House, and the hundreds of voices who have contributed to the legacy and success of this organization.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. NEIL ABERCROMBIE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 2003

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, on rollcall vote No. 408, I am recorded as having voted, ''No''. I would like the RECORD to show that I, in fact, support the Otter amendment and I intended to vote, ''Yes''. I hope that it is retained in the final version of the Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations Act.

HONORING KGMC–TV

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 2003

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor KGMC–TV in Fresno, CA for their impressive support for our community. In 2002, KGMC–TV donated a total of 464 spots of valuable airtime towards Ad Council public service announcements.

Throughout the Ad Council's 60-year history, stations like KGMC–TV have helped to address the most pressing social issues of the day. Each year, the Ad Council receives approximately $1.3 billion in donated media for over 40 campaigns to promote awareness about topics ranging from high-school drop-out prevention to AIDS awareness.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to honor KGMC–TV for their ongoing dedication to informing the 19th district of current and socially important issues that improve the lives of our constituents and our Nation.

A TRIBUTE TO ALLEN B. GRESHAM FOR FOUR DECADES OF PUBLIC SERVICE TO SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 2003

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like today to pay tribute to Allen B. Gresham, a legendary attorney and highly respected community leader for more than four decades in San Bernardino County, California. Mr. Gresham is retiring from full-time practice after 41 years of building one of the top legal firms in Inland Southern California, and nearly as long helping make our community a better place.

My friend Allen Gresham grew up in El Centro, California and received his law degree from Stanford University before joining a San Bernardino law firm in 1959. In just 3 years, he was named as a partner, and became the senior partner by 1978. Gresham, Savage, Nolan and Tilden now has 27 lawyers and is one of the most respected and accomplished law firms in Southern California.

Mr. Gresham served as president of the San Bernardino County Bar Association in 1969 and as a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers for the past 25 years. He was named one of the ''Best Lawyers in America'' for the past decade, and was honored as one of the top lawyers in America in 2001. He was selected as one of the top five business litigators in the Inland Empire in that year, as well.

Almost from the beginning, Allen Gresham was active in our community. He has been a member of the Kiwanis Club of San Bernardino since 1960, and has been a director of Arrowhead United Way since 1964. He was a director of the San Bernardino County Symphony Association from 1967 to 1973 and rejoined the board in 1989—serving as its president for the next 4 years.

In 1971, Mr. Gresham stepped up his activities dramatically, beginning 32 years of service in two groups that have helped ensure that San Bernardino County grows economically and in its educational opportunities. He was elected to the Board of Trustees of the San Bernardino Community College District—and has been reelected for 8 consecutive terms. As board chairman for 3 of those terms, Mr. Gresham has helped a sleepy community college of a few thousand students grow into an academic powerhouse that today serves more than 30,000 on two campuses.

In that same year, Mr. Gresham joined Inland Action, Inc., a service group formed by community leaders to maximize the economic development of San Bernardino County, and to ensure that the county retains the benefits of Norton Air Force Base. Over my 25 years in Congress, I have worked closely with Allen Gresham and the other members of Inland Action to keep the Inland Empire high in the attention of the Federal Government. Although Norton was closed in 1988, the group has continued to strive for economic progress, and was a significant factor in winning community control of the former base in 1998. There is no doubt in my mind that the efforts of Allen Gresham and the other members of Inland Action has helped ensure that San Bernardino County is on course to be an economic powerhouse for decades to come.

I have always looked forward to the annual Inland Action trips to Washington—not least because a meeting with Allen Gresham was always a joy. He provides a combination of personal stability with an amazing ability to laugh at himself and bring laughter to those around him. His engaging and informed participation is one of the reasons Inland Action has forged numerous ties to lawmakers and federal officials that have paid off handsomely for the San Bernardino area.

Allen Gresham has received many well-deserved honors over his life of community service. He was named Citizen of the Year by the local board of realtors in 1975, Distinguished Citizen by the Military Airlift Command in 1988, Citizen of Achievement by the League of Women Voters in 1991 and received the San Bernardino County Bar Association's ''John B. Surr Award'' for outstanding service to the legal profession in 1999.

Mr. Speaker, as Allen Gresham retires from active practice, he is also stepping down from his role in Inland Action to give him more personal time with his wonderful wife of 49 years, Clara Thompson Gresham. Please join me in wishing them well in their retirement years, and thanking them for all of the many, many years they have devoted to their community.

