

long-term effects of exposure on troops—for Vietnam, for the first Gulf war and for the current Iraq conflict, for example. Results are used to help set compensation policy.

Ti-service longitudinal studies might best be centralized and coordinated through the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, which encompasses all service branches as well as the U.S. Public Health Service.

Doing longitudinal studies often is difficult in the academic setting, where there is pressure for immediate pay-off. At the same time, studies produced by federal researchers all too often are rejected by regular scientific journals as being of limited interest because they focus on military or veteran populations.

ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 2004

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the people of the State of Israel and the greater Jewish community on the 56th anniversary of their Independence. The creation of the Jewish State in 1948 was met with the immediate support and recognition from the United States, and our country has continued to consider Israel our closest friend and strongest ally. As Israel continues to fight against terrorist groups, it is more important than ever the United States continues to show our solidarity and provide whatever aid and support both economic and moral, to our friend Israel.

Israel, as the only truly democratic nation in the Middle East should be lauded for 56 years of democracy. Israel continues to show the world that this small state which has been surrounded by aggressive states for most of its existence is here to stay. I believe the survival of the Jewish state is paramount and the United States must continue to encourage Israel's sustained efforts to defend the freedoms and rights it has secured its citizens.

That is why I commend President Bush, for his strong leadership in standing with Prime Minister Sharon in support of Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, and in support of limited Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Prime Minister Sharon's bold and courageous position is following in the footsteps of Prime Minister Barak's withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon. Unfortunately though, just as in Lebanon, I do not believe Hamas, the Palestinian Authority or other terrorist organizations will show the strong leadership and quest for peace that the Israeli government has shown, by stopping their terrorist attacks against the Jewish state.

Since its Independence, Israel has endured the unstable and troubling conditions in the Middle East that have sparked several wars and incited much violence. Yet the Israeli people remain united and strong and continue to stand up for their nation. That is why I stand here today, and re-affirm the right of the Israeli people to always protect themselves and their state from the forces of terrorism, no matter where it may exist.

Israel is a modern success story, the only Democracy in the Middle East, the only Middle Eastern country where Arabs have the right to vote for their elected officials and their political

leaders. Her detractors, and those who hide their anti-Semitism behind anti-Zionism must not denigrate the success of Israel. I am proud to be one of Israel's strongest friends in Congress and to stand here today and wish Israel a hearty Mazel Tov on 56 years of Independence.

A TRIBUTE TO THE PLAYERS AND COACH OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 2004

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the players of the University of Vermont Men's Basketball Team, and their coach, Tom Brennan, on an extraordinary basketball season.

It is certainly worthy of both recognition and celebration when a team finishes a tough schedule with over 20 wins—UVM went 22–9 on the year—and wins its conference championship. UVM lost its first game in the NCAA tournament to Connecticut, but there is no disgrace in losing to the only team which never lost a game in the entire tournament, for UConn was the eventual champion of the collegiate Division I basketball.

And it is certainly worth acknowledging the excitement that the team evoked all over the state of Vermont; our state is very proud of the wonderful record of this year's glorious team, and of both the men's and women's basketball teams at the University of Vermont in recent years. And the state is very proud as well that Vermont's own Taylor Copenrath was selected to the AP All-America Team, as an honorable mention.

But what the people of Vermont are most proud of, and I include myself in their number, is that this basketball team not only played well on the basketball court, they worked hard and learned well in the classrooms and laboratories that are the heart of our state university. College is, after all, primarily about academics and not athletics.

At a time when the nation, and the NCAA as well, is deeply concerned that many athletes competing in major sports at Division I schools are not graduating from college, when there is widespread concern that often the educational mission of universities is put aside in the interest of athletic success, the men's basketball team in Vermont reminded us all that education and athletics can go together.

Of the 64 teams in the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball tournament, only the University of Vermont had 8 of its players with a grade point average of 3.0 or better. The Catamounts had the best GPA of any team in the 65–team NCAA tournament.

The team's dual achievement—succeeding at the highest level in both athletics and academics—makes Vermont proud, and serves, I believe, as an example to the nation.

Our congratulations go to the members of the 2003–2004 University of Vermont Men's Basketball Team: T.J. Sorrentine, Jack Phelan, Kyle Ciepicki (of Shelburne, VT), Martin Klimes, Mike Goia, Taylor Copenrath (of West Barnet, VT), David Hehn, Germain Njila, Alex Jensen, Corey Sullivan, Matt Hanson,

Scotty Jones and Matt Sheftic (of Essex Junction, VT). And to those who helped them succeed on the court and off: Tom Brennan, head coach; Jesse Agel, associate head coach; Pat Filien, assistant coach; Jeff Rush, assistant coach; Chris Poulin, athletic trainer/strength coach; Reza Mohamed and Amarildo Barbosa, student managers; and Ryan Gore, student athletic trainer.

