow students from other Bergen County High Schools and supportive parents and citizens throughout the County. All of Bergen County is proud of their efforts.

RECOGNIZING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF VILLA JULIE COLLEGE

HON. JOHN P. SARBANES

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. SARBANES. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Villa Julie College in Stevenson, Maryland on its Founder's Day which recognizes the accomplishments of the remarkable women who helped establish the College and honors those who have since contributed and continue to contribute to Villa Julie's vitality.

Villa Julie has developed from a one-year women's secretarial college into a four-year, co-educational liberal arts institution offering career-focused Bachelor's and Master's degrees in a variety of programs. It has transitioned from a local commuter college to a regional residential institute of higher learning. Enrollment has increased more than 45 percent in 7 years; revenues have doubled and the endowment has increased by more than $11 million since 2000.

Today Villa Julie is Maryland's third largest independent college and it has earned recognition as a ''best value'' by several national news sources including U.S. News and World Report which ranked it in the top quarter for its classification. Villa Julie's distinct approach of blending liberal arts with a career focus continues to attract terrific students from around the region. Students have benefited significantly from Career Architecture, an award-winning process developed to assist them in building a career plan based on individual values, skills, and interests. More than 70 percent of incoming freshmen over the past six years say the College's reputation of preparing students for rewarding careers was ''very important'' in their decision to attend.

As the College continues to expand, it has stayed true to its mission of increasing access to higher education. Student surveys indicate that about 60 percent of Villa Julie students are the first in their family to attend college.

Madam Speaker, Villa Julie is a special place. The College, its founders and supporters can take enormous pride in how it has successfully adapted over time and in the difference it has made in the lives of so many in this area. I take this opportunity on Founder's Day to congratulate Villa Julie for its commitment to higher education over the past 60 years.

TRAVEL BAN ON SYRIAN ACTIVIST RIAD SEIF

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to the Syrian human rights activist Riad Seif. Mr. Seif is a former Member of Parliament and a prisoner of conscience held by the Syrian Government, one of hundreds like him who are prohibited from leaving Syria to see family, pursue education, or seek medical care. Mr. Seif desperately needs medical attention and should be allowed to leave Syria to seek this care.

I call upon the Syrian Government to immediately lift the travel ban against Mr. Seif and others who are prevented from leaving Syria because of their stand for freedom and human rights. Mr. Seif should be released to seek the medical care that he so urgently needs.

IN HONOR OF THE MILL CREEK FIRE COMPANY AND ITS LADIES' AUXILIARY; HONORING: JOSEPH H. MULLINS, SR., LAWRENCE MERGENTHALER, AND CATHERINE W. JENKINS

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. CASTLE. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to pay tribute to the Mill Creek Fire Company and its Ladies' Auxiliary for providing the people of Delaware with 80 years of outstanding service. The importance of emergency fire and medical services within our communities cannot be underscored enough. I am proud to represent a state that is home to such selfless and dedicated firefighters, EMTs, and service volunteers as those at the Mill Creek Fire Company here in Delaware.

The Mill Creek Fire Company was born from a tradition of strong community involvement and has kept that tradition alive through the years. The fire company had its humble beginnings in the Social Room of the Marshallton United Methodist Church back in 1927, when seven community members each chipped in one dollar to start the Mill Creek Fire Company Treasury. From that point on, it has steadily grown into a pillar of strength within the community. Residents within its 17 square mile response district have come to rely on the company not only for safety, but also for the social role it plays in bringing the community together. The Mill Creek Fire Company's unique, green fire trucks have become a source of pride, and serve as a reminder of the dedication and spirit which enable the company to excel.

On this special anniversary, I would like to recognize three individuals for their unprecedented dedication to the Mill Creek Fire Company; Joseph H. Mullins, Sr., Lawrence Mergenthaler, and Catherine W. Jenkins. They have each put forth tremendous effort to make the organization what it is today.

Joseph Mullins joined the company in 1938, from which point he went on to serve as Chief

for 25 years and president for two terms. Lawrence Mergenthaler joined the company in 1953 and assumed the position of Chief after Joseph Mullins in 1976. He has served several terms on the board of directors and among his many accomplishments, he was voted to be a fireman of the year. Catherine Jenkins was president of the Ladies' Auxiliary for 4 years, served on the board of directors, and still remains active in many community organizations.

This brief list of distinctions does not do these honorees justice for all the hard work and sacrifices they have made for the ends of bettering our community. Their efforts will inspire others and I am happy to call attention to the positive influence they have had throughout Delaware and beyond.

I would also like to commend the Mill Creek Fire Company and its Ladies' Auxiliary for its 80 years of exceptional service. The bravery and hard work of all those involved with this outstanding fire company are responsible for making Delaware a safer place to live.

TRIBUTE TO ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND AND PINNEBERG, GERMANY

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Rockville, Maryland and Pinneberg, Germany on the 50th anniversary of their outstanding ''Sister City'' relationship.

In 1983, the first official delegation from Pinneberg visited Rockville, and participated in a White House ceremony commemorating the 300th anniversary of German immigration to the United States. Over the past 50 years, individuals and groups from both cities, including police officers, students, politicians, sports teams, choruses and concert bands, have participated in exchanges that have left both sides richer in knowledge and understanding. I know these participants will never forget their experiences and the lessons they have learned from each other.

We here in Rockville and our friends in Pinneberg should be proud that our cities were among the first in the United States and Germany to engage in this relationship, after its proposal in 1956 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower as part of a people-to-people citizen diplomacy initiative. Our sister city relationship is a cornerstone of a program that for many years has worked to achieve peace and prosperity through cultural understanding and exchange among countries all over the world. Even during turbulent times, our two cities have reached towards one another in friendship and set an example for others to follow.

In celebration of this anniversary, a delegation from Rockville, including its Mayor, Larry Giammo, visited Pinneberg this past June. This week, beginning on October 2nd, the City of Rockville will formally welcome a 40-member delegation from Pinneberg, including its current Mayor. They will spend time with our local elected officials, tour the City and other sights in Maryland, dedicate a commemorative plaque, and conclude the week's festivities with ''An Evening of Celebration'' in Rockville's new Town Center on October 7th.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Rockville, Maryland and Pinneberg, Germany for their meaningful and productive collaboration over the past 50 years. We all look forward to another 50 years of friendship between these two great cities.

TRIBUTE TO CORPORAL DAVID McCONNELL

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. SHUSTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Corporal David McConnell of Altoona, Pennsylvania. CPL McConnell is currently serving in Iraq as part of the United States Marine Corps. He has served our country since 2005 when he first enlisted in the Marine Corps.

Corporal McConnell was deployed to Iraq on December 31, 2006, initially serving as an Infantryman. He was stationed in Fallujah as part of the Regimental Combat Team 6 Security Platoon, where he acted as convey security. Promoted to corporal in August, McConnell is currently stationed in Fallujah to provide protection services for the team directing leader engagement with Iraqi diplomats.

A dedicated and enthusiastic leader, Corporal McConnell is committed to furthering the cause he believes so much in. He is proud of the work of his unit and believes that the contributions and sacrifices they have made are well worth it to be able to assist in expanding freedom in Iraq.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank and recognize David and the rest of our troops for their efforts in serving our military. He and his unit should be very proud of the work they are doing in Iraq and the sacrifices they have made for their country. Their courage and devotion do not go unnoticed, and they are all in our thoughts and prayers for a safe return home.

TRIBUTE TO JEFF PIGEON, WIBC, INDIANAPOLIS

HON. MIKE PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor an icon of the Indiana airwaves, Jeff Pigeon. After serving Hoosiers for 27 years at WIBC in Indianapolis, IN, Jeff bid a bittersweet farewell this morning during his final broadcast.

Jeff Pigeon has never been anything but upbeat and positive and for nearly 20 years on the WIBC Morning News and that is how he helped Hoosiers wake up and start their day. It's hard to imagine WIBC or Indiana without him.

Jeff's energy touched the hearts of Hoosiers far beyond Indianapolis as people in Muncie, Anderson, Columbus, New Castle and areas throughout Indiana cherish Jeff and his ebullient personality.

His heart for people stretched beyond the airwaves and is attested to by his work for Crossroads Rehabilitation Center, Gleaners Food Bank and the Indianapolis Police Department.

Jeff Pigeon started working at WIBC in 1981 as host of the 7 p.m.–midnight shift. He took over the morning drive-time show in 1988.

His radio background stretches across the country, from stations in Minneapolis, Denver and Chicago. An espouser of Midwestern values, Jeff graduated from the University of Illinois before launching his radio career.

Hoosiers of Eastern Indiana congratulate Jeff Pigeon on 27 great years of service to our State and a voice they have come to know, respect and love. He will be greatly missed.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF MASSACHUSETTS GOVERNOR JANE SWIFT

HON. JOHN W. OLVER

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. OLVER. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the contributions and achievements of Massachusetts Governor Jane Swift, a woman whose record of leadership in our State is matched by few.

When Jane Swift became Chief Executive of Massachusetts in April 2001, she became the first woman Governor of the Bay State, one of only five women Governors at the time, and one of only 19 women Governors in history. These numbers are far too low, and Governor Swift deserves credit for being a trailblazer and an inspiration to what hopefully will turn out to be many more women chief executives in the future.

During her tenure, Governor Swift oversaw a budget that had reached the $23 billion mark, directed 13 cabinet agencies and executive divisions, and enacted numerous reforms. In policymaking as well as in example, she established herself as an advocate for women and families. Her efforts on behalf of foster children and working parents garnered praise across the political spectrum. And, when Governor Swift delivered twin girls while in office, she achieved yet another remarkable first.

Also while in office, Governor Swift continued her work as a strong supporter of the cultural development of our State, which included championing the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art. Her efforts to bolster Mass MoCA continue to be greatly appreciated by everyone who cares about the economic development of the north Berkshires.

Governor Swift counts 12 total years of official public service in her career. Elected to the Massachusetts State Senate at age 25, she was the youngest-ever woman member of the legislature. She also has spent many more years personally working in her community to create opportunity and improve the quality of life for local residents.

Today, Governor Swift serves on a number of key boards and steering committees, including the board of the Williamstown Elementary School Endowment and the Community Outreach Board of Mass MoCA. She remains active in politics and is engaged in a wide variety of public policy issues. Drawing on her diverse experiences, Governor Swift shares her perspectives as a sought-after public speaker, imparting wisdom to and inspiring the next generation of women and men leaders.

It is my honor to commend her years of public service and pay tribute to Governor Swift's enduring leadership. National Women's Business Week is an important occasion to celebrate women leaders, and Governor Swift has been a groundbreaker since the beginning of her career. She is, indeed, a ''Woman of Achievement,'' and I join the Northern Berkshire Business and Professional Women in honoring her this month.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably detained on September 24, 2007 and as a result I was not present to vote on rollcall No. 893. Had I been present, I would have voted ''aye.''

H.R. 1400, THE IRAN COUNTER-PROLIFERATION ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 25, 2007

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, the Iranian government continues to defy the international community in its pursuit of nuclear weapons. In the past, it denounced United Nations Security Council Resolutions imposing sanctions as ''illegal'' and ''invalid.'' And just this week, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad spoke before the U.N. General Assembly and announced that the nuclear issue in Iran was closed.

It is obvious to all of us that Iran's nuclear development programs are a concern for our Nation. Our Nation's security would be greatly affected by Iranian control over any nuclear weapons. However, we must not forget that, in addition to its disregard for the international community, the regime in place has abhorrent civil liberties and human rights practices within Iran. In the past 5 years, hundreds of newspapers have been closed, hundreds of pro-reform websites have been blocked, and innumerable people have been unjustly imprisoned. Just this year, Dr. Haleh Esfandiari, an Iranian-American, was jailed for months for unsubstantiated accusations that she was trying to set up networks of Iranians to start a revolution to bring down the government. In fact, she has long been an advocate for building bridges between the United States and the Middle East. While Dr. Esfandiari has been released, countless others have not, and it is clear that we must work to stop these baseless and ruthless actions.

While we address our ongoing concerns, we must be vigilant in ensuring that the United States works with the international community and approaches the Middle East diplomatically. As our Nation has learned, we must be willing to do everything that is necessary to protect our Nation and its people; however, we must not preemptively strike other sovereign nations because of incomplete and questionable information. What we must all agree on is that Iranian nuclear capability must continue to be investigated, discussed, and debated—throughout this Congress, the Nation, and the world.

