

In Portland tomorrow, the first class of Friends of the Children, including Natasha, will graduate from the program. These were children who were identified 12 years ago by their elementary schools as most likely to fail. They now show great progress in leading successful lives.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass this bill and make a commitment to improving the lives of at-risk children.

THE MORTUARY SCIENCE GRADUATING CLASS OF 2004 WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 2004

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to recognize an outstanding group of young men and women who on August 1, 2004 will receive their degree in the field of Mortuary Science from Wayne State University Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences located in Detroit, Michigan.

The Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, located on the campus of the Detroit Medical Center, is a unit of Wayne State University. The School of Mortuary Science was formed within the Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences in 1943. Students from all over compete for a spot in this highly selective program. The program provides students with specialized training in the area of funeral preparation and services. The students who graduate from this program are fully prepared psychologically, physically and socially to deal with the process of dying and death. Upon acceptance of their degrees they each will be charged with the duty of providing guidance, advice and support to those who have lost loved ones. The process of bereavement is long and sometimes stressful. Many families will look to these individuals for answers to questions regarding the burial process, as well as words of comfort. I am confident that the instruction given to these graduates over their course of study will assist them in their mission to promote nobility and understanding within the field of Mortuary Science.

Mr. Speaker, as a Member of Congress, I ask my colleagues in the 108th Congress to please join me congratulating the Wayne State University Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences School of Mortuary Science class of 2004 and in wishing them the best in future endeavors.

CONGRATULATIONS TO 2004 DETROIT PISTONS ON ITS NBA CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 2004

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, congratulations to our 2004 Detroit Pistons who brought Detroit its first NBA championship title in 14 years. It has been a long hard climb back up the championship ladder from our two Championships in 1989–90, but the Pistons have fi-

nally reached the top again and can proudly call themselves world champions.

Whereas on June 15, 2004, the 2-time champion Detroit Pistons won the 2004 National Basketball Association championship, defeating the 9-time champion Los Angeles Lakers;

Whereas the Pistons defeated the Milwaukee Bucks 4 games to 1 in the first round of the playoffs;

Whereas the Pistons defeated the Defending Eastern Conference Champion New Jersey Nets 4 games to 3 in the hard fought Conference Semifinals;

Whereas the Pistons defeated the regular season Eastern Conference Champion Indiana Pacers 4 games to 2 in the Conference Finals;

Whereas in the finals against the Lakers, the Pistons won 4 games to 1, giving them their 1st NBA Championship since 1990, and making them the first team from the Eastern Conference to win the title in 5 years;

Whereas the Pistons are the first team to win the three middle games of the finals since the 2–3–2 format went into effect in 1985.

Whereas the Pistons' gritty offense was led by Rip Hamilton, who averaged more than 21.5 points and 4.2 assists per game throughout the post-season;

Whereas Rasheed Wallace overcame foot injury to provide 26 points and 13 rebounds in the crucial game 4 victory;

Whereas Ben Wallace, two-time NBA defensive player and three-time NBA All-Defensive First Team, led the Pistons stifling defense and has brought a working-class mind-set that symbolizes the lunch-pail anonymity which has become the face of the team;

Whereas Tayshaun Prince was tenacious on the ball defense and mitigated the Los Angeles Lakers talented back court;

Whereas Chauncey Billups was voted Most Valuable Player, in acknowledgment of his outstanding offensive and defensive performance throughout the post-season, averaging 21 points a game and 5.2 assists versus 2.6 turnovers in the finals.

Whereas Coach Larry Brown has done an outstanding job preparing his Pistons to take on an exceptional Lakers team, giving him the unique distinction of being the first coach to win both the NBA and NCAA championships;

Whereas former Piston and current President of Basketball Operations Joe Dumars, Coach Brown, and his staff John Kuester, Mike Woodson, Dave Hanners, Herb Brown and Igor Stefan Kokoskov have provided strong leadership and solid coaching, resulting in a basketball team in which teamwork and hard work are the rules and not the exceptions;

Whereas the Pistons fans have shown undying support for their team, leading the league in attendance in a year where attendance records were shattered all over the NBA.

Whereas the Pistons exemplify what can be achieved by a talented group of players working together in concert for a common goal, overcoming a championship proven Lakers' team comprised of NBA all-stars.

Whereas the Pistons have shown that basketball remains a team sport and have reminded us fans that the game is still a team game with fundamentals at its heart and soul;

Whereas, as sports writer Eric Neel so cleverly put it "Once upon a time, there was a shared ball on offense and a shared responsibility on defense. In their Game 5 victory, as in the previous four games, it was that time all over again. We've got retro jerseys and throwback sneaks, now we've got a world

champion from back in the day, to go with them."

