

willingly and unselfishly give their time and talent and make their communities a better place to live and work. Ray Becker is one of these individuals. Ray will be stepping down as President of the Building Industry Association of Southern California (BIA) and I would like to thank him for his service.

Ray originally came to the Inland Empire in the early 1980s as Vice President and Division Manager with the Lusk Company. During 20 years in Southern California real estate development, Ray has managed the construction of more than 3,000 homes and 16,000 home sites. For eight years Ray taught Light Construction and Development Management at the University of California, Riverside.

Ray is also Senior Vice President of Lennar Communities Inland, a division of Lunar Homes of California. Lunar is a national real estate company listed on the New York Stock Exchange and is one of the largest public homebuilders in the United States. Under his leadership, Lunar acquires, plans, entitles, develops, markets, sells, and manages medium and large scale communities.

Ray has been an excellent President of BIA and continually promotes the building profession. He is also involved in California BIA and the National Association of Homebuilders. He is past President of the Inland Chapter of HomeAid, an industry charitable foundation, and has held the Presidency of the Youth Service Center and Parkview Community Hospital Foundation. Ray's commitment to the community and to Southern California is exemplary.

Ray's tireless passion for the building industry has contributed immensely to the betterment of the community of Southern California. I am proud to call him a fellow community member, American and friend. I know that many BIA members and homebuilders are grateful for his service and salute him as he steps down from his position.

H.R. 1964, THE HIGHLANDS STEWARDSHIP ACT

HON. SUE W. KELLY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 21, 2003

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge the passage of H.R. 1964, the Highlands Stewardship Act.

The Highlands region is spread through parts of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania and covers more than two million acres of pristine, undeveloped land. In studies in 1992 and 2002, the National Forest Service recognized the Highlands as "nationally significant" and estimated that 5,000 acres of land are lost to development just in the New York and New Jersey portions of the Highlands.

The Highlands also serve as an "oasis" amid the urban centers of Philadelphia, Hartford, and New York. The region, with its networks of reservoirs and aquifers, supplies clean, safe drinking water for over 11 million Americans. At the moment, only 23% of those watershed lands are protected, with almost 100,000 of those acres being immediately threatened. Without these water sources, the sprawling metropolises we know today and New York and Philadelphia would have never developed.

The tourist value of this region cannot be overlooked. Every year, over 14 million people visit the Highlands. This total is higher than the number of people who visit Yellowstone National Park every year, and we don't even have a geyser.

Twenty million people live within a two hour drive of the Highlands. With the ever-increasing rigors of city and suburban life, it is important to have a place for families to unwind and interact with the natural splendors that are too often missing from their lives. The Highlands provides that and so much more. This bill will ensure that these natural beauties survive so that future generations can enjoy them as we do now.

IN HONOR OF FATHER MARINO FRASCATI

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 21, 2003

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of and recognition of Father Marino Frascati, founding member of the Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization—and spiritual guide, healer, and beloved mentor and friend to many in this Westside community for more than fifty years. Father Frascati, parish priest of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, continues to serve the Detroit-Shoreway neighborhood with integrity, compassion, and grace, and was bestowed the honorary appointment of President for Life with the Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization. Father Frascati has been a steady and focused instrument of healing, preservation, growth and hope along the streets of this neighborhood.

When others lost hope and turned away, Father Frascati dug in, continuing his quest to improve the lives of the families, seniors and individuals who live and work within this Westside community. His rare ability to connect with others and bring people and groups together for the common good has significantly improved all aspects of this neighborhood.

Father Frascati was instrumental in renovating and developing countless commercial and residential structures along Cleveland's Westside. Due to his persistence and personal meetings with Monsignor Barone, then Undersecretary for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Detroit-Shoreway neighborhood was the first community in Cuyahoga County to be awarded the Urban Development Action Grant for a neighborhood project. This grant resulted in the construction of Father Caruso Boulevard and restoration of the historical Gordon Square Arcade. Despite opposition and adversity, Father Frascati remains a tireless and unwavering champion of this neighborhood. Father Frascati established Nolasco Corporation which resulted in new housing for senior citizens and low income families. Additionally, Father Frascati has created strong and enduring bonds with local business owners, bringing businesses and jobs—like Bank One at the Gordon Square Arcade—back into the neighborhood.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor, recognition and gratitude of Father Marino Frascati, whose compassion, commit-

ment and energy continues to create a haven of assistance, hope and renewal along the streets of Detroit-Shoreway and beyond. His presence, vision, leadership, and unwavering faith in the people and possibilities of this community have restored and uplifted the very foundation of this neighborhood—reclaiming the heart and soul of this community one brick, one senior citizen, one family at a time.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VERNON J. EHLERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 21, 2003

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 641, 642, 643, and 644, I was absent because I was receiving a major named award from and giving remarks to the national meeting of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on all four votes.

THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

HON. RICHARD BURR

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 21, 2003

Mr. BURR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the lack of progress in the Middle East peace process. Aside from our own Nation's ongoing military operations in the war against terrorism, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the most important foreign policy issues being discussed and debated by my constituents.

Clearly, there is a wide range of points of view on this critically important issue, and they cover the range of the political spectrum. I would like to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to outline some of my own thoughts on some of these subjects.

I should state at the outset that I believe Israel has a right to defend herself against the actions of Palestinian extremists. It would be the height of hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker, for our own country—engaged in its own fight against terrorists bent on her destruction—to deny Israel the right to pursue those bent on her destruction. Since obtaining independence in 1948, Israel has been engaged in a near-constant struggle for survival.

The current violence, and Israel's military response to it, is a reflection and continuation of that struggle. There are some on the Palestinian side, many of whom have close ties—if not direct connections—to Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Authority, who desire nothing less than the destruction of the state of Israel. These are the very groups sending young Palestinians to detonate suicide bombs on buses, in pizza parlors, in sidewalk cafes, and even at Jewish religious celebrations. On that basis alone, Israel has no choice but to continue efforts to round up those responsible. Even prior to the eruption of the latest violence more than two years ago, Arafat refused to do so. He refuses to do so to this day.

It is clear, Mr. Speaker, that Arafat has abdicated his position as a responsible negotiator