Nonetheless, while we attempt to address these situations diplomatically, these actions must be backed by strong sanctions against the regime in Tehran. It is with this knowledge that I support H.R. 1400, the Iran Counter-Proliferation Act of 2007. This legislation, first and foremost, declares the support of diplomatic and economic means to resolve the Iranian nuclear situation, calls for enhanced U.N. Security Council efforts, and explicitly states that nothing authorizes the use of force in Iran. Additionally, the bill expands bilateral sanctions against Iran, prohibits the Presidential waiver of these sanctions, and increases oversight of the Administration's efforts.

While critics of this legislation may consider these actions to be inflammatory, I instead see it as a necessary and diplomatic step that must be taken. Iran has long flouted its disregard for the international community and it must understand that it cannot pursue a nuclear weapons program and ignore international law without facing international political and economic repercussions.

TRIBUTE TO LINDA CHAVEZ-THOMPSON

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, I rise today to honor Linda Chavez-Thompson, executive vice president of the AFL–CIO, on the occasion of her retirement. Elected to this post in 1995, Chavez-Thompson became the first woman and person of color to be chosen for one of the federation's three highest offices.

As a second-generation American of Mexican descent, Chavez-Thompson personifies the American dream. Born in Lubbock, TX to cotton sharecroppers, Chavez-Thompson toiled the fields to help supplement her family's income. After making 30 cents an hour picking cotton, Chavez-Thompson rose through the ranks of the labor movement, beginning her career as a union secretary at the local AFSCME chapter, the labor union to which her father belonged.

In her capacity as executive vice president of the labor federation, Chavez-Thompson has worked tirelessly to strengthen State and local labor movements and has served as a strong voice on behalf of civil, human and immigrant workers' rights. She serves as vice-chair of the Democratic National Committee, and serves as the president of the Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers, ORIT, which is the Western Hemispheric arm of the International Trade Union Confederation.

In retirement Chavez-Thompson will continue to pioneer new territory as the first AFL–CIO Executive Vice President Emeritus. In this capacity, she will continue to provide her leadership to state and local labor councils and communities throughout the country, and will continue her important international work. Her determined work on behalf of all workers, especially women, people of color, people with disabilities and immigrants will continue.

In making this difficult decision to retire after more than 40 years of service to the labor movement, Chavez-Thompson expressed, ''You . . . have given me the opportunity of a lifetime, which was to go where I never dreamed I could go, and do more than I ever dreamed I could do.''

For lending her talents, passion and vision to the effort of bringing justice to workers, we are all thankful to Chavez-Thompson. She has marched and spoken on behalf of those who often labor without a voice and has inspired us all to continue this important work for workers across the world.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE DEMOCRATIC RECORD

HON. JOHN M. SPRATT, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. SPRATT. Madam Speaker, on Friday, Majority Leader STENY HOYER spoke to the National Press Club regarding fiscal responsibility and the Democratic record. I recommend his speech to all of my colleagues.

The speech sets out the clear differences between the current Administration's harmful fiscal policies and the strong track record of fiscal responsibility that the current 110th Congress has established. Indeed, the new House majority has already passed and adhered to the Pay-As-You-Go rule and passed a budget resolution that returns to balance by 2012.

The speech also establishes some helpful context for the Administration's pending veto threats on the appropriations bills. Most of the funding difference consists of Congressional efforts simply to restore harmful cuts proposed by the President, and the rest of the difference represents a responsible level of increase that will enable us to fund key priorities. Our appropriations level was accommodated within our fiscally responsible budget resolution, which returned the budget to balance by 2012.

MAJORITY LEADER HOYER'S ADDRESS AT THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB: FIGHTING FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE

SEPT. 28.—I first want to thank Alan Greenspan for putting the issue of fiscal responsibility back on the political map. This is a very healthy development, even though it embarrasses the Administration.

In his new book, the former Federal Reserve Board Chairman writes: ''Most troubling to me was the readiness of both [the Republican-controlled] Congress and the Administration to abandon fiscal discipline.'' And this: '''Deficits don't matter,' to my chagrin became part of the Republicans' rhetoric. . . . Deficits must matter.''

I was tempted to come here and deliver the shortest speech of my professional life. Eight words in all. ''Chairman Greenspan is correct. Are there any questions?''

But the bar is higher today. So, I intend to convince you of four main points: First, this Administration has pursued the most fiscally irresponsible policies in American history.

Second, the Democratic Party is the party of fiscal responsibility today—which is a very under-reported story.

Third, the President needs to put down his veto pen and pick up the telephone. Our differences on funding levels for domestic appropriations for Fiscal Year 2008—which begins on Monday—are relatively minor. We need to work out those differences, rather than engage in political posturing.

And finally, we must not allow our disagreement on appropriations to distract us from the ominous, long-term fiscal challenges that confront our nation. The United

States of America is on an unsustainable fiscal path—and the longer we wait to address our challenges, the more difficult it will be to avert a fiscal crisis.

THE REPUBLICANS' FISCAL TRAIN WRECK

There's no other way to say it, the Republicans' fiscal record is like a decades-long train wreck. For 18 of the 26 years that I have served in Congress, a Republican has occupied the White House.

And, in every single year of those Republican Administrations, the federal government ran a budget deficit. The cumulative deficits under Presidents Reagan, George Herbert Walker Bush, and George W. Bush total more than $4.1 trillion.

In contrast, the Clinton Administration had a cumulative surplus of nearly $63 billion over eight years. Under President Clinton's stewardship, the federal government reduced the deficits he inherited and recorded four consecutive surpluses—the first time that had happened in 70 years.

So, forgive me for dismissing the Republican Party's claim that it is fiscally responsible.

Forgive me for rejecting the Republicans' repeated assertion that supply-side tax cuts pay for themselves—an assertion that has been challenged by the Treasury Department, the Congressional Budget Office, and the current Chairman of the Federal Reserve, who told the Senate in 2005: ''I think it's unusual for a tax cut to completely offset the revenue loss.''

In fact, revenues have grown by just 3.6 percent since the President's 2001 tax cut was enacted—less than half the 8.4 percent annual growth during the Clinton Administration.

And forgive me for being somewhat amused by the Administration's defensive push-back on Alan Greenspan's recent comments.

The President claimed last week that his fiscal record is ''admirable and good.'' Does he really believe this? He came to office inheriting a projected 10-year budget surplus of $5.6 trillion, and proclaimed, ''We can proceed with tax relief without fear of budget deficits, even if the economy softens.''

But then, the Republican-controlled Congress passed and the President signed the largest tax cuts in a generation—tax cuts disproportionately skewed toward the wealthiest citizens—while increasing spending at a rate (7.1 percent) nearly twice that of the Clinton Administration.

As predicted, these irresponsible policies turned surpluses into massive deficits: $158 billion in Fiscal 2002, $378 billion in Fiscal 2003, $413 billion in Fiscal 2004, $319 billion in Fiscal 2005, and $248 billion in Fiscal 2006.

On Sunday, when we close the books on Fiscal 2007, we'll record another $158 billion deficit. The President will crow that he is reducing the deficit, ignoring the fact that, but for his policies, we would not even have deficits. And consider: The Administration projected a budget surplus of $573 billion this year when it took office. So, Fiscal 2007 really represents a swing of three-quarters of a trillion dollars, virtually all of it the result of policies enacted by a Republican Congress and signed by President Bush.

The exploding national debt is equally disturbing. Today, the debt stands at more than $9 trillion, a 56-percent increase (or $3.3 trillion) under President Bush. That's $29,728 for every man, woman and child in our nation.

All these figures can be mind-numbing. So, let's put them in perspective:

In 2007, the interest payments on the national debt—the fastest growing major category of spending in the budget—are a projected $235 billion. That's more than Congress appropriates in discretionary spending for any government department or agency other than Defense. It's four times more than we spend on education, and seven times more than we spend on the Department of Homeland Security.

In other words, these interest payments—which increasingly are paid to foreign governments that hold our debt—cannot be used to build roads and bridges; to invest in research and development; to improve education, to protect our nation, or, yes, to provide tax relief.

The Republicans' record of fiscal irresponsibility speaks for itself. As Republican Congressman Jeff Flake of Arizona said last year: ''Whether we want to admit it or not, the Republican Congress's failure to discipline itself is sending us all down a flower-strewn path to fiscal insolvency.''

DEMOCRATIC MAJORITIES WORK TO RESTORE FISCAL DISCIPLINE

The truth is, Democrats are the party of fiscal discipline in Washington today.

In one of our first acts after regaining the Majority, we reinstated the pay-as-you-go budget rules (or PAYGO) that are widely credited with producing record budget surpluses during the Clinton Administration. In a nutshell, PAYGO means the federal government must offset tax cuts or spending increases elsewhere in the budget. It's a common-sense rule that millions of American families apply to their own personal budgets.

Adopted on a bipartisan basis in the 1990s, PAYGO was even rhetorically supported by President Bush in his first three budgets—although he exempted his 2001 tax cuts from the rule and Republicans allowed it to expire in 2002.

The President's new Director of OMB, former Budget Committee Chairman Jim Nussle—who supported PAYGO in the '90s—later had a change of heart, explaining: ''We don't believe you should have to pay for tax cuts.''

And so Republicans didn't. They just kept on billing the costs of tax cuts and spending increases to future generations through higher deficits.

Today, Democrats are fighting to restore the fiscal discipline that has been sorely lacking since 2001. Why? Because we believe deficits and spiraling debt threaten our future prosperity and national security. And because we believe that it is simply immoral to force our children and grandchildren to pay this generation's bills.

That's why we passed a budget for Fiscal 2008 that would bring the budget back to balance by 2012. Last year, the Republican Congress failed to even pass a budget.

And, that's why we have honored our commitment to PAYGO. We have not violated the PAYGO rule once in the approximately 30 bills with direct spending or revenue provisions of more than $1 million, as will be detailed in a report next week by John Spratt, Chairman of the House Budget Committee.

If you examine the four major House bills with mandatory spending increases—children's health insurance, the farm bill, higher education and energy—you'll see that approximately 80 percent of the spending increases have been financed by spending cuts.

For all their talk about being tough on spending, our Republican friends in the House actually have opposed the spending cuts that we have put forward. House Democrats, for instance, paid for our SCHIP bill by, among other things, cutting subsidies for insurers—cuts Republicans opposed. We have made the tough decisions with respect to spending priorities that Republicans never made when they were in power.

And, as we enter the final stages of this session of Congress, I want to make one thing clear: The House will not waive PAYGO for any tax cuts or entitlement spending increases that are not offset.

Today, we are examining different proposals to permanently reform the alternative minimum tax, as well as a temporary AMT fix that would be offset by closing tax loopholes and cracking down on special interest tax breaks. In either case, simply waiving PAYGO is not an option—even if some members of the other body prefer that we do so.

THE CURRENT APPROPRIATIONS FIGHT IN CONTEXT

Now let me focus on the current disagreement between Democrats in Congress and the Administration over domestic appropriations. Don't be fooled. This is not a fight about spending. This is a fight about our priorities as a nation—and about the Administration's desire to posture for its base.

Let me say, I am not pleased that we have not completed our appropriations work on time. The Administration's unjustified veto threats have only impeded our progress. Nonetheless, we have passed a continuing resolution to ensure that our government is funded and functioning, and to give us time to work out our differences.

But the bottom line is, the Administration is itching to instigate an appropriations fight with Congress in a vain effort to establish its bona fides with its conservative base.

After failing to veto even one appropriations bill or other legislation that substantially added to the deficit during his first six years in office, the President is now threatening to veto eight of the 12 annual spending bills for Fiscal 2008 over a total of $23 billion.

There is no question that $23 billion is a lot of money. However, let's put it in perspective: $23 billion is about eight-tenths of 1 percent of a total federal budget of nearly $3 trillion.

Twenty-three billion dollars is not quite half of the $42 billion in additional funding for Iraq that the Administration requested on Wednesday, and about 12 percent of the Administration's total request of $190 billion for the war for 2008—a war the White House estimated would have a total cost of $60 billion.

The truth is, $16 billion of the $23 billion that Democrats are fighting for would simply restore cuts proposed by the President to key programs—a 50-percent cut in vocational education; the elimination of student aid other than work study and Pell Grants; and deep cuts in medical research, law enforcement grants and rural health programs, to name a few.

This is a fight about whether we adequately fund No Child Left Behind, special education, medical research, Head Start, clean water programs, public safety, and appropriate health care for our veterans and men and women in uniform.

