

service and achievement for African American citizens in our community and across this nation.

In recognition of its historic past, Wayside Church is currently in the process of receiving an official designation as a Cultural and Historical Landmark of the City of Fort Worth and is being considered for a Texas Historical Landmark designation and the National Register of Historic Places.

Wayside Church of God In Christ, Inc., congratulations on 92 years (1912–2004) of outstanding local, state, and national service!

TRIBUTE TO JOHN MRAULE

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is truly a privilege to take this opportunity to pay tribute to John Mraule, a man who for over twenty-five years has dedicated himself to developing women athletics while rising to the top ranks of Colorado high school basketball coaches. His recent induction into the Colorado High School Activities Association Hall of Fame is a testament to his incredible ability to develop outstanding women athletes as well as his unparalleled work ethic.

This incredible honor is the manifestation of a life-long passion, and could not have been bestowed upon a more deserving individual. John started the women's basketball program at Montrose High School before it was a sanctioned sport, and since has led his teams to eleven league titles, ten district championships, thirteen state tournaments, and the state championships in 1985 and 1991. As further proof of his coaching abilities, John has been named the Southwestern League Coach of the Year, and was named State Coach of the Year during his team's championship season in 1991.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that John Mraule is a person of unparalleled dedication and commitment to women athletics who coaches his teams on a championship level. It is John's incredible talent, unrelenting passion for competition, and drive for perfection that I wish to bring to the attention of this body of Congress. John is a remarkable man who has taken the Montrose High School girl's basketball program to extraordinary heights. It is my distinct pleasure to honor him here today, and wish him the best of luck in all his future endeavors.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT AND RESULTS ACT

HON. TODD RUSSELL PLATTS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Mr. PLATTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce important legislation to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our Federal government—the Program Assessment and Results Act, or PAR Act. As elected representatives of the people, we have a responsibility to use taxpayer dollars in the most effective way possible. As Congress formulates its budget

each year, we must have the best information available to us on which to base our spending decisions.

The Government Performance and Results Act, or GPRA, has laid a solid foundation for agencies working with Congress to set strategic goals and begin to utilize performance based information. Building on GPRA, we must take the next step toward reforming the way the government conducts business.

One of the key aspects of any reform effort is to change the prevailing mind set. If our emphasis is on creating a more results-oriented government, then we must change our mind set from outputs to outcomes. It takes time to achieve this type of cultural shift. The reforms of the early 1990s—the CFO Act, GPRA and others—are just beginning to work as intended.

Prior efforts to make the federal government more effective—the Hoover Commission, Zero-Based Budgeting, the Planning-Programming-Budgeting System, Reinventing Government—have come and gone with little lasting effect. Federal managers have learned that if they wait, each new administration is likely to attempt yet another broad-based reform. From a management standpoint, it is difficult in that type of environment to make long-range plans; and it's next to impossible to achieve the kind of cultural shift needed to reform the management of the federal government.

Major reform takes time. By enacting GPRA, Congress put government reform in statute. Because of this statutory framework, federal managers now look at the requirements for performance plans and strategic plans required by GPRA and know they are here to stay regardless of changes in Congress and the Executive Branch. When the first round of strategic plans fell short of expectations, the reform effort was not scrapped—it was improved. Now, ten years after GPRA was enacted, we have strategic plans that are more in line with what was envisioned. We have seen slow, sustainable improvement.

GPRA requires that agencies focus attention on program evaluation as one of six aspects of their strategic plans. Unfortunately, according to a draft report from the General Accounting Office, program evaluation is the one area where departments consistently come up short. Not only have agencies failed to comply with this requirement, the valuable information that stands to be gained from these evaluations is not culled, coordinated, or presented in a useful way.

We have seen great progress in meeting other objectives set out in GPRA. In 1997, only 76 percent of federal managers had developed performance measures. By 2003, that number had risen to 89 percent. It is now time to strengthen GPRA to address the shortfall we see in program evaluation.

By creating and using the Program Assessment Rating Tool, or PART, this Administration has gone a step beyond the strategic plans required by GPRA and implemented a system for evaluating the performance and results of federal programs. The next logical step is to codify the requirement for a coordinated evidence-based review of programs. In looking at this legislation that I am introducing today, we must ask ourselves, do we believe that better understanding how government operates program by program is a good idea. If the answer to that question is yes, and I believe it is, then we should work to ensure that

program assessments be required for this and every future administration.

This legislation does not seek to codify the use of the PART specifically. Rather, this bill amends GPRA by establishing a requirement for program reviews. Specifically, the Office of Management and Budget is required under the Act to review each program activity at least once every five years. By requiring OMB to be responsible for overseeing program assessment data, we will take a great step forward in realizing the reform envisioned by GPRA and make the federal government more efficient and results oriented.

Information gleaned from these program reviews needs to be useful across the board to all stakeholders. Members of Congress, taxpayers, federal managers and the Executive Branch need to know if programs are being managed effectively and if they are achieving the desired result. Further, this legislation, once enacted, will allow us to compare data among different agencies, to see how different programs with similar goals are achieving results. Members of Congress can use the information to make informed budget decisions and conduct more effective oversight. It will help the taxpayers see what they are getting for their money. Most important, federal managers will use the information to improve the way they manage programs. The results will be a more effective and efficient government for the good of all Americans.

COMMEMORATING NORTH DAKOTA'S PRISONER OF WAR AND MISSING IN ACTION SOLDIERS

HON. EARL POMEROY

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, at an event last year commemorating North Dakota's Prisoner of War and Missing in Action soldiers, I had the privilege of listening to Joanna Sherman read from her essay, "Freedom's Obligation." Joanna's work was chosen as the North Dakota State winner in the Veterans of Foreign Wars Voice of Democracy Scholarship Contest. This essay is a testament to the great value of instilling patriotism and the appreciation of our Nation's freedom into our Nation's youth.

I would like to include in the RECORD her essay, which eloquently describes the meaning of freedom and the cost of preserving it. I commend Joanna for her achievement.

FREEDOM'S OBLIGATION
(BY JOANNA SHERMAN)

The ancient Athenian leader Pericles, a proponent of democracy, once said, "Freedom is the sure possession of those alone who have the courage to defend it." Freedom is America's greatest gift, and it is the duty of the American people to honor and cherish it. Our great gift of freedom relies heavily on three obligations: remembering the past, understanding the present, and committing to the future.

How can we ensure tomorrow's freedom? We must remember that today's freedom was paid for by the sacrifices of yesterday. From the past, there are countless personal stories that remember freedom's fight. My grandparents' story is only one of them. They were married July 2, 1942. One week later my