

soldiers and the work force. I was pleased to work with him in Congress to secure funds to make a host of needed repairs to Range building and workplaces, as well as improvements to roads and water and sewer projects. These efforts made White Sands Missile Range a finalist for the Presidential Quality Award. Further, he canonized the Hembriillo Battlefield where the 10th Cavalry fought a heroic campaign in the late 1800s by requesting its inclusion as a place on the National Register of Historic Places. He also continued the time-honored tradition to remember the New Mexico Veterans of the World War II Bataan Death March by recreating an annual march (begun in the early 1990s) through 25 miles of surrounding Range desert in tribute to the heroes of Bataan.

Throughout the past 18 months, Gen. Gatanas has effectively and continuously led White Sands and its work force on a journey of continuous improvement. He created a foundation of technical and infrastructure improvements which will serve the Range for generations and instilled a true spirit of professionalism and pride throughout the work force. The general's efforts have been noted throughout the work force. The General's efforts have been noted throughout the entire Materiel Development Community, the Army Staff, the Department of Defense and the U.S. Congress. His dedication to duty, selfless service and outstanding leadership mark him as a truly successful commander. These accomplishments are deserving of the highest attention and accolades, and it is only appropriate that after the completion of next week's change-of-command ceremony, Brigadier General Harry Gatanas will be promoted to the rank of Major General and will depart to take command of his next assignment as the Commanding General of the U.S. Army's Test and Evaluation Command in Alexandria, Virginia.

All of us in New Mexico have been blessed by an impressive cadre of commanding generals who have taken charge of the reins at White Sands since its founding in World War II. I've been pleased to work with each Commanding General at the Range for the past two decades.

Next month, the Range will celebrate its final firing of the century. Established on July 9, 1945, the first atomic bomb explosion occurred on the Range one week later, on July 16th at Trinity site. Since that time, over 42-thousand test firings have occurred at White Sands, which have included the initial test flights of all of the Army's missile systems including the V-2 rocket, the Nike Hercules, the Nike Zeus, the Redstone, the Hawk and the Pershing II.

I look forward to working with soon-to-be Major General Gatanas and the rest of the Army leadership in continuing the impressive technological contributions to our national security throughout tests, evaluations and operations conducted at White Sands Missile Range.

COMMENDING THE IRS LAGUNA NIGUEL TAXPAYER ADVOCATE OFFICE

HON. GARY G. MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 10, 1999

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, there are few jobs in the federal government for which public gratitude is a less common response than for those who are tasked with collecting our taxes. Not only must these public servants enforce our ever-burgeoning, byzantine Internal Revenue Code, they are expected to do so in a manner that is professional, responsive and fair to all.

During the past year, I have been witness to the performance of the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) Taxpayer Advocate Office in Laguna Niguel, California, headed by Ms. Connie Adams. This office, which services the 41st Congressional District and the surrounding region, is responsible for resolving difficult, complicated tax disputes between taxpayers and the IRS, and doing so in a manner that stresses, to the utmost, service and fairness to the American taxpayer.

It gives me great pleasure to commend the IRS Laguna Niguel Taxpayer Advocate Office for meeting this difficult challenge during the past year. In handling over thirty complicated tax disputes which I received from constituents in my congressional district, the Laguna Niguel Taxpayer Advocate Office performed its duties expeditiously, with due diligence, and attention to detail. I would especially like to express my appreciation to the staff members at the Laguna Niguel Taxpayer Advocate Office, including Ms. Maryanne McGoldrick, Ms. Deborah Mata, Ms. Mary Haven, Ms. Katie Williams and Ms. Kim Alfrey for their responsiveness and consummate professionalism in performing their duties.

The preliminary evidence in my congressional district is that the IRS has responded with conviction to the reform requirements mandated by the 105th Congress. There are certainly other agencies in the federal government which would do well to learn from the laudatory example set by the Laguna Niguel Taxpayer Advocate Office. Again, my hat is off to these fine public servants for a job well done.

IN HONOR OF THE 75TH BIRTHDAY OF JUDGE J. JEROME PLUNKETT

HON. CHRISTOPHER COX

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 10, 1999

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of a great man who has achieved a great milestone: the Honorable J. Jerome Plunkett, who will celebrate his 75th birthday tomorrow, November 11.

A distinguished jurist, a decorated soldier, a patron of education, and a devoted husband and father of eight children, Judge Plunkett has throughout his life been a leader for his nation, his state, his community, and his family.

Born in St. Paul, Minnesota, one of five children of James P. and Anne Plunkett, the

young boy's early experiences helped shape his extraordinary life. For his eighth birthday he traveled to Washington, D.C.—by train, for James P. was the Solicitor General for the Great Northern Railroad—to watch his father argue a case before the nine Justices of the United States Supreme Court. Barely beginning third grade, Jerry Plunkett could not have known then that a quarter century later he would begin his own career as a judge. But without doubt that lasting memory was one of several influences that propelled him to the law and the bench.