Please, Mr. President, do not lecture us about fiscal responsibility. And please, do not tell us that we cannot find funding to invest in our children, our infrastructure, and our future when you are proposing to spend another $190 billion on the war in Iraq.

Democrats believe the President's priorities are deeply misguided, and not supported by the American people. We believe, in this appropriations fight, the President is playing politics, pure and simple.

If you doubt that, just consider that funding for non-defense appropriations in 2008 (when adjusted for inflation and population growth) is actually below the funding levels passed by the Republican Congress and signed by the President for Fiscal 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005.

I know that Chairman David Obey remains hopeful that in the next few weeks the Congressional leadership and White House will sit down and negotiate a reasonable agreement on funding levels.

But as the rhetoric heats up, ask yourself: If the President is really fiscally conservative, why didn't he veto one appropriations

bill in six years? Why didn't he veto the corporate tax bill in 2004—a bloated bill that doled out $139 billion in corporate welfare when all that was needed was a $5 billion tax fix to put us in compliance with our trade agreements?

We Democrats are going to fight for the priorities of the American people. The President should not try to rehabilitate his fiscal record by vetoing responsible appropriations bills—or, for that matter, the bipartisan children's health insurance bill.

OUR LONG-TERM FISCAL CHALLENGES

Finally, let me say that as important as this disagreement over appropriations is, we must not be distracted from the long-term fiscal challenges that face our nation. Fiscal responsibility is not some virtue that exists in a vacuum. It's vital to our future.

As Bob Bixby of the Concord Coalition points out: ''The basic facts [of our fiscal challenges] are a matter of arithmetic, not ideology. Two factors stand out: demographics and health care costs.''

With the imminent retirement of 78 million Baby Boomers, and the attendant demands on Social Security and Medicare, we are on the cusp of a fiscal tsunami that threatens to drown our nation in a sea of red ink.

Over the next quarter century, the number of Americans 65 and older will nearly double—from 12 percent of the population today to 20 percent.

Medicare and Medicaid will grow by nearly five times as a share of the economy by 2050, if we assume the growth of health care costs does not slow. And these programs will absorb as much of our nation's economy by the late 2040s as the entire federal budget does today.

According to the 2006 Financial Report of the United States—signed by Treasury Secretary Paulson—our fiscal exposures (explicit liabilities and implicit obligations) had a present value of $44 trillion, or about as much as the net worth of all household assets.

We are not going to grow our way out of this problem, through some magic supply-side solution. The GAO estimates that it would require inflation-adjusted average annual economic growth in the double-digit range every year for the next 75 years to close the gap through growth alone.

It is imperative that we get serious about our long-term fiscal challenges. There is plenty of room for debate over the mix of options that should be considered. But we do not have time to waste.

Senators Conrad and Gregg and Congressmen Cooper and Wolf have put forward proposals for a bipartisan task force. While I would like to believe that Congress could address these issues through the regular legislative process, the experience of recent years suggests that this is extremely difficult in the current political environment.

Thus, I support the Conrad-Gregg and Cooper-Wolf proposals in concept, although I have concerns about several specific provisions.

My preference certainly would be to have Members of Congress and this Administration make recommendations that are considered in this Congress. But there are two problems with that: First, this is now an outgoing Administration, with little over a year left. And second, despite the good-faith efforts of Secretary Paulson, this Administration is loath to put all options on the table.

As a result, I believe that we must move forward with such a task force after our new President is inaugurated in January 2009, with a process allowing the President and Congress to consider alternatives.

Turning a blind eye to our long-term challenges would not only be irresponsible, it would be unforgivable. As Comptroller General Walker has warned: ''Continuing on the unsustainable fiscal path will gradually erode, if not suddenly damage, our economy, our standard of living, and ultimately our national security.''

Our fiscal future need not be filled with peril—if we have the courage and will to recognize and address these challenges.

HONORING STAFF SERGEANT ZACHARY TOMCZAK

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to honor the life of Staff Sgt. Zachary Tomczak, who died September 25, 2007, in Iraq from wounds suffered when his unit came under small arms fire.

Zachary, who served in the Army's 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division based in Fort Bragg, NC, graduated from Huron High School in 2002 and joined the Army soon after graduation. He was serving on his fourth tour of duty when he was wounded. He is described as a phenomenal person who stood as an example for all American citizens. His high school principal said, ''Zac was someone who demanded very little of us and gave an awful lot. He was a wonderful, wonderful young man.''

The lives of countless people were enormously enhanced by Zachary's compassion and service. He represented the best of the United States, South Dakota, and the Army. His life continues to inspire all those who knew him and many who did not. Our Nation and the State of South Dakota are far better places because of his service, and the best way to honor him is to emulate his devotion to our country.

Today, we remember and honor Zachary's noble service to the United States and the ultimate sacrifice he has paid with his life to defend our freedoms and foster liberty for others.

I join with all South Dakotans in expressing my sympathies to the family and friends of Staff Sgt. Tomczak. His commitment to and sacrifice for our Nation will never be forgotten.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN GIDEON PRATHER SR.

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I must inform the House of the passing of another member of that vanishing breed of ''the Greatest Generation'' of Americans who served our Nation during World War II and made our Nation and its communities strong when they came home.

John Gideon Prather Sr. was somebody all of us turned to for advice. Part of that was because he was a wise attorney, helping many clients who couldn't really afford one, but it was also because that's just the way he was, regardless of his chosen profession. The country lawyer in him gave advice to judges, other attorneys and clients across Kentucky. As a prosecuting attorney, he set the tone for how lawyers ought to interact with one another professionally, fight as they may in the courtroom. Our community and our criminal justice system are stronger because of him.

John left us September 21, 2007 at the age of 87. His law partners were his son John Jr. and Winter Huff. He began working in his father's insurance company in the 1940s. After Pearl Harbor was bombed, he joined the U.S. Navy, where he served in North Africa and Italy. After the war, he graduated from the University of Kentucky law school and began his legal career, spanning six decades and including terms as Somerset City and State prosecuting attorney.

As a civic leader, he was not just a member of our community organizations, including the Jaycees, Kiwanis Club, VFW and American Legion, he was a leader in them. He was also a profound Sunday school teacher. But John Prather's greatest civic effort was his near-lifelong commitment to Troop 79 of the Boy Scouts, headquartered at his church in Somerset. Generations of young boys became much better men through John's dedication to Boy Scouts. They were his greatest pride and maybe his greatest legacy.

He leaves behind his wife, Jean, a son, a daughter-in-law, and four grandchildren.

John was a father figure and friend to us lawyers, his church, civic colleagues, and, indeed, the whole community. A mighty oak has fallen and the void left on the mountain top is both painful and profound. We will miss the gentlemanly courtesies, wise counsel, and warm friendship he dispensed so liberally.

We will miss John G. Prather.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE REMARKABLE EFFORTS OF SEW MUCH COMFORT

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it is an honor for me to rise today to recognize the nonprofit organization, Sew Much Comfort, which coordinates the efforts of volunteer seamstresses to adapt clothing for wounded servicemembers.

This all-volunteer initiative formed in December 2004 as a 501(c)3 public charity and is the only organization that provides specially designed adaptive clothing to military hospitals. Ginger Dosedel founded the organization nearly 4 years ago when her husband was stationed at Eglin Air Force Base. Their son underwent treatment at Walter Reed Army Medical Center for muscular cancer and suggested to his mother that she may be able to help the many wounded soldiers they met while in Washington, DC.

Their mission ''to design, create, and deliver customized clothing for these brave troops'' not only provides our heroes with a tangible symbol of our immeasurable support for them, but also helps to facilitate the healing process upon their return from military service.

The Emerald Coast Chapter of the American Sewing Guild recently sponsored an event where numerous volunteers gathered in Baker, a city in my district of Northwest Florida, to sew for this wonderful cause.

Over the past four years, thousands of volunteers have worked diligently to alter shirts, shorts, boxer shorts, and pants. All of which are shipped to a central distribution center in Ohio and then allocated to military hospitals throughout the United States, as well as Germany, Iraq, and Afghanistan

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am proud to recognize the remarkable philanthropic efforts of Sew Much Comfort and their volunteers for their generosity and commitment to service which has helped to create a better life for our brave servicemembers.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KENNY C. HULSHOF

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. HULSHOF. Madam Speaker, unfortunately, I was unavoidably detained and missed September 7th's rollcall vote, number 869. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on H.R. 2669, the College Cost Reduction Act of 2007.

RECOGNITION OF RETIREMENT

HON. JACK KINGSTON

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. KINGSTON. Madam Speaker. I rise today in recognition of the retirement of Vernon Martin, the Executive Director of the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center. Vernon has been a valuable partner in my efforts to represent the First District of Georgia and a great friend.

Over the many years that we have known each other, he has been wonderful to work with and always kept the safety, security, and well-being of the community in the forefront of his thoughts. Vernon has dedicated 38 years of service to Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center, where he was instrumental in the economic development of the region. The service area for his office has undergone tremendous change in the past four decades. Coastal Georgia needed leadership and hard work to transition from the slow growth rates that characterized prior eras to the booming growth that the region is now experiencing. Vernon and his staff at the RDC have provided steady guidance and support to the communities they serve, helping them prepare for the future and adapt to change.

Vernon's list of accomplishments over the years is a long one. He was active in the creation of Coastal Emergency Management Plan to insure the safety of Georgia's costal communities during hurricanes, established the Nation's first and largest rural revolving loan fund, helped to create one of the Nation's first regional rural tourism program and was involved in coordinating off-base impact planning for two major military installation expansions. In 2004, Vernon was awarded the Walter Scheiber Leadership Award for his support to the Association and for his outstanding leadership and innovation as a regional council executive director.

Although he will be missed at the Regional Development Center, we are all glad to know that he will still serve in an advisory capacity and help transition to a new Executive Director. I'm sure Vernon is counting the days until he can fully enjoy the beautiful Georgia weather on his beloved motorcycle. I wish him the best of luck in his retirement.

CONGRATULATING ST. JOHN'S PREPARATORY SCHOOL IN DANVERS, MASSACHUSETTS

HON. JOHN F. TIERNEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. TIERNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor St. John's Preparatory School in Danvers, Massachusetts, on the occasion of its 100th Anniversary Celebration and extend the congratulations and best wishes from the United States House of Representatives for continued success in all of its future endeavors to the School's Board of Trustees, Administration, Faculty, Staff and Alumni.

St. John's Preparatory School held its first day of classes on September 10, 1907, and over the next century, it has graduated 12,000 alumni, who have gone on to make significant, lasting contributions in careers and communities throughout the region, across the country and around the world.

Today, St. John's Preparatory School continues to honor the legacy of its founders, the Congregation of the Brothers of St. Francis Xavier, and remains dedicated to the pursuit of humility, zeal, compassion, trust and simplicity in all endeavors.

Throughout its history, the School has nurtured a dynamic community of learners encouraging its students to develop their full spiritual, intellectual, moral, physical and creative potential, and it has inspired its student body to value and honor the diversity that enriches both the school community and the world beyond its campus.

St. John's Prep students continually strive for excellence and have earned distinction in scholarship, athletics, service and the arts. The Prep, as it is better known by many, is committed to the character, mission and values of a Catholic education and since its opening has celebrated its Catholic identity and formed partnerships with schools in the region to enhance educational opportunity and ensure access for students from all walks of life.

St. John's Preparatory School seeks to promote human dignity and the pursuit of peace and justice, and its alumni, students, faculty and staff have established various programs to respond to the needs of many working side by side with other volunteers and social service organizations locally, nationally and internationally.

Congratulations to St. John's Preparatory School for one hundred years of education, inspiration and enrichment bestowed upon so many who have passed through its halls and in recognition of the contributions and accomplishments of its alumni, administration, faculty, staff and students that have touched many throughout the world.

MS. FABIOLA SMALL

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, today I am proud to recognize a longtime community leader in southeast Texas. Ms. Fabiola Small has worn many distinguished hats throughout her lifetime, including co-chair of the Port Arthur Weed and Seed; founder of Love People, Inc.; founder of the Port Arthur, Texas Juneteenth Pageant; president of Woodmen of the World, Lodge 6192 and Youth Lodge 4640; president of Texas Senior Citizens Association; and board member of Tekoa Academy Charter School.