CELEBRATING THE ANNIVERSARY OF ISRAEL'S INDEPENDENCE

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 2004

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate Yom Ha'Atzmaut, the anniversary of the Independence of the State of Israel.

It took a horrific, unimaginable Holocaust for the world to finally acknowledge the need to establish a homeland for the Jewish people, to shield it from the persecution and discrimination that it had endured for generations. That recognition came in 1948, and the State of Israel was born.

Today it is as important as ever to preserve and safeguard this Jewish national homeland and to ensure the security of Israel and its people. Never again should a people face annihilation. That is why a safe and secure Israel is in everyone's interest.

We must continue to strive for a settlement of conflict in the Middle East that guarantees the right of all people in the region to live in peace. That is my wish on this day as we celebrate the independent State of Israel.

IN RECOGNITION OF PROFESSOR CHÈRE GIBSON

HON. MARK GREEN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 2004

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I rise today before this house to honor the accomplishments of Professor Chère Campbell Gibson who will be retiring after 27 years of service to the University of Wisconsin System and the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Human Ecology on June 30, 2004.

Professor Gibson received her B.S. from Macdonald College of McGill University in Nutrition, and her M.S. and Ph.D. in Continuing and Vocational Education from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Professor Gibson has had a long, multi-faceted, and distinguished career of teaching, research, and outreach in the discipline of adult education with a particular emphasis on distance learning. She is especially well-known among distance educators around the world. Professor Gibson also has the distinction of being the first faculty member on the UW-Madison campus to teach a course completely on-line. This distinction gave her many opportunities to participate in faculty development workshops around campus and the country as well as involvement in the selection of learner and course management systems.

Throughout her career, she has had an enduring concern about the equality of access to

education and has recognized the importance of ensuring not only access but also success in educational pursuits. In recognition of these contributions to the field of teaching and learning at a distance, the United State Distance Learning Association inducted her into their Hall of Fame in 2003.

Chère Campbell Gibson's love of teaching and working with students is a consistent thread throughout her professional career. She has and will continue to have a lasting impact on the lives of her students and advisees. It cannot go without saying that she has also wonderfully touched the lives of her colleagues and friends.

The Executive Committee of the School of Human Ecology, at its meeting on March 22, 2004, by unanimous vote, endorsed the recommendation of the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies to award Emerita status to Professor Chère Campbell Gibson.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor and my great pleasure to recognize today the outstanding and exemplary service of Professor Chère Campbell Gibson. On behalf of my constituents and citizens from the great State of Wisconsin, we say a hearty thank you, and wish her all the very best in her future endeavors.

2ND ANNIVERSARY OF
GOVBENEFITS.GOV

HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 2004

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, on April 29, 2004, the U.S. Department of Labor will celebrate the second anniversary of GovBenefits.gov. Additionally, in collaboration with the Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Labor will launch the GovLoans.gov website as an integrated part of GovBenefits.gov. GovLoans.gov will be a one-stop shop for Federal loan programs.

I want to recognize the successful inter-agency collaboration between the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Education to improve the American public's access to their government through the launch of GovLoans.gov. I would also like to congratulate and recognize the U.S. Department of Labor for consistently demonstrating GovBenefits.gov as a leading government-to-citizen initiative that is offering tremendous value to the American public.

GovBenefits.gov is a prime example of what e-Government should look and act like. In working together with nearly a dozen other agencies, the Department of Labor has launched this one stop shop for individuals interested in learning what government benefits for which they may be eligible.

GovLoans.gov will provide a broad range of information on Federal loan programs, as well as educational tools and resources to help citizens and small business owners understand the loan process. This site will also help consumers find the loan that best fits their individual needs, and will serve as a trusted and comprehensive point of access to Federal loan information.

GovLoans.gov is a Presidential initiative managed by the U.S. Department of Education that will provide citizens and small business owners with comprehensive information

on available Federal loan programs from the five major Federal credit agencies: the U.S. Departments of Education, Agriculture, Housing and Urban Development, Veterans Affairs, and the Small Business Administration.

GovLoans.gov consolidates loan programs across government into a single portal and simplifies the language describing each program, enabling citizens and small business owners to easily find applicable Federal loans that meet their needs and to better understand the loan process.

GovBenefits.gov represents a partnership of 10 Federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Labor (managing partner), and the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, State, Veteran Affairs, and the Social Security Administration.

Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Government Reform Subcommittee on Technology, Information Policy, Intergovernmental Relations and the Census, I commend the U.S. Department of Labor for its work in developing GovBenefits.gov as a leading government-to-citizen initiative that is offering tremendous value to the American public and recognize GovBenefits.gov and GovLoans.gov as citizen-centric initiatives that are demonstrating the intent of the President's Management Agenda.

EASTERN NEW MEXICO'S COMPASSION EARN'S NATIONAL ATTENTION

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 2004

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to tell my colleagues about an amazing act of selflessness that has recently earned national press coverage for a small town in my congressional district.

In February, the Portales News Tribune reported that students in Dora, New Mexico had donated \$3,000 they raised for their prom to the family of sixteen-year-old Clayton Stokes, who was killed in a pickup truck crash. Motivated by this, other students in the school helped raise another \$4,000 for the family.

Dora High School Principal Bill Stockton said that the 11th grade students who attend the school decided to donate their prom money after a memorial assembly for their late classmate. These students had diligently been saving for their prom for 3 years.

Clayton, a resident of Causey, was a bright young man with a promising future before him. He was born on March 21, 1987, in Carlsbad, to Jim and Cathy Stokes. He was active in both varsity basketball and baseball at Dora High School. He enjoyed riding horses and snowboarding and was a member of the Dora FFA. Family members said he enjoyed working in construction with his father and two brothers and spending time with family and friends.

As Principal Stockton noted, losing a student in a small school is like losing a family member. The students' gesture alone deserves our deep praise and admiration, however, there is more to this story.

Rooney Moon Broadcasting was so touched by the students' generosity that the station

asked radio listeners to help replace the money so the students could have their prom after all. Within hours, the station helped raise nearly \$17,000. Incredibly, the money has continued coming in and the station places the latest total around \$22,000. A memorial scholarship in Clayton's name is planned.

This money poured in from residents all across eastern New Mexico, primarily from residents in Curry and Roosevelt counties. It is clear to me that the spirit of "paying it forward" is alive and well in this area of New Mexico.

The first donation came from Mike Knight, owner of Rib Crib in Clovis, who volunteered to cater the Dora prom. McDonalds of Portales pledged \$1,000 for the scholarship fund. The Bank of America in Clovis and Tankersley's arranged for all the boys to have rental tuxedos.

The May 3, 2004, issue of People magazine has an article about this wonderful deed. The magazine has a section entitled "Local Heroes" for people in the country that are making a difference. This act is certainly worthy of this recognition. On a personal note, I am pleased that millions of Americans will learn of the honorable and heroic deeds of my eastern New Mexico constituents through this article in one of the largest publications in the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for affording me the opportunity to brief my colleagues regarding this inspiring story. In a time of bleak news in our world, it is indeed refreshing to be reminded of the kindheartedness of our friends and neighbors. I am attaching the article and request that it be reprinted in its entirety in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD so that we may be reminded of this account throughout the ages.

[From People, May 3, 2004]

THE PROM MUST GO ON

For three years, the 11th graders of Dora High in remote Dora, N. Mex., had scraped their pennies together from bake sales and fund-raisers for their prom. Then, suddenly, a prom didn't seem so important. Around midnight on Feb. 15, classmate Clayton Stokes was driving home after hanging out with friends when he dozed at the wheel. His truck flipped over, and Stokes, 16, an athlete and joker, died instantly.

Tragic as it was, Stokes' death set off an avalanche of goodwill that has left residents of Dora (pop. 500) feeling pretty good about their town. The day after his death, Clayton's classmates piled into vans and drove to the Stokeses' home. There, they handed a \$3,000 check—their entire prom fund—to his devastated parents, Jim, 48, and Cathy, 45, so they could bury their youngest boy. "We never thought twice about it," says Kassandra Clark, 16. The rest of the school chipped in, raising another \$4,000. "They floored us," says Jim, a construction worker. "For them to love my boy so much to give up their prom," adds Cathy. "It didn't take the pain away, but it eased it."

That was only the beginning. Local radio host Steve Rooney and his cohost got wind of the gesture, and on the day Clayton was laid to rest, they asked listeners for donations so the kids could have their prom. "We couldn't answer the phones fast enough," he says. The juniors, who had held a sleepover at classmate Ashlet Carter's house, tuned in while dressing for the memorial. "We had to redo our makeup," says Carter. "We all kept crying."

The money kept coming—\$22,000 so far, some of it to create a scholarship fund in Clayton's name. And on April 24, Dora High will have a prom. What would Clayton think