That autumn Washington day in 1932, as every one of Jerry Plunkett's 75 birthdays, was Armistice Day. On the first Armistice Day, November 11, 1918, Americans had celebrated the end of World War I, which officially concluded when the armistice was signed on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. But the "war to end all wars" had done no such thing. Just months after graduating from St. Thomas Military Academy in St. Paul, Jerry—then 18 years old—entered the United States Army, as the storm clouds of World War II cast their dark shadow on America.

He enrolled in the Infantry Officers Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia, and rapidly rose through the ranks. By 1944, he was a First Lieutenant with the Second Infantry Division, destined to participate in the Allied invasion of France to liberate Europe.

Lt. Plunkett, the infantryman, was wounded during the monumental struggle with Nazi forces at Normandy, code-named "Operation Overlord," and commanded by General Dwight D. Eisenhower. He would later be decorated not only with a Purple Heart but the Bronze Star, but in June 1944 he continued to punch inland, securing safe landing zones for reinforcements, and waged the campaign through France and into Germany. The German failure to successfully defend the Normandy area from the Allied liberation forces in essence doomed Hitler's dream of "Fortress Europe," and marked the beginning of the end for the Nazis.

While Jerry survived the war, one of his two brothers, James F. Plunkett, did not. He was killed in action in France in 1944.

With victory came peace, and Jerry Plunkett returned home like so many other veterans to start a new life, and begin a career. He chose the law.

When he earned his Juris Doctor degree from the University of Minnesota, he went to work as a legal editor for the West Publishing Company, even then a long-established firm (founded in 1876) and the leading national provider of case law and statutes for all U.S. jurisdictions. His interest in the law was matched, however, by his interest in people and solving real-world problems, and barely two years later he had landed his first job in public policy, as the Assistant City Attorney for the City of St. Paul.

As barrister for the state capital, Jerry Plunkett earned experience in prosecuting criminals and managing civil cases in the courtroom. By 1954, he was presiding over those same cases as the Honorable Jerome Plunkett, appointed by the Municipal Court bench by then-Minnesota Governor C. Elmer Anderson.

His progress and accomplishments on the bench were as swift and commendable as they had been on the battlefield. He was made Chief Administrator of the court system.

In 1956, he was elected by his fellow judges as President of the Municipal Judges Association for the entire state. And while serving on the municipal court bench, Judge Plunkett completed the first recodification since 1875 of all of the laws governing the municipal and conciliation courts in the state of Minnesota. His recodification was enacted by the state legislature in 1961, exactly as he wrote it.

A decade later, another Minnesota governor elevated Judge Plunkett to the District Court. On July 1, 1967, Governor Harold LeVander made possible what would become a 25-year career serving the people of Minnesota. During his remarkable tenure, Judge Plunkett personally set up and organized the Family Court Division of the Ramsey County District Court; he spent three years recasting all of the jury instructions in use in the state's civil courts; he worked for five years to rewrite all of the pension and retirement laws for judges in the state of Minnesota; he served on the Public Defender's Board, which supervises the entire public defender operation in Ramsey County; and he was elected by his fellow judges as an officer of the state-wide Minnesota Judges Association, serving as its Treasurer.

As an experienced District Court judge, Jerry Plunkett was appointed in 1977 to sit as a temporary member of the Minnesota Supreme Court, where he heard over 30 cases and authored seven Supreme Court opinions. Among the matters before Judge Plunkett was the historic Reserve Mining Company case, arising out of claims that the firm's iron-ore processing plant at Silver Bay, Minnesota had disposed of its ore wastes in a way that discharged asbestos particles into the air and into Lake Superior.

Despite these enormously time-consuming professional achievements, family has always been Jerry Plunkett's first priority. Throughout his adult life, he has been devoted to—and guided by—his wife, the former Patricia Bonner. They have raised eight children, all of them impressive in their own rights: John, a forensic pathologist; Patrick, an attorney; Marnie, a computer engineer; Timothy, an insurance executive; Paul, an attorney; Michael, a radiologist; Ann, a business executive; and Peggy, a graphic designer. Imbued with their parents' sense of community and led by the example of their parents' lives, this generation of Plunketts stands as a living testament to the values that each of us in Congress is proud to call American.

Jerry Plunkett's love of his country, his leadership as a jurist for his state, and his dedication to his wife and his family have always been matched by a high level of involvement in the local community. He served as Chairman of the Ramsey County Law Library. He was Director of the Capital Community Center. He has been a Trustee of St. Thomas Academy, and the President of the school's Alumni Association. He has given of himself, his time, and his energies without limit, and all of us owe him an enormous debt of gratitude for his service and his outstanding example.