"Ms. Fab" selflessly volunteers her time at the Salvation Army Boys and Girls Sports Section, and delivers meals to the young and the elderly. She has received countless awards, including the 2006 Woodmen of the World Insurance Society; 2006 Fraternalist of the Year; MVP of the National Fraternal Congress of America; 2006 Women's History, Builders of Communities & Dreams; 2007 MVP of the U.S. Congress, and 2007 Juneteenth Trailblazer.

Ms. Small is the first African American to be recognized as the National and International Fraternalist of the Year. An award presented to fraternalists who provide outstanding volunteer service in his or her community, and excellent leadership in his or her local chapter throughout the past year. Ms. Small's volunteerism even caught the attention of Southern Living Magazine, who will feature her in an upcoming issue.

Ms. Small has dedicated her time and energy to the Golden Triangle for most of her life. Her selfless acts of kindness, devotion, and compassion for others are a true testament to her character. With 4 children, 18 children that she has taken under her wings, 22 grandchildren, and 9 great-grandchildren, "Ms. Fab" is an inspiration to others, setting a great example for all to follow.

On behalf of the Second Congressional District of Texas, I applaud Ms. Fabiola Small on her outstanding achievements. She has helped make our world a better place to live, and I applaud her unwavering service and dedication to the community.

And that's just the way it is.

TRIBUTE TO PAUL WICE OF WEST CENTRAL NEBRASKA

HON. ADRIAN SMITH

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay my respects to a broadcasting institution in West Central Nebraska, Paul Wice. This past Friday he turned on the microphone to host "Talk of the Town" one last time.

A 1962 graduate of Kearney High, and a 1966 graduate of Kearney State College, Paul has been a fixture on the airwaves for listeners in my district for nearly 40 years.

I have had the pleasure of being interviewed by him both as part of news stories, and as a guest on his show.

Never one to shy away from the tough questions, Paul earned his reputation as being a tough but fair interviewer, whose only motivation was to provide his listeners with the most up-to-date information available.

He has given back to the Kearney community in so many ways—as an instructor, a volunteer, and a member of many local community boards—yet I fully expect this service to continue.

I wish him well in his retirement and I hope he knows how much he will be missed.

SALUTE TO NOVATO HUMAN NEEDS CENTER

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask you to share with me in saluting the Novato Human Needs Center on its 35th anniversary of serving the low-income people of Novato and helping them move towards self-sufficiency.

The Novato Human Needs Center began in 1972 when three people—Gene Quinones, a Catholic priest, Bob Stockwell, a Protestant businessman, and Mary Banks, a black welfare mom—came together that Thanksgiving season with the desire to help those in need. With $50 and a heart full of good intentions, they gave birth to the Holiday Share program, allowing those who have to give what they can to those in need. Since then, the nonprofit has helped thousands of residents, has increased its services to provide year-round assistance, and has grown to operate on a budget of more than $1.4 million.

Such is the power of the organization's philosophy that those who come for help—seniors, immigrants, the disabled, those in unexpected crisis—are often those who years later become the helpers. One anonymous donor, once a poor immigrant and now a wealthy resident, subsidizes the center's rental assistance program which allows someone experiencing a temporary and unexpected crisis, such as a medical emergency or job loss, to get one-time help with rent or mortgage payments. Among those whom this program saved was an elderly woman left without an income when her husband died. Because of the donor's generosity, Novato Human Needs Center was able to cover the widow's rent until social security checks arrived in her name.

''It really is neighbor helping neighbor,'' notes Susan Markavage, a Novato resident who works at the center.

In addition to rental assistance, the center has instituted programs for such wide-ranging services as providing emergency food, job training and financial, as well as continuing the traditional Holiday Share.

In fact, the center—which operates out of facilities underwritten by the City of Novato—even provides showers for the homeless, many of whom work but simply can't afford housing in Marin County, one of the Nation's most expensive places to live.

''One of them,'' Markavage explains, ''cleans our parking lot thoroughly every morning before coming in.''

Although Novato Human Needs Center is unique in that it provides comprehensive services to those in need, it also is ''a wonderful place for the community to come together and connect,'' says executive director Deanna Euritt.

Novato has a very strong sense of community, she explains, and it is because of the community's support that the center exists and continues to operate. ''We're very grateful to the City of Novato and all the residents who live here who have been very generous not only with their financial contributions, but with their time.''

As one donor said, ''God's been really good to me and I feel this need to be good to someone else who might be in dire circumstances.''

And that, Madam Speaker, is what makes the center a valuable member of the Novato community—neighbors helping neighbors. Congratulations to the Novato Human Needs Center on its 35th anniversary, and to the people of Novato for supporting such a worthy organization.

FLOOD INSURANCE REFORM AND MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 27, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3121) to restore the financial solvency of the national flood insurance program and to provide for such program to make available multi-peril coverage for damage resulting from windstorms, and floods, and for other purposes:

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I am honored to be a co-sponsor of H.R. 3121, ''The Flood Insurance Reform and Modernization Act of 2007'' and I would like to thank Chairman FRANK. Subcommittee Chairwoman WATERS, Representative TAYLOR, and Representative JINDAL for their leadership in reforming a program that plays a vital role in protecting residents and communities in flood prone areas.

Flood protection is an important issue in my district and in Texas, a state which has experienced the greatest number of flood and flash flood deaths over the past 36 years. In 2006, Texas saw an increase of over 20 percent in new flood insurance policies under the National Flood Insurance Program.

I want to thank Chairman FRANK for working with Congressman HINOJOSA and I in committee to preserve subsidies for those properties that serve as affordable rental housing for many families. A measure was included in the bill to acknowledge that the loss of subsidies for properties that serve as primary homes for rental households could result in significantly higher premiums, to the detriment of these families. Higher premiums would increase the cost of property ownership, a cost that apartment owners would likely pass on to tenants in the form of higher rents. By protecting subsidies for these properties, this measure would ensure their continued affordability at a time when our nation is faced with a shortage of affordable housing.

I want to also express my strong support for a provision in the bill authored by my colleague Congressman TAYLOR to expand the National Flood Insurance Program to include coverage for wind damage.

Multi-peril coverage, or the coverage of both wind and flood risk in one policy, has proven especially important in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita as survivors continue to struggle to receive fair compensation for the damages they experienced. Private insurers have used anti-concurrent causation clauses to deny payment for damages on the grounds that the damages occurred as a result of flooding, which is covered by the Federal government. Multi-peril coverage would shield consumers from these arguably deceptive practices, protecting consumers in the absence of a solution to this controversy.

Again, I express my full support for this important piece of legislation.

TRIBUTE TO BISHOP GREGORY MANSOUR

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I rise to day to honor the Most Reverend Gregory John Mansour on the 25th anniversary of his ordination. Bishop Mansour will be honored at Divine Liturgy and festivities on Sunday, October 7th in my hometown of Flint, Michigan.

After graduating from Western Michigan University in 1977, Gregory Mansour entered Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary in Washington, D.C. and attended Catholic University of America. Graduating with a degree in Theological Studies in 1981, he was ordained a priest on September 18, 1982 by Bishop John Chedid at St. Michael Church in Flint. He celebrated his first Divine Liturgy at Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Church and then traveled to Rome to continue his studies earning his License in Spiritual Theology from the Gregorian Pontifical Institute.

Returning from a trip to Lebanon in 1983, Father Mansour began his work as a parish priest. He worked as an administrator at St. Maron Parish in Philadelphia and served 11 years as pastor to St. George Maronite Catholic Church in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. Bishop John Chedid tapped him to serve as the Eparchy's Protosyncellus, Vicar General, and Chancellor for the newly formed Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon in Los Angeles in 1994. He also served as Advocate/Procurator for the Eparchial Marriage Tribunal.

His Beatitude Patriarch Nasrallah Peter Cardinal Sfeir nominated him to Chorbishop and he was ordained on January 21, 1996. When Bishop Chedid retired his replacement, Bishop Robert J. Shaheen, with the concurrence of the Holy See, moved the See of the Diocese from Los Angeles to St. Louis, Missouri. Chorbishop Mansour relocated and assumed the additional duties as rector of St. Raymond Cathedral and began teaching Spiritual Theology at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary.

When Bishop Stephen Hector Douelhi retired, His Holiness Pope John Paul II named Bishop Mansour to succeed him as the head of the Eparchy of Saint Maron in Brooklyn. Ordained a bishop in Lebanon on March 2, 2004, he was enthroned in Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Cathedral in Brooklyn on April 27, 2004.

Madam Speaker, throughout his life Bishop Mansour has followed the words of St. Augustine, ''With you I am a Christian, for you I am (a priest, and now) a Bishop.'' Bishop Mansour has kept the promise he made 25 years ago to serve Our Lord Jesus Christ with humility, joy, and compassion. I ask the House of Representatives to join me in congratulating him as he celebrates this momentous occasion and wish him the best for the future.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL JAMES KASLER OF MOMENCE, ILLINOIS

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a true American war hero whom I had the pleasure to meet recently.

Retired Air Force COL James Kasler of Momence, Illinois, represents the uncommon courage that is found in our military men and women. His distinguished record of service includes 76 awards for valor and service, and Colonel Kasler has the distinction of being the only person in our country's history, dead or alive, to receive the Air Force Cross three times.

His career as a decorated combat pilot began as a B–29 tail gunner over Japan in World War II. He went on to become a jet ace in Korea, and showed remarkable bravery volunteering for bombing runs in Vietnam.

On his 91st mission, in Vietnam, Colonel Kasler was shot down while covering for his downed wingman. He would go on to endure 6½ years in a Vietnamese prison camp, and would become a role model for his fellow prisoners, including Senator JOHN MCCAIN of Arizona and a member of this House, Representative SAM JOHNSON of Texas.

James Kasler is the face of the valor that all our veterans demonstrated when they put on the uniform of our armed forces. Recently I had the honor of delivering the keynote address at the dedication of the Kasler-Momence Veterans Park in my district, where I met the colonel. This park will serve to honor all those veterans who served and those future veterans who are currently serving. Hundreds of thousands of military personnel go about their task every day without complaint, often far from their families and in hostile conditions—and too many don't make it home. Their service keeps us free.

I am proud to have COL James Kasler as a constituent, and proud to have been associated with the veterans' memorial that bears his name. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring him and all war heroes of the past, present, and future.

ESTABLISHING A MEMORIAL TO ALL VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker I rise to introduce a bill that would designate a permanent location in Washington, DC, for a memorial known as Dark Elegy, dedicated to all victims of terrorism. Pursuant to the Commemorative Works Act, my legislation authorizes Dark Elegy as a commemorative work, making it eligible to be located in the Washington, DC, area on land owned by the National Park Service or Government Services Agency.

Dark Elegy is currently located in Montauk, New York—in my home district of eastern Long Island—and has been exhibited around the Northeast for the past 16 years. The memorial was created by one of my constituents, the artist Suse Lowenstein, and consists of larger-than-life sculptures depicting the reaction of 76 mothers, sisters, daughters, wives, and relatives as they responded with shock and grief upon learning of the death of their loved ones after the 1988 terrorist bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. Mrs. Lowenstein's son, Alexander, was one of 35 Syracuse University students aboard that flight.

Sadly, the creation of Dark Elegy spanned a growing number of terrorist attacks around the world. It is a striking and solemn coincidence that this work of art was dedicated on September 11, 1991—exactly one decade before the terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001. If you are not familiar with Dark Elegy, I ask you to view ''Remembering the Moment,'' which will tell you more about the legacy of Dark Elegy than any written statement could ever convey and can be accessed at the following website: www.darkelegy103.com.

Dark Elegy was created to remind the world of the devastation that terrorism leaves in its wake. It will serve as a lasting testament to the victims of terrorism worldwide in the unending struggle to eradicate this menace from the globe. In addition, it is intended to stand as a beacon for all peace-loving people throughout the world to unite.

Madam Speaker, it is my goal to help find a permanent home for Dark Elegy that can be visited by as many people from as many nations as possible. From its current display in my district, this memorial has assumed a unique role in both healing and remembrance for many individuals and families. It has been visited by families affected by terrorism including families of the victims of the September 11th attacks and by families of murdered children whose loss, while not terrorism-related, was equally painful. It is through their voices that the Lowensteins repeatedly heard, and continue to hear, the expressed belief that Dark Elegy should be placed somewhere prominent where people from all over the world can visit and experience it themselves.

It is important to note that establishing this memorial would not cost taxpayers any additional public funds. Once a permanent location is found, the artist and her family will donate the memorial to the public. Also, the artist and her family will personally finance the casting of each figure in bronze assuring the longevity of the sculptures that make up the memorial. It is their strong belief that this is an appropriate use of the money paid to them from the Libyan Government following the Pan Am 103 tragedy in 1988.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to please join me in cosponsoring this legislation, and I call upon the committees of jurisdiction and our leadership to consider it pursuant to the Commemorative Works Act and related legislation in order to secure a permanent location for this worthy and poignant memorial to all victims of terrorism.

WELCOMING HONOR AIR

HON. HEATH SHULER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. SHULER. Madam Speaker, I rise to welcome World War II veterans from my home district to Washington, DC. I am honored to welcome these members of the Greatest Generation to Washington to visit the National World War II Memorial.

For the past year Honor Air of Henderson and Buncombe counties has provided trips free of charge for World War II Veterans to ensure that they would have an opportunity to see the memorial which honors their service to our nation, and remembers their comrades in arms who never made it home. I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to the dedicated volunteers of Honor Air for making these trips possible.

World War II was a defining moment for our country during the 20th Century. The men and women who served in uniform during that war dedicated their lives and spirit to guiding our Nation through some of its most trying hours. On behalf of all the residents of North Carolina's 11th District, I offer our deepest appreciation.

The National World War II Memorial was opened to the public in May of 2004, and has been visited by millions of visitors. Built to honor the 16 million Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, Coast Guardsmen, and Merchant Mariners who served our Nation during World War II, the National World War II Memorial serves as a reminder of their sacrifice and service to the American people. I am thankful that we have finally found a permanent memorial here in the Nation's capital to honor their service.

DR. THOMAS C. HO

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, the Texas State University System (TSUS) recently announced the establishment of the TSUS Regents' Professor Award to honor outstanding performance and contributions of its professors.

These ''stars of academia'' bring attention to their campuses through their distinguished teaching, accomplishments in research, scholarly activities, service at the local, state, and national levels, and commitment to their colleges and universities.

On August 16, 2007, Dr. Thomas C. Ho, a Lamar University Professor in the Chemical Engineering Department was one of six outstanding faculty members to be recognized as the first recipients of the Regents' Professor Award.

Dr. Ho has had a 25-year long teaching career at Lamar University. He, shapes his students through his unique and challenging

teaching methods and projects. His exceptional student evaluations attest to his commitment to their success, and their appreciation of his efforts.

As a member of the AIChE Fluidization Committee, and ASME Industrial Waste Committee, Dr. Ho has received numerous teaching awards, including the Amoco Teaching Excellence Award, the Lamar University Teaching Bonus Award, and the Certificate of Recognition awarded by the International Incineration Conference.

With expertise in thermal treatment of hazardous and industrial wastes, fluidization and fluidized bed combustion & incineration, metals and sulfur emission control, mercury sorption and desorption on sorbents, it is obvious why he received the International Incineration Conference's Outstanding Service Award four times.

Dr. Ho currently has active research projects in metal capture by sorbents during fluidized bed technology for metal emissions control; development of two-state fluidized bed technology for metal emissions control; sorbent technology for multipollutant air emissions control; and statistical study of PM–10, PM–2.5, and PM–1.0

Dr. Ho also has illustrative papers and presentations on metal capture during fluidized bed incineration wastes contaminated with lead chloride; metal behavior during fluidized bed thermal treatment of soil; and adsorption and desorption of mercury on sorbents at elevated temperatures.

Dr. Ho's passion for students, his research projects and publications, and contributions to professional societies earned him this top honor. I am proud to recognize his contributions in the Second Congressional District.

And that's just the way it is.

HONORING OFFICER CHRISTOPHER PFEIFER

HON. ADRIAN SMITH

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, today I rise to remember a brave young man from the Third District, Pfc. Christopher Pfeifer, who passed away last week from wounds suffered in Afghanistan on August 17 when his unit came under enemy fire. He was assigned to the 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team.

A talented young man, Chris has been described as the type of person who gave his very best at everything he did, and who loved the Army. Chris' death came just days before his wife, Karen, gave birth to their first child, a baby girl.

Words cannot express our gratitude for Chris' service to our country, or the loss of such a brave individual.

HONORING JOHN JOSEPH ''JACK'' HEALY

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor John Joseph ''Jack'' Healy, former Santa Rosa mayor and city councilmember, who died recently as a result of a traffic accident. Jack, who was 81, was known for helping others and promoting education.

Because of his delightful personality, Jack was a top vote-getter in elections. He served the city for a dozen years before retiring because of heart problems.

In civic affairs, Jack did his homework on the issues and was known for treating people—even those who disagreed with him—with respect. Friends say that because of this, he had no enemies.

''He was one of the kinder, more thoughtful City Council persons, who didn't just look at the technicality of the issue, but how it impacted people,'' longtime friend and former council colleague Schuyler Jeffries told reporters upon hearing the news of Jack's death.

Before becoming involved in politics, Jack joined the business faculty at Santa Rosa Junior College. Perhaps because of his own struggles to get a college education, Jack worked to help others achieve this accomplishment, and eventually he became dean of the campus evening program.

''I always was impressed by his desire to give people a hand up who needed it,'' his son, Mike Healy, says. ''He went out of his way to help people better themselves in life.''

The son of Irish immigrants—his father was a copper miner who died when Jack was young—Jack dreamed of going to college. Thanks to the GI Bill, that dream was realized after World War II, when he attended San Francisco State University. There, he met his wife, Sharon, to whom he was married for 54 years until her death in May. The couple had two sons, Mike and Matt, who survive them, along with two grandchildren, Megan and Tom.

Jack was a well-liked member of the ''old gray mayors,'' an informal group of former city leaders, and continued to remain active in local affairs even after his retirement, serving for eight years on the Sonoma County Library Commission.

Madam Speaker, I would like to honor a man who served his community not only wisely but also well. Jack will long be missed.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, today I was unavoidably delayed and missed the vote on final passage of H.R. 3121, The Flood Insurance Reform and Modernization Act of 2007 (Rollcall 921). Although H.R. 3121 passed by a vote of 263–146, I respectfully request the opportunity to record my position. Had I been present I would have voted ''yea'' on Rollcall 921.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES AND CONDEMNING RUSH LIMBAUGH'S ATTACK ON ''PHONY SOLDIERS''

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing a resolution to affirm that our soldiers have the freedom to speak about the war in Iraq. As a Member of the House Armed Services Committee, I believe it is important to express opposition to the view that American soldiers who do not embrace the policies of the Bush Administration lack the skills to do the job of protecting their country or lack the willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice in service of their country.

Madam Speaker, as a general principle it should not be the business of Congress to condemn or applaud the publicly expressed views of private citizens. If we took note of every stupid, ignorant or asinine utterance in the public square we would have little time to focus on the important issues facing this nation.

Moreover, I believe firmly in the right of every American to speak his or her mind freely. Even the most outrageous and offensive speech is, and should be, protected by the first amendment of our constitution. Our citizens should be free to express their political views without expecting Congress to act as a kind of imperious censor or arbiter of what is acceptable, intelligent or in good taste. Instead of passing resolutions condemning the political views of others, I think the preferred approach for Congress as an institution is to stay above the partisan fray and let individual Members express their personal, as opposed to institutional, views about the free speech of others.

There are times, however, when I believe this body should speak collectively—and that is in those rare circumstances when the speech of prominent Americans, media personalities or political organizations is so outrageous and divisive that it commands the attention of every Member. We can respect the first amendment rights of others without giving up our own right to speak out freely and collectively in this body.

In this regard, I believe remarks by a prominent conservative talk-show personality, Mr. Rush Limbaugh, deserve a rebuke from the Congress. Democrats and Republicans alike should find his attack on our men and women in uniform both offensive and deplorable.

Specifically, Mr. Limbaugh suggested that soldiers who oppose the Bush Administration's policy in Iraq are ''phony soldiers.'' The clear implication of his remarks leaves no doubt. Mr. Limbaugh used his syndicated radio program to impugn the character of those American servicemen and women who have spoken out against the policies of the Bush Administration.

I believe that Congress should make clear that our soldiers, whatever their rank and whatever their views, deserve to be honored for their service. I believe Congress should make clear that Mr. Limbaugh's use of the term ''phony soldiers'' is beneath contempt. I believe Congress should remind Mr. Limbaugh that the men and women who serve in our

military do so, not as Republicans, conservatives, Democrats or liberals, but as Americans.

Madam Speaker, it is not my intention to advance a partisan message with this resolution. Nor is it my intention that Congress waste time and effort in exposing partisan hypocrisy, however tempting that goal may be.

It is my intention, however, to make clear to the men and women serving in uniform, many of whom are risking their lives on foreign soil to defend our civil liberties, that it is not acceptable for anyone to accuse them of being "phony" or false patriots because their political views may differ from those of their commander-in-chief.

To suggest that a soldier's sacrifice is somehow made less worthy by expressing his or her opinion betrays a view of military service so cramped as to be unrecognizable to most Americans—Republicans or Democrats. I can say with full confidence that that is not the opinion held by those of us who serve on the Armed Services Committee. Congress should make clear that it rejects this narrow view as well.

That is the underlying purpose of this resolution, and I ask my colleagues to join me in embracing the underlying message.

TRIBUTE TO CARL A. LABARRE, LATE A FORMER SUPERINTENDENT OF DOCUMENTS, U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

HON. ROBERT A. BRADY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, as chairman of the Committee on House Administration and of the Joint Committee on Printing, I wish to pay tribute to Carl A. LaBarre, who served the U.S. Navy faithfully and well during his career, and who then brought a similar standard of service to the Government Printing Office, where he led his staff in improving public access to Government information.

On October 4,2007, Carl LaBarre will be laid to rest with full honors in Arlington National Cemetery. A Montana native who attended the University of Montana and later the Naval War College, the Naval Post Graduate School, and the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, LaBarre was a career U.S. Navy officer who retired as Inspector General of the Naval Supply Systems Command in Washington, D.C., with the rank of Captain. During his service he earned the Legion of Merit, the Navy Commendation Medal, and the Department of Defense Joint Service Commendation Award. Perhaps most significantly, especially to those of us who have been watching Ken Burns' latest documentary The War, then-Ensign LaBarre earned recognition for service in the best tradition of the Navy on December 7, 1941, while "effecting the rescue of personnel trapped below decks" on the battleship USS *California*, which was badly damaged in the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

As noteworthy as it was, Carl LaBarre's career did not end with his service in the Navy. In 1971, he joined the GPO as Deputy Director and then Director of its Materials Management Service, which was responsible for keeping the GPO supplied with paper, ink, equipment, and all the other materials required to accomplish its work. In 1975, then-Public Printer Thomas McCormick appointed him Superintendent of Documents, a statutory position which is responsible for the public distribution of all Government documents via sales, distribution to Federal depository libraries, and the international exchange program. From that post LaBarre directed a nationwide network involving warehouse-based mail order operations, 25 bookstores in major metropolitan areas, and depository libraries in virtually every State and congressional district; during his tenure, the numbers of depository libraries increased from 1,170 to 1,367, broadening the reach of the program across America. Sales also increased, from $34.5 million annually when he took office to $55 million by the time LaBarre retired in 1982.

The hallmark of Carl LaBarre's service as Superintendent of Documents was his effort to improve the management of GPO's documents distribution operations and increase customer satisfaction. He adopted modern information technology and worked to make GPO's customer services comparable with those of private-sector firms. In the Federal Depository Library Program, LaBarre supported the automation of the Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Publications, which transformed the world of bibliographic control for Government documents. He supported microfiche conversion of Government documents, at that time seen as a primary means for providing depository libraries with scientific and technical documents printed in small numbers outside of GPO. He made the Depository Library Council an effective advisory body for the Public Printer and it remains so to this day. For his efforts he was commended by the American Library Association. LaBarre also received GPO's Distinguished Service Medal, the highest award the Public Printer can bestow, not once but twice for "his outstanding success in improving the management of the Documents operations and for creating an unprecedented era of customer satisfaction," and for "his exceptional leadership and his unparalleled achievements while serving as Superintendent of Documents."

Madam Speaker, I have not had the privilege of working with Carl A. LaBarre during my tenure on the Joint Committee on Printing. Those who did have the privilege attest that he was a remarkable man and a faithful, dedicated public servant. On behalf of the Joint Committee and indeed the entire Congress, I extend condolences to Carl LaBarre's family, friends, and former colleagues.