INTRODUCTION OF THE WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES OPPORTUNITY ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 2003

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the ''Workers with Disabilities Opportunity Act of 2003'' with Representative MATSUI (D–CA) and 34 other colleagues. This bill will remove a persistent employment barrier facing Social Security beneficiaries with disabilities who want to attempt to return to work—the fear of losing their health insurance. Right now, these workers lose their Medicare health insurance coverage if they remain in the workforce more than 8.5 years. This legislation would make Medicare coverage permanent for them.

There is a glaring problem with the American workforce today. There are a disproportionately small number of workers with disabilities in it. According to the Census Bureau's 2002 report, only 24 percent of American adults with disabilities are employed compared to 77 percent of other Americans. The National Organization on Disability reports that despite major advances in disability services and technologies, less than 1 percent of Social Security Disability Insurance enrollees leave the rolls each year to return to work. When the non-working adults with disabilities were asked in the National Health Interview Survey why they were discouraged from working over one-fifth of them replied that it was out of fear of losing their health insurance. With this piece of legislation we can remove this barrier.

People who receive Social Security disability insurance benefits risk losing the health insurance coverage they currently have if they return to work. While you may think that their job's health benefits may cover what they need, many employers do not offer health insurance and even if they do, the treatments workers with disabilities require may well not be covered by a standard employer-provided plan. This puts many Social Security beneficiaries in a dilemma. They must choose between staying at home and keeping their health insurance or going to work and losing it. There is no question about it; this Hobson's choice is keeping disabled Americans out of the workforce.

Some of you may ask: ''Well, what about existing law?'' The answer is that existing law does not do nearly enough. Under current law, Medicare coverage only extends for 8.5 years after a Social Security beneficiary returns to work. While this may sound like an adequate amount of time to become integrated into the workforce, keep in mind that people with a physical or mental disability often require ongoing care. Their health, often their lives, and certainly their ability to sustain work, depend on that care.

The Workers with Disabilities Opportunity Act is critical for removing the fear of returning to work for the millions of Americans with disabilities. We had bipartisan support for the original House version of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act that extended Medicare coverage to 8.5 years for workers with disabilities. We hope to have bipartisan support for making this improvement

complete. Furthermore, this piece of legislation is supported by the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities, which is made up of a coalition of national disability organizations including the American Association on Mental Retardation, National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, Paralyzed Veterans of America, The Arc of the United States, and United Cerebral Palsy. Let's work together to give Americans with disabilities the opportunity to succeed in the workplace by providing permanent Medicare coverage. Let's give Americans with disabilities a real ticket to work instead of pulling the rug out from underneath them after eight and a half years.

If this bill becomes law millions of Americans will no longer be afraid of going back to work. Enacting this small piece of legislation can have a tremendous impact on the lives of American with disabilities. We need to give Americans with disabilities a chance to become permanent, active members of the workforce. Americans with disabilities deserve the opportunity to succeed and we can give it to them by making their Medicare coverage permanent. I urge my colleagues to join us in support of this important legislation.

DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE, JUSTICE, AND STATE, THE JUDICIARY, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 2003

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2799) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes:

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to offer some perspective on the amendment offered by my colleague from California, Mr. ROHRABACHER.

As all of us know and acknowledge, Mr. ROHRABACHER's amendment seems like a no-brainer and something everyone would support. To suggest that our Nation's veterans who were held prisoner by the Japanese in World War II should be prevented from filing a lawsuit for compensation seems outside the realm of what any politician would argue. But if my colleagues will allow, I am here to do just that.

While I do acknowledge the difficulty of arguing my position, I believe it's a sound position and one any member of this body could support if only they were made aware of the history surrounding this matter and the facts behind our international obligations.

America is indeed indebted to our former POWs—whether they are World War II POWs or those, including Jessica Lynch, who were held captive by Saddam Hussein. That debt our Nation owes these men and women is not just one of gratitude, but one of compensation for their time in enemy hands.

This amendment, however, is neither the best nor a wise approach to ensuring we meet our Nation's obligations to our former POWs and I would like to explain why.

If passed by the House of Representatives and adopted in conference in its current form, this amendment would almost certainly invite a veto by the White House. I firmly believe that the President would be using sound judgment in vetoing the amendment because it would violate our treaty obligations under the treaty we signed with the Japanese at the end of World War II.