To mark the occasion of Judge Jerry Plunkett's 75th birthday, his family and his friends will gather with him in St. Paul in celebration. What better way to repay his many kindnesses to our country, if only in part, than by giving him this tribute? I know that all of my colleagues join with me in wishing a happy birthday, and many more to come, to a great American.

CONCURRING IN SENATE AMENDMENTS TO H.R. 2280, VETERANS BENEFITS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1999, WITH AMENDMENTS

SPEECH OF

HON. ROBERT A. UNDERWOOD

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 9, 1999

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2280—the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 1999. I know many of my colleagues share my sentiments when it comes to our veterans; for their selfless sacrifice in the name of freedom, we can never thank them enough. The basic principle that lies behind the public support our veterans traces back to the earliest days of this Republic.

This bill, in part, carries on that legacy of gratitude. Among some technical fixes included within this bill is legislation concerning the National WWII Memorial, the expansion of Veterans cemeteries, benefits for homeless veterans, and mechanisms for improving the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. Finally, this bill includes a Senate Amendment that will provide a cost-of-living adjustment in rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities.

As we come to the close of the 20th Century, we are again reminded of the brutality that has been unleashed on human kind as a result of war and armed conflict. Whenever and wherever there had been a just cause, the United States was there to support the side of righteousness. The dedication and bravery exhibited by our veterans can never be forgotten. As a citizen from the territory of Guam, a place that was occupied by foreign troops some 50-odd years ago, the feat of liberation by the combined efforts of both Chamorro insurgents from the hills and from American Marines on the shores will forever remain legendary in the annals of history. Mr. Speaker, on this eve of the 81st anniversary of Veterans day, passage of this bill is all together fitting and proper. I commend Chairman STUMP for his leadership in bringing this measure to the floor. I would also like to thank my good friend Mr. EVANS for his tireless efforts to fight for the American veteran and always keep them within the public consciousness. I urge all my colleagues to support this important legislation.

THE REGULATORY IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2000

HON. GEORGE W. GEKAS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 10, 1999

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce the Regulatory Improvement Act of 2000. This bill would bring a greater degree of rationality and sounder science to the regulatory process.

We are all aware that regulations have a huge effect on society. They seek to protect the health and safety of the American people, and they seek to protect the natural environment. They deal with transportation, agriculture, communication, manufacturing—lit-

erally every walk of American life. They also directly and indirectly cost consumers billions and billions of dollars. There is a consensus, I believe, that the relationship between these benefits and these costs needs to be better known. This is the fundamental aim of the bill.

Let me say, first, that our effort rides on the shoulders of enormous work that has been done by our colleagues in the Senate, particularly Senator THOMPSON, the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs. He joined Senator LEVIN to introduce a bill that has the same goals as this one. While there are differences between the two bills, our effort follows from and builds on the work of our colleagues in the other body. I applaud them for their work.

While significant details differ, the contours of this bill are quite similar to theirs. This bill would require federal agencies promulgating major rules to conduct essential analyses of the rules they propose. These analyses will not only cause the agencies to do better thinking about the problems they confront, but they will also allow fuller public discussion of the regulations that are proposed by executive branch agencies.

In the past, we have been shocked at the sight of agencies moving forward precipitously, and in the face of conflicting scientific information, with regulations having massive effects on economic growth and progress. We were pleased to see the Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit put the brakes on the Environmental Protection Agency's massive effort to stall economic progress in Pennsylvania and numerous other parts of the country.

That being said, however, I have never weighed in on the substance of these regulations because their true anticipated benefits were never known. As Chairman of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law, I was not satisfied that the administrative processes were being followed as these regulations were written. I did not have confidence that the agency was acting rationally and in the best interest of the nation. Nor did many other Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle.

Once the Regulatory Improvement Act of 2000 is passed, we will be able to have confidence in the decisions made by regulatory agencies. This bill will cause more information about the decisions of regulators to come to light allowing everyone—Congress, the press, and the public—to understand the benefits of major regulations. It will also direct agencies toward addressing common causes of injury and disease, rather than popular fears about injury and disease. These are different things, and the federal bureaucracy needs to use sound science to solve the real problems that face Americans, rather than problems that are merely exaggerated in the public mind. Too often, interest groups feed distorted statistics and selective anecdotes to a hungry media in order to advance some agenda. If the regulatory process was better anchored to scientific analysis, the practice of fomenting hysteria among the public would not work as well. Americans would not have to live with trumped up fears.

The bill requires cost-benefit analysis of major regulations, along with risk assessment and substitution risk evaluation of major regulations that address health, safety, or environmental risks. In general, a major regulation is one that has an effect on the economy of \$100 million or more.