RECOGNIZING LES C. VINNEY

HON. STEVEN C. LaTOURETTE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. LaTOURETTE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Les C. Vinney, a resident of the 14th Congressional District of Ohio, who retired at the end of September from his position as President and Chief Executive Officer of STERIS Corporation in Mentor, Ohio.

Mr. Vinney joined STERIS as Chief Financial Officer in 1999, and from July 2000 through September 2007 he served as President and CEO. Mr. Vinney presided over a period of unprecedented growth at STERIS, including a growth in revenue of more than 50 percent, a near quadrupling of stock values, and a rise in employment in Mentor from fewer than 400 employees to almost 1,000.

Mr. Vinney has innovatively led the way at STERIS, transforming it from primarily a healthcare company to one that has adapted its proven technologies for new markets. Most significantly, he established STERIS's Defense & Industrial Group to adapt and market STERIS's technologies to help businesses and government address the risks of biochemical contamination.

Following the anthrax attacks in 2001 that closed down much of Washington—including my congressional office—STERIS successfully completed the cleanup of State Department and the General Services Administration's mail processing facilities. Since then, he has briefed me regularly as STERIS has successfully conducted collaborative research and development work with the U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical Biological Center to adapt and modify STERIS's Vaporized Hydrogen Peroxide (VHP) technology for use against biological and chemical warfare agents.

Mr. Vinney is keenly aware that military applications can be applied to other settings, and has helped grow STERIS into a model for military, public and commercial applications of its technologies. The cutting-edge VHP decontamination system can be used to kill bacteria, viruses and spores in settings from operating rooms to jets, and was even used after Hurricane Katrina.

Beyond his work with STERIS, Les is a civic leader as well, and has served as Chairman of the Northeast Ohio Technology Coalition, an organization promoting economic and technology development in Northeast Ohio. He's also served on the boards of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, University Hospitals, the Greater Cleveland Partnership, and as a past chairman of the Lake County United Way Campaign. Outside Ohio, he also serves on the boards of Campbell Soup Company and the Advanced Medical Technology Association (AdvaMed).

I wish Les the best in his retirement, and know how much he is looking forward to spending more time with his wife, Linda, and their family. On behalf of the 14th Congressional District of Ohio, I congratulate Les on all of his fine work, and thank him for his leadership for Northeast Ohio and the nation.

HONORING LCDR TRACY G. DEWITT

HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, it is my honor and privilege to rise today on behalf of an Arlington, Tennessee resident, Lieutenant Commander Tracy G. DeWitt, who has devoted his life to defending the United States of America. Please join me in commending Commander DeWitt on a career spent serving our Navy and our Country. On October 1, 2007 he will retire after 24 years of service to a grateful Nation.

Born and raised in Gravette, Arkansas, Commander DeWitt began his service in the

Navy by enlisting when he finished high school. After basic training in Orlando, Florida, Commander DeWitt completed tours in Diego Garcia and Pensacola, Florida before being accepted at Auburn University as part of the Navy's Enlisted Commissioning Program.

Commander DeWitt received a Bachelor of Science degree in Management and was commissioned as an Ensign in August of 1994. He has served aboard many of the Navy's finest ships, including the aircraft carrier USS *John C. Stennis*, the USS *Stout*, and the USS *Thomas Gates*. In August of 2004, Commander DeWitt was ordered to U.S. Naval Personnel Command in Millington, Tennessee, where he served as the Head of Sea Special Assignments and the Head of Enlisted Separations.

Along with completing both his Master's degree in Management from Troy State University and his doctoral work in Management from Northcentral University, Commander DeWitt has received numerous citations to include the Meritorious Service Medal, the Navy Commendation Medal, the Navy Achievement Medal and the Navy Good Conduct Medal.

Madam Speaker, please join me in again congratulating Lieutenant Commander DeWitt on his record of service and wishing him, his wife Gillis, and their three sons Tyler, Justin and Andrew a fulfilling and enjoyable retirement. May God bless him and his family.

NEW MISSION AT CANNON AIR FORCE BASE

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. UDALL of Mew Mexico. Madam Speaker, earlier today, the 27th Special Operations Wing (SOW) assumed control of Cannon Air Force Base, becoming the Western base for the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC). This is a great day in the history of the Air Force, and I am proud to represent the brave men and women in uniform who will be serving as the "tip of the spear" at Cannon in defense of our nation.

First, I must note the closing of an honorable chapter in the history of Cannon, the departure of the 27th Fighter Wing. In October 1951, the 140th Fighter-Bomber Wing was established as the first Air Force mission at Cannon. Over the next eight years, various missions and units were housed at the Eastern New Mexico base until 1959 when the 27th Tactical Fighter Wing was activated. Since that time we have seen thousands of soldiers serve at Cannon, providing the air support and fighter capability with great distinction. I would like to personally acknowledge Colonel Scott West for his steadfast command of the 27th over the past year and a half.

The changing of command that occurred this morning swept in a new era for the base. Colonel Timothy Leahy, who is not new to New Mexico having served three separate missions at Kirtland Air Force base, has assumed command of the 27th SOW. There is no doubt that this elite group of soldiers will bring substantial pride to our state and I hope that in the coming months they feel as comfortable calling New Mexico home as the previous occupants at Cannon.

Finally, for two long years the communities of Clovis and Portales worked strenuously with unwavering determination to ensure that its Air Force base would not be closed. I want to recognize the tireless, selfless leadership of General Hanson Scott, Randy Harris, Mayors David Lansford and Orlando Ortega, and the entire Committee of 50 in working to bring AFSOC to Cannon. I am certain that the men and women of the 27th SOW will find assistance, comfort and camaraderie in the neighbors of Clovis and Portales.

I look forward to seeing the years ahead as the 27th SOW grows and matures. In times of war and in times of peace, these dedicated soldiers will serve with staunch perseverance and patriotism. I am honored to represent them and I pledge to work with them as they continue the rich, storied history of Cannon Air Force Base.

IN HONOR OF CORPORAL JASON L. DUNHAM

HON. JOHN R. "RANDY" KUHL, JR.

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. KUHL. Madam Speaker, the poem below was written by Albert Carey Caswell in honor of Corporal Jason L. Dunham of the United States Marine Corps. Corporal Dunham gave his life for his country while serving in Iraq, absorbing the brunt of a grenade explosion in a selfless act of bravery on April 14, 2004, thereby saving the lives of two of his fellow Marines. Corporal Dunham's undaunted courage, intrepid fighting spirit, and unwavering devotion to duty in the face of certain death earned him the Medal of Honor, our Nation's highest award for valor, on January 11, 2007. Corporal Dunham is survived by his family in Scio, New York.

One,
One Fine Thing . . .
As to this our world, your heart so surely brings!
All in your choices,
All through your most sacred inner voices . . .
As to our Nation, the blessings you've bestowed upon her . . . which so ring!
All in The Face of Death,
When, your oh so magnificent courage so seems to crest!
For in these, are the things which so makes an angel's heart sing . . . no less!
All in that moment!
There between life and death, A Freedom Fighter . . . at his best!
All in these moments, of which we are now so left . . . to carry with us, until our deaths!
Children of God!
Who cry, when their brothers and sisters in arms . . . so fall and die!
Yet, marching on . . . ever onward until the evil is gone, as where courage is born!
To Give All!
To Hear That Most Noble Of All Calls!
To go forth, in that of death's course . . . for One Fine Thing, While Standing Tall!
To give up your young promising life!
To go so boldly forth, all in your course . . . and so gallantly to sacrifice!
But All, to stand In The Shadow of Death . . . and not look away, nor think twice!
Rise . . . to Heaven, my Fine Son!
Jason, for you in your angelic glow . . . have Heaven so won!
As you died, so others may live . . . your life, the most precious of all gifts one could give!
While, in That Moment,
When, who lives and who dies . . . where the most splendid of all courage so lies!
As it was you, Jason the one so who my fine son . . . The Congressional One, who so gave his life!
As now I cry!
Knowing full well, how so beautifully you died . . .
Maybe a child, who'll save the world . . . a boy or girl, from that One Fine Thing unfurled which lies!
To bring, in your being . . . and in your life . . .
Could you, would we, would you . . . the courage find, in this your life's meaning so divine!
To somehow find, to give to this our world all in our time . . . but, One Fine Thing!

PSORIASIS AND PSORIATIC ARTHRITIS RESEARCH, CURE, AND CARE ACT

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis Research, Cure, and Care Act, H.R. 1188 and to encourage my colleagues to lend their support.

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as many as 7.5 million Americans are affected by psoriasis—a chronic, inflammatory, painful, disfiguring and disabling disease for which there is limited treatment and no cure. Ten to thirty percent of people with psoriasis also develop psoriatic arthritis, which causes pain, stiffness and swelling in and around the joints. On average, there are 17,000 people living with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis in each congressional district.

Cristy Boisvert is one constituent in my district living with psoriasis. Cristy was diagnosed with psoriasis when she was six months old. Growing up with psoriasis was difficult. Her mother spent countless nights applying medication to her scalp, followed by countless mornings washing the greasy mess out of her hair before school.

In junior high, Cristy played on the basketball team. One day she wore shorts to practice, which revealed the flaky psoriasis plaques on her legs. Her friends stood around making fun of her. They called her "Fungi" because they said it looked like mushrooms were growing on her legs. You can only imagine how much those words hurt her.

When Cristy was 20, she began to think about whether she wanted to have children. She reflected back on all of the grief that living with psoriasis caused her and questioned whether she wanted to take the risk of passing that down to another human being.

Cristy is now in her 30s, and she is ecstatic about the fact that she can do something positive about psoriasis. As an active member of the National Psoriasis Foundation, she is working to ensure that young people in the future will not have to endure the same ridicule that she did.

The Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis Research, Cure, and Care Act will expand psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis research and ensure access to care and treatment for these diseases. Despite the serious adverse effects that psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis have on individuals and families, psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis are under-recognized and under-funded by our nation's research institutions and public health agencies. On average, the NIH has spent less than one dollar for each person with psoriasis in the last ten years. H.R. 1188 calls on the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases to expand and intensify research on psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis and to coordinate those efforts with the NIH. The bill directs the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to develop a patient registry to collect much-needed longitudinal data on psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis so we can begin to understand the long-term impact of these conditions and evaluate the effects of various therapies.

Of serious concern is that people with psoriasis are at elevated risk for a myriad of comorbidities, including, but not limited to, heart disease, diabetes, obesity and mental health conditions. To help address this, H.R. 1188 authorizes the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to convene a summit of researchers, public health professionals, representatives of patient advocacy organizations and policymakers to review current efforts in research, treatment, and quality-of-life maintenance being conducted by federal agencies whose work involves psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis and their related comorbidities. Lastly, the legislation also directs the Secretary of HHS to commission a study from the Institutes of Medicine to evaluate and make recommendations to address health insurance and prescription drug coverage as they relate to medications and treatments for psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis.

I thank the National Psoriasis Foundation for all of its efforts and leadership over the last four decades, and am grateful to the Foundation and its members and staff for their ongoing commitment to improving the quality of life for those with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis in my district. I also would like to personally thank my constituent, Cristy Boisvert, for all her work.

I urge my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring the Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis Research, Cure, and Care Act.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE NAVAL AVIATION TORPEDO SQUADRON THREE

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, the men and women who served their country during World War II deserve our deep respect and reverence. The Naval Aviation Torpedo Squadron Three (VT–3) embodies the spirit and achievement of this era, through their bravery and sacrifice. Today we honor their sacrifice.

VT–3 served valiantly in the Pacific while assigned to both the carriers *Yorktown* and *Saratoga*. While on the *Yorktown*, the squadron was pivotal in the victory at the battle of Midway. The squadron lost many pilots and planes, but the VT–3 squad regrouped and still participated in the Pacific theatre.

In the Philippines, South China Sea, and Japan, the VT–3 squad flew with valor. They provided air support in the invasions of Leyte, Luzon, and Iwo Jima. They flew missions over Hong Kong and Okinawa, as well as taking part in the first strikes on Tokyo.

They are an example of exemplary service and heroism. The squadron earned four Presidential Unit Citations, six Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medals and the prestigious silver star was awarded to Lt. Frank F. Frazier for his actions in the battle of Formosa.

The Naval Aviation Torpedo Squadron Three fought valiantly to defend our Nation, flying some of the most difficult and dangerous missions in the Pacific Theater. Through their sacrifice, our Nation endured, earning our lasting honor and respect.

As a Member of the 110th House of Representatives, I hereby commend the members of the Naval Aviation Torpedo Squadron Three for their gallantry and service during World War II and we extend to them our sincere best wishes in the future.

AMERICAN FAMILY FARM AND RANCH PROTECTION

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I am proud to join with my colleague, Representative PHIL ENGLISH, to introduce the American Family Farm and Ranch Protection Act,'' which will help conserve and protect our nation's vital lands, farms, and ranches.

The voluntary placement of a conservation easement on private land is a very effective and successful tool for protecting and conserving our Nation's open spaces and sensitive lands.

In 1997, in order to encourage the conservation of sensitive lands and farms, Congress enacted an estate tax exclusion for land placed under a conservation easement. Unfortunately, the original bill capped the exclusion at $500,000. Our bill would update and increase this estate tax exclusion to $5 million.

Given the significant rise in land values over the past decade, the increased exclusion provides a meaningful and in many cases necessary increase in the estate tax incentive as a way to encourage and allow individuals to place conservation easements on their land.

Our Nation's family farmers, whose most significant asset is often their land, provide a glaring example of why this legislation is needed. When the owner of the farm dies, surviving family members are often forced to sell all or a significant portion of the farm just to pay the estate tax bill. This legislation would help ensure that families are not forced to sell the farm and that their land resources are available for agricultural use by future generations.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I regret that I was unavoidably absent Thursday afternoon, September 29 on very urgent business.

Had I been present for the two votes which occurred I would have voted ''no'' on H.R. 3567, rollcall vote No. 922; I would have voted ''aye'' on H.R. 3567, rollcall vote No. 923.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE ORANGE COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HON. MAURICE D. HINCHEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. HINCHEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Orange County Chamber of Commerce in Montgomery, New York as it celebrates two significant events in the history of its organization. The Chamber is marking the 10th Anniversary of the merger of Orange County's two major chamber organizations, which united to form the current Chamber of Commerce on this day in 1997. Additionally, the Chamber is commemorating the 125th anniversary of the formation of one of the predecessor chambers in 1882.

In recent years, Orange County has consistently ranked as one of the fastest growing counties in New York State. As this growth has occurred, the Orange County Chamber of Commerce has provided critical leadership in creating and supporting an environment in which business will succeed while also working to enhance the quality of life throughout Orange County's communities. The Chamber continues to serve as a consistent and effective advocate for businesses throughout Orange County and the Hudson Valley region.

Through their committed efforts and diligence, the Board of Directors and staff at the Chamber have expanded its membership to nearly 2,400 businesses and individuals, making it one of the ten largest in the State of New York and the largest between Long Island and Albany. This strong network of community and business leaders coupled with the technical support, expertise and promotional services provided by the Chamber has contributed to the ongoing expansion of business opportunities in Orange County.

Madam Speaker, I am delighted to salute the Orange County Chamber of Commerce on the anniversary of these important milestones. I'd like to congratulate Chamber President John A. D'Ambrosio, outgoing Board President Kunwar Nagpal, and incoming Board President Jim Smith for their leadership and hard work. I'd also like to recognize the Board of Directors, staff, and members of the Chamber for their dedicated efforts to make Orange County, New York a better place to live, work and visit.

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 Tuesday, October 2, 2007 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

OCTOBER 3

9:30 a.m.
Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
To hold hearings to examine combating genocide in Darfur, focusing on the role of divestment and other policy tools.
SD–538

Foreign Relations
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Gail Dennise Mathieu, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Namibia, William Raymond Steiger, of Wisconsin, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Mozambique, Dan Mozena, of Iowa, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Angola, and Eunice S. Reddick, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Gabonese Republic, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.
SD–419

10 a.m.
Environment and Public Works
Clean Air and Nuclear Safety Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's reactor oversight process.
SD–406

Aging
To hold hearings to examine veterans health, focusing on ensuring the care of aging heroes.
SR–325

10:30 a.m.
Judiciary
Antitrust, Competition Policy and Consumer Rights Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine S. 772, 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.
SD–226

2:30 p.m.
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
State, Local, and Private Sector Preparedness and Integration Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine pandemic influenza, focusing on state and local government efforts to prepare.
SD–342

Foreign Relations
East Asian and Pacific Affairs Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine Burma's saffron revolution.
SD–419

OCTOBER 4

9:30 a.m.
Armed Services
Business meeting to consider the nominations of John J. Young, Jr., of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, Douglas A. Brook, of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and Robert L. Smolen, of Pennsylvania, to be Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs, National Nuclear Security Administration.
SD–106

Foreign Relations
To hold hearings to examine united Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, with Annexes, done at Montego Bay, December 10, 1982 (the ''Convention''), and the Agreement Relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982, with Annex, adopted at New York, July 28, 1994 (the ''Agreement''), and signed by the United States, subject to ratification, on July 29, 1994 (Treaty Doc. 103–39).
SD–419

Indian Affairs
To hold an oversight hearing to examine the backlogs at the Department of the Interior, focusing on land in to trust application, environmental impact statements, probate, and appraisals and lease approvals.
SD–628

10 a.m.
Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
To hold hearings to examine the regulation and supervision of industrial loan companies.
SD–538

Commerce, Science, and Transportation
To hold hearings to examine the security of our nation's seaports.
SR–253

Judiciary
Business meeting to consider S. 1640, to amend chapter 13 of title 17, United States Code (relating to the vessel hull design protection), to clarify the definitions of a hull and a deck, S. 2035, to maintain the free flow of information to the public by providing conditions for the federally compelled disclosure of information by certain persons connected with the news media, S. Res. 326, supporting the goals and ideals of a National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims, H. Con. Res. 193, recognizing all hunters across the United States for their continued commitment to safety, and the nomination of Thomas P. O'Brien, to be United States Attorney for the Central District of California.
SD–226

Joint Economic Committee
To hold hearings to examine the cost of mass incarceration in the United States.
SH–216

2:30 p.m.
Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Consumer Affairs, Insurance, and Automotive Safety Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine S. 2045, to reform the Consumer Product Safety Commission to provide greater protection for children's products, to improve the screening of noncompliant consumer products, to improve the effectiveness of consumer product recall programs.
SR–253

Judiciary
To hold hearings to examine the implementation of the Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefits Act.
SD–226

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine forestalling the coming pandemic, focusing on infectious disease surveillance overseas.
SD–342

OCTOBER 17

9:30 a.m.
Veterans' Affairs
To hold an oversight hearing to examine the Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense collaboration, focusing on the report of the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors, the report of the Veterans Disability Benefit Commission, and other related reports.
SD–562

10 a.m.
Commerce, Science, and Transportation
To hold hearings to examine the digital television transition, focusing on government and industry perspectives.
SR–253

OCTOBER 18

2:30 p.m.
Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Science, Technology, and Innovation Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine science parks, focusing on bolstering United States competitiveness.
SR–253

OCTOBER 24

9:30 a.m.
Veterans' Affairs
To hold hearings to examine to consider pending legislation.
SD–562

OCTOBER 31

9:30 a.m.
Veterans' Affairs
To hold an oversight hearing to examine vocational rehabilitation.
SD–562

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

See Résumé of Congressional Activity.

Senate passed H.R. 1585, National Defense Authorization Act.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S12343–S12388

Measures Introduced: Six bills and four resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2119–2124, S.J. Res. 19, and S. Res. 338–340. **Page S12379**

Measures Reported:

Special Report entitled "Further Revised Allocation to Subcommittees of Budget Totals from the Concurrent Resolution for Fiscal Year 2008". (S. Rept. No. 110–186)

Report to accompany S. 1693, to enhance the adoption of a nationwide interoperable health information technology system and to improve the quality and reduce the costs of health care in the United States. (S. Rept. No. 110–187) **Page S12379**

Measures Passed:

National Defense Authorization Act: By 92 yeas to 3 nays (Vote No. 359), Senate passed consideration of 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, after taking action on the following amendments proposed thereto: **Pages S12350–72**

Adopted:

Levin (for Domenici/Bingaman) Modified Amendment No. 2937 (to Amendment No. 2011), to require a cost-benefit analysis of the proposed funding reduction for the High Energy Laser Systems Test Facility. **Page S12355**

Levin (for Carper) Amendment No. 3028 (to Amendment No. 2011), to allow additional types of vehicles to be used to meet minimum Federal fleet requirements. **Pages S12355–56**

Levin (for Reed) Modified Amendment No. 3099 (to Amendment No. 2011), to make available from Shipbuilding and Conversion for the Navy, $1,172,710,000 for advanced procurement relating to the Virginia class submarine program. **Page S12356**

Levin (for Bennett) Amendment No. 3102 (to Amendment No. 2011), to require the Secretary of Energy to develop and implement a strategy to complete the remediation at the Moab site, and the removal of the tailings to the Crescent Junction site, in the State of Utah by not later than January 1, 2019. **Page S12356**

Levin (for Lott) Modified Amendment No. 2264 (to Amendment No. 2011), to improve the administration and oversight of the Armed Forces Retirement Home. **Pages S12356–57**

Levin (for Murray) Modified Amendment No. 2953 (to Amendment No. 2011), to assist school districts serving large numbers or percentages of military dependent children affected by the war in Iraq or Afghanistan, or by other Department of Defense personnel decisions. **Page S12357**

Levin (for Feingold) Modified Amendment No. 3005 (to Amendment No. 2011), to provide for 2 programs to authorize the use of leave by caregivers for family members of certain individuals performing military service. **Pages S12357–61**

Levin (for Lautenberg) Modified Amendment No. 2957 (to Amendment No. 2011), to authorize certain activities of the Maritime Administration. **Pages S12358–61**

Levin (for McCain) Modified Amendment No. 3103 (to Amendment No. 2011), to require a pilot program on commercial fee-for-service air refueling support for the Air Force. **Page S12361**

Levin (for Nelson (FL)/Martinez) Amendment No. 3107 (to Amendment No. 2011), to modify the purposes for which the Naval Aviation Museum Foundation at the National Museum of Naval Aviation at Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, may operate the National Flight Academy. **Page S12361**

Levin (for Sanders) Modified Amendment No. 3082 (to Amendment No. 2011), to provide, with an offset, an additional $15,000,000 Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation, Army, for a program of research on Gulf War illnesses. **Page S12361**

Levin (for Baucus/Tester) Modified Amendment No. 2325 (to Amendment No. 2011), relative to the removal of missiles from the 564th Missile Squadron. **Page S12361**

Levin (for Kennedy) Modified Amendment No. 2897 (to Amendment No. 2011), to establish a Joint Pathology Center located at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. **Pages S12361–62**

Levin (for Kennedy/Biden) Modified Amendment No. 2068 (to Amendment No. 2011), to require reports on the mitigation of effects of explosively formed projectiles and mines. **Page S12362**

Levin (for Chambliss) Amendment No. 3112 (to Amendment No. 2011), to express the sense of the Senate on the Air Force Logistics Center. **Page S12362**

Levin (for Sessions) Modified Amendment No. 3032 (to Amendment No. 2011), to provide an effective date for section 531. **Pages S12362–63**

Levin (for Sanders) Modified Amendment No. 2905 (to Amendment No. 2011), to require a pilot program on military family readiness and servicemember reintegration. **Pages S12354, S12363–64**

Levin (for Hutchison) Modified Amendment No. 3027 (to Amendment No. 2011), to require a report on the feasibility of establishing a Border State Aviation Training Center. **Page S12363**

By 51 yeas and 44 nays (Vote No. 358), Reid (for Kennedy) Amendment No. 3058 (to Amendment No. 2011), to provide for certain public-private competition requirements. **Pages S12350, S12364–69**

Nelson (NE) (for Levin) Amendment No. 2011, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S12350**

Withdrawn:

Reid (for Kennedy) Amendment No. 3109 (to Amendment No. 3958), to provide for certain public-private competition requirements. **Pages S12350, S12368**

Pursuant to the order of the Senate of Friday, September 28, 2007, the motion to invoke cloture on the bill was withdrawn.

Senate insisted on its amendment, requested a conference with the House thereon, and the Chair was authorized to appoint the following conferees on the part of the Senate: Senators Levin, Kennedy, Byrd, Lieberman, Reed, Akaka, Nelson (FL), Nelson (NE), Bayh, Clinton, Pryor, Webb, McCaskill, McCain, Warner, Inhofe, Sessions, Collins, Chambliss, Graham, Dole, Cornyn, Thune, Martinez, and Corker. **Page S12385**

National Passport Month: Senate agreed to S. Res. 338, supporting the goals and ideals of National Passport Month. **Pages S12385–86**

Burma Sense of the Senate: Senate agreed to S. Res. 339, expressing the sense of the Senate on the situation in Burma. **Pages S12386–88**

Recognizing Outstanding Hispanic Scientists: Senate agreed to S. Res. 340, recognizing the efforts and contributions of outstanding Hispanic scientists in the United States. **Page S12388**

Department of Defense Appropriations Act: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at approximately 10 a.m., on Tuesday, October 2, 2007, the Senate begin consideration of H.R. 3222, making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008. **Page S12388**

Removal of Injunction of Secrecy: The injunction of secrecy was removed from the following treaty:

Protocols of 2005 to the Convention concerning Safety of Maritime Navigation and to the Protocol concerning Safety of Fixed Platforms on the Continental Shelf (Treaty Doc. No. 110–8).

The treaty was transmitted to the Senate today, considered as having been read for the first time, and referred, with accompanying papers, to the Committee on Foreign Relations and ordered to be printed. **Page S12385**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

1 Army nomination in the rank of general.

1 Navy nomination in the rank of admiral.

A routine list in the Navy. **Page S12388**

Messages from the House: **Page S12379**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S12379–81**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S12381–83**

Additional Statements: **Pages S12378–79**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S12383–84**

Notices of Hearings/Meetings: **Page S12384**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S12384**

Text of H.R. 1124 as Previously Passed: **Pages S12384–85**

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—359) **Pages S12368–69, S12370**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 2 p.m. and adjourned at 6:50 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, October 2, 2007. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on page S12388.)

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 10 public bills, H.R. 3707–3716; and 6 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 221; and H. Res. 694–698 were introduced. **Pages H11069–70**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H11070–71**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 3648, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude discharges of indebtedness on principal residences from gross income, with an amendment (H. Rept. 110–356) and

H.R. 2830, to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal year 2008, with an amendment (H. Rept. 110–338, Pt. 2). **Page H11069**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein she appointed Representative Hirono to act as Speaker Pro Tempore for today. **Page H11032**

Recess: The House recessed at 12:35 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m. **Page H11032**

Recess: The House recessed at 2:04 p.m. and reconvened at 2:31 p.m. **Page H11032**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Commending the Wings Over Houston Airshow for its great contribution to the appreciation, understanding, and future of the United States Armed Forces, the City of Houston, Texas, and Ellington Field: H. Res. 691, to commend the Wings Over Houston Airshow for its great contribution to the appreciation, understanding, and future of the United States Armed Forces, the City of Houston, Texas, and Ellington Field; **Pages H11032–34**

Honoring the sacrifices and commitments of the men, women, and families of the United States Transportation Command: H. Res. 640, amended, to honor the sacrifices and commitments of the men, women, and families of the United States Transportation Command; **Pages H11034–36**

Recognizing the Navy UDT-SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce, Florida, as the official national museum of Navy SEALS and their predecessors: H.R. 2779, to recognize the Navy UDT-SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce, Florida, as the official national museum of Navy SEALS and their predecessors; **Pages H11036–37**

Commending the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard upon its completion of the longest continuous deployment of any United States military unit during Operation Iraqi Freedom: H. Con. Res. 185, amended, to commend the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard upon its completion of the longest continuous deployment of any United States military unit during Operation Iraqi Freedom, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 378 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 924; **Pages H11037–40, S11044–45**

Agreed to amend the title to read as follows: "Commending the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard upon its completion of the longest continuous deployment of any United States ground combat military unit in Operation Iraqi Freedom.". **Page H11045**

Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson Post Office Building Designation Act: H.R. 2276, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 203 North Main Street in Vassar, Michigan, as the "Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson Post Office Building", by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 379 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 925; **Pages H11040–41, S11045–46**

Corporal Stephen R. Bixler Post Office Designation Act: H.R. 3325, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 235 Mountain Road in Suffield, Connecticut, as the "Corporal Stephen R. Bixler Post Office", by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 379 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 926; **Pages H11041–42, S11046**

Philip A. Baddour, Sr. Post Office Designation Act: H.R. 3382, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 200 North William Street in Goldsboro, North Carolina, as the "Philip A. Baddour, Sr. Post Office"; and **Pages H11042–43**

Laurence C. and Grace M. Jones Post Office Building Designation Act: H.R. 3233, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at Highway 49 South in Piney Woods, Mississippi, as the "Laurence C. and Grace M. Jones Post Office Building". **Pages H11043–44**

Recess: The House recessed at 3:50 p.m. and reconvened at 6:30 p.m. **Page H11044**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on page H11032.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Three yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H11044–45, H11045–46 and H11046 . There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 12:30 p.m. and adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

No committee meetings were held.

Committee Meetings

No committee meetings were held.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, *p. D1289)*

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''. Signed on September 28, 2007. (Public Law 110–87)

H.R. 3218, to designate a portion of Interstate Route 395 located in Baltimore, Maryland, as ''Cal Ripken Way''. Signed on September 28, 2007. (Public Law 110–88)

H.R. 3375, to extend the trade adjustment assistance program under the Trade Act of 1974 for 3 months. Signed on September 28, 2007. (Public Law 110–89)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2007

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: to hold hearings to examine the National Flood Insurance Program, 10:30 a.m., SD–538.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: to hold hearings to examine pending nominations, 10 a.m., SD–406.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: to hold hearings to examine issues and challenges facing current mine safety disasters, 10 a.m., SD–430.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, to hold hearings to examine the National Capitol for pandemic preparedness, 10 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on the Judiciary: to hold hearings to examine preserving the rule of law in the fight against terrorism, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: business meeting to consider the nomination of Paul J. Hutter, of Virginia, to be General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, time to be announced, room to be announced.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, on Food Aid Programs, 10 a.m., 2362A Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet, hearing entitled ''Digital Future of the United States: Part VI: The Future of Telecommunications Competition,'' 9:30 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, hearing entitled ''Systemic Risk: Examining Regulators' Ability to React to Threats in the Financial System,'' 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''Credit-Based Insurance Scores: Are They Fair?'' 2 p.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Africa, and Global Health, hearing on Ethiopia and the State of Democracy: Effects on Human Rights and Humanitarian Conditions in the Ogaden and Somalia, 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, hearing on Leveraging Remittances for Families and Communities, 2 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on House Administration, Election Task Force, briefing on the Status of the Investigation into FL–13 Congressional District Contested Election, 4 p.m., 1310 Longworth.

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law, hearing on the United States Trustee Program: Watchdog or Attack Dog? 1 p.m., 2237 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security, hearing on Gang Crime Prevention and the Need to Foster Innovative Solutions at the Federal Level, 1 p.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, hearing on H.R. 2262, Hardrock Mining and Reclamation Act of 2007, 2 p.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, hearing on Private Security Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, 10 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Rules, to consider the following: H.R. 2740, MEJA Expansion and Enforcement Act of 2007; H.R. 928, Improving Government Accountability Act; H.R. 3648, To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude dischargers of indebtedness on principal residences from gross income, and for other purposes; and H.R. 3246, Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development act of 2007, 3 p.m., H–313 Capitol.

Committee on Science and Technology, Subcommittee on Research and Science Education, hearing on Nanotechnology Education, 2 p.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation, hearing on United States Fire Administration Reauthorization: Addressing the Priorities of the Nation's Fire Service, 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, hearing on The

Federal Safe Routes to School Program, 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, executive, briefing on Iran, 12:30 p.m., H–405 Capitol.

Subcommittee on Terrorism, Human Intelligence, Analysis and Counterintelligence, executive, hearing on CIA Activity, Part I, 10 a.m., H–405 Capitol.

Résumé of Congressional Activity

FIRST SESSION OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

The first table gives a comprehensive résumé of all legislative business transacted by the Senate and House. The second table accounts for all nominations submitted to the Senate by the President for Senate confirmation.

DATA ON LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

January 4 through September 30, 2007

	Senate	*House*	*Total*
Days in session	138	126	..
Time in session	1,058 hrs., 48′	1,134 hrs., 55′	..
Congressional Record:			
Pages of proceedings	S12,342	H11,029	..
Extensions of Remarks	..	E2,021	..
Public bills enacted into law	21	66	..
Private bills enacted into law	..	..	..
Bills in conference	5	5	..
Measures passed, total	421	794	1,215
Senate bills	59	25	..
House bills	80	357	..
Senate joint resolutions	3	..	..
House joint resolutions	4	3	..
Senate concurrent resolutions	16	5	..
House concurrent resolutions	25	67	..
Simple resolutions	234	337	..
Measures reported, total*	324	342	666
Senate bills	185	2	..
House bills	57	230	..
Senate joint resolutions	4	..	..
House joint resolutions	1	..	..
Senate concurrent resolutions	7	..	..
House concurrent resolutions	4	7	..
Simple resolutions	66	103	..
Special reports	16	7	..
Conference reports	1	6	..
Measures pending on calendar	..	43	..
Measures introduced, total	2,512	4,673	7,185
Bills	2,110	3,706	..
Joint resolutions	18	54	..
Concurrent resolutions	47	220	..
Simple resolutions	337	693	..
Quorum calls	6	7	..
Yea-and-nay votes	357	439	..
Recorded votes	..	477	..
Bills vetoed	1	1	..
Vetoes overridden	..	..	..

* These figures include all measures reported, even if there was no accompanying report. A total of 185 reports have been filed in the Senate, a total of 355 reports have been filed in the House.

DISPOSITION OF EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS

January 4 through September 30, 2007

Civilian nominations, totaling 388, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	176
Unconfirmed	187
Withdrawn	24
Returned to White House	1
Other Civilian nominations, totaling 2,644, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	2,304
Unconfirmed	340
Air Force nominations, totaling 6,061, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	6,053
Unconfirmed	8
Army nominations, totaling 5,994, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	5,928
Unconfirmed	66
Navy nominations, totaling 4,584, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	4,583
Unconfirmed	1
Marine Corps nominations, totaling 1,334, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	1,329
Unconfirmed	5

Summary

Total nominations carried over from the First Session	0
Total nominations received this Session	21,005
Total confirmed	20,373
Total unconfirmed	607
Total withdrawn	24
Total returned to the White House	1

Next Meeting of the **SENATE**

10 a.m., Tuesday, October 2

Senate Chamber

Program for Tuesday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond 60 minutes), Senate will begin consideration of H.R. 3222, Department of Defense Appropriations Act.

(Senate will recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. for their respective party conferences.)

Next Meeting of the **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

9 a.m., Tuesday, October 2

House Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Consideration of the following suspensions: (1) S. 474—A bill to award a congressional gold medal to Michael Ellis DeBakey, M.D.; (2) H. Res. 657—Expressing heartfelt sympathy for the victims of the devastating thunderstorms that caused severe flooding during August 2007 in the States of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin; (3) H.R. 3068—Federal Protective Service Guard Contracting Reform Act of 2007; (4) S. 1612—International Emergency Economic Powers Enhancement Act; (5) H. Res. 635—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; (6) H. Res. 564—Recognizing that violence poses an increasingly serious threat to peace and stability in Central America and supporting expanded cooperation between the United States and the countries of Central America to combat crime and violence; (7) H. Con. Res. 203—Condemning the persecution of labor rights advocates in Iran; (8) H. Res. 676—Declaring that it shall continue to be the policy of the United States, consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act, to make available to Taiwan such defense articles and services as may be necessary for Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability; (9) H.R. 2828—To provide compensation to relatives of United States citizens who were killed as a result of the bombings of United States Embassies in East Africa on August 7, 1998; (10) H.R. 2003—Ethiopia Democracy and Accountability Act of 2007; (11) H.R. 3432—200th Anniversary Commemoration Commission of the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade Act of 2007; (12) H.R. 3571—To amend the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 to permit individuals who have served as employees of the Office of Compliance to serve as Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, or General Counsel of the Office, and to permit individuals appointed to such positions to serve one additional term; (13) H. Con. Res. 200—Condemning the violent suppression of Buddhist Monks and other peaceful demonstrators in Burma and calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi''; and (14) H.R. 3087—To require the President, in coordination with the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other senior military leaders, to develop and transmit to Congress a comprehensive strategy for the redeployment of United States Armed Forces in Iraq.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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