Some of us in this chamber may take those treaty obligations lightly or might suggest that we should ignore commitments made over 50 years ago. I say we must abide by those treaty obligations because that treaty is what set the foundation for the 50 years of friendship and cooperation our Nation has had with Japan. Great nations do not violate their treaty obligations nor do they go back on their commitments to their friends. Great nations abide by their commitments and stand with their friends in easy situations and in difficult situations.

I believe there is another compelling reason why this amendment should be rejected and why we should choose another course. The amendment offered by my colleague from California only addresses those POWs who were taken captive during World War II. What about the POWs from the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Iranian Hostage Crisis, the Persian Gulf War, or our most recent war with Iraq? These POWs have suffered extraordinary hardships and, due to the inequity in this amendment, would be left without any long-term compensation for their sacrifices.

I think it's important to point out that our Nation is currently home to an estimated 42,781 surviving ex-POWS: more than 39,700 from World War II, 2,400 from the Korean War, 601 from the Vietnam War, one from Somalia and three from Kosovo—and these numbers don't include the POWS from our actions against Iraq.

That is why I have offered an alternative—one that would accomplish everything this amendment does not. My legislation, H.R. 850, would create a new compensation system for former POWs delivered through the Department of Veterans Affairs. Under the new system, POWs detained 30 to 120 days would receive $150 per month, those detained 121 to 540 days would receive $300 per month, and those detained for 540 or more days would receive $450 per month. Payment would be made without regard to any other compensation under the laws of the United States. In addition, the bill contains a provision to provide outpatient dental care for all POWs. Current law requires a period of internment of not less than 90 days in order to qualify. Further, I have already agreed to eliminate the 30 day requirement to be eligible for benefits under the bill to ensure POWs who were held for a shorter period of time, including those who have returned from Iraq, would in fact be eligible for monthly compensation.

Mr. Chairman, my legislation offers this body an alternative to breaking our treaty obligations and failing to meet our commitments to 50-year-old friends and allies. World War II ended nearly 60 years ago and throughout the last half of the twentieth century, Japan proved time and again that it is one of our most trusted allies and a nation upon whom we could count for lasting friendship. If anything, the last year has shown this Nation the value of trusted friends and our need for close allies around the globe.

We have the chance today to do something noble. We can both be a good friend to Japan and meet our commitments to the men and women who have worn our Nation's uniform and been held captive during foreign wars. We can do this by rejecting the path chosen by my colleague from California and by, instead, choosing an approach such as that offered in H.R. 850.

A TRIBUTE TO DR. BRIAN BOWKER

HON. NICK SMITH

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 2003

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Brian Bowker on the completion of his doctorate in animal sciences from Purdue University and his dedication to science and agriculture.

As a Federation of Animal Science Societies (FASS) Congressional Science Fellow, Dr. Bowker serves as Legislative Assistant in my office. I've had the benefit of Brian's expert advice on agricultural issues. I have seen the extent of his education but more importantly the extent of his character. Brian has reached an educational level that few people obtain, yet he desires to learn more and to use that knowledge to benefit others. He understands the concept, which few of us really embrace, that as Albert Einstein said, ''Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death.''

The recipient of numerous awards and honors, Brian has received the Featherston Outstanding PhD Award and the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award. In addition, the Animal Science Department of Purdue University named Brian the outstanding freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior. He has received the Oakley M. Ray Distinguished Leadership Award, the Millard Plumlee Scholarship, and the Richard A. Pickett Scholarship, just to name a few. Also, Brian is a member of the American Meat Science Association and the American Society of Animal Sciences.

Therefore, on behalf of the Congress of the United States, I commend Dr. Brian Bowker for receiving his PhD, and thank him for his service to our Nation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 2003

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Chairman, on rollcall No. 406, the Hostettler amendment to H.R. 2799, the Commerce-Justice-State appropriation bill for fiscal 2004, on Tuesday July 22, during a series of several votes, I inadvertently voted ''no'' when I intended to vote ''yes.''

I strongly disagree with the decision handed down by the 9th Circuit on the Pledge of Allegiance and have voted to reflect that disapproval twice previously: on June 27, 2002 (H. Res. 459) and on March 6, 2003 (H. Res. 132).