Whereas the Pistons's success resulted from contributions from the entire roster of players, including Chauncey Billups, Elden Campbell, Darvin Ham, Richard Hamilton, Lindsey Hunter, Mike James, Darko Milicic, Mehmet Okur, Tayshaun Prince, Ben Wallace, Rasheed Wallace, and Corliss Williamson;

Whereas the Pistons have displayed great strength, ability, and perseverance this season, which are all reflective of the hard-working people of the metropolitan Detroit region and the great State of Michigan, which furthermore is reflected in the team slogan "Going to work. Every night.":

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) Congratulates the Detroit Pistons for winning the 2004 World championship and for their outstanding performance during the entire 2004 season, and congratulates all of the 16 NBA teams who made it into the post-season;

(2) Salutes the achievements of all of the players, coaches, and staff of the Pistons, who worked hard and who were instrumental in bringing the City of Detroit its third NBA championship;

(3) Commends the Los Angeles Lakers for a valiant performance during the playoff finals and for displaying their strength and skill as a team;

(4) Directs the Clerk of the House of Representatives to transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to the Pistons players, Head Coach Larry Brown, General Manager Joe Dumars and President and team owner William Davidson.

IN HONOR OF DR. JOSEPH AND MRS. BETTS SKRHA IN CELEBRATION OF THEIR 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY—JUNE 5, 2004

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 2004

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of Dr. Joseph and Betts Skrha, as they celebrate fifty years of devotion to each other, to their family, and to their extended family—the people of their beloved North Broadway community.

The union of Dr. and Mrs. Skrha represents a shared love and commitment not only for each other, but for their family, and their community. Their unbreakable bond continues to embrace and elevate the lives of their children—Joseph Ray, Betsey and John. The memory of their beloved son, Paul, remains eternal within their hearts, and within the hearts of countless residents along Broadway Avenue and beyond.

A united team, Dr. and Mrs. Skrha continue to serve as each other's confidant and advocate. A couple of doors down from the family home, where they continue to live today, Mrs. Betts Skrha supported and worked with Dr. Joseph Skrha throughout his medical practice. Their steadfast convictions and willingness to help others is reflected in the lives of hundreds of families and individuals, some of whom, like the Skhra's, still live in the old neighborhood. Moreover, they have inspired their children and many others—including myself—to reach out in service to others.

Dr. Joseph Skhra, an ordained Roman Catholic Deacon, was the Director of the Family Medicine Department and Director of Pastoral Care for many years at the now-closed St. Michael's Hospital. Betts Skhra, a scholar and leader in her own right, holds two degrees in nursing, worked within the field for many years, and was the long-time chairperson of the St. Michael's Community Board. Moreover, Betts Skhra is a founding member of Broadway School of Music and the Arts.

Their collective faith and deep sense of spirituality has healed, and continues to heal, the bodies, and more importantly, the heart and soul of the working class people of this neighborhood. They both continue to provide spiritual guidance to the elderly at Lourexis, Alexia Manor and Mead House. Additionally, the Skrha's continue their advocacy on behalf of University Settlement, The Broadway School of Music and the Arts, Our Lady of Lourdes Church and School, and the Cleveland Sight Center.

The Skrha's community service and heart are an inextricable facet of the light that brings comfort, hope and possibility along the streets and within the homes of our North Broadway community. Their leadership and dedication has made a permanent, positive difference within the lives of countless individuals and families—including mine.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor and recognition to Dr. Joseph and Mrs. Betts Skhra, for creating a symphony of love and strength that continues to resound within the hearts and minds of their children, grandchildren and the countless individuals whose lives they've touched along their journey. I offer to both of them my gratitude and admiration for being invaluable role models for many of us whose paths have crossed with theirs as they continue to inspire us all to reach for our dreams, to live in service to others, and to never forget where we came from.

COMMENDING CHAIRMAN TAYLOR
AND YOUNG

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 2004

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend both Chairman TAYLOR and Chairman YOUNG for their efforts to eliminate Federal funding of land acquisitions in the FY05 Department of Interior appropriations bill. I, along with several of my colleagues, have been fighting this battle for some time, and I am pleased with today's results. Federal land acquisitions have been the reason for my opposition to the Interior appropriations bill in the past, but now I can support this legislation.

I offered legislation that accomplishes almost exactly what Chairmen TAYLOR and YOUNG are proposing in the FY05 Interior appropriations bill. H.R. 1517, The Land Reinvestment Act, simply eliminates Federal land acquisitions by zeroing out the land and water conservation fund's Federal expenditures. I want to note that State side assistance will remain untouched and I again commend my colleague's actions for keeping that program funded.

The Federal Government is the nation's largest single landowner. The FY05 Interior

appropriations bill sends a clear message that Congress will no longer tolerate Federal land grabs. I am very pleased by my colleagues efforts and look forward to supporting this legislation.

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
OFFICE OF VICTIM ADVOCATE ACT

HON. CAROLYN C. KILPATRICK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 2004

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, since women were allowed to serve in combat, we have been stunned from time to time by stories of sexual assault and abuse within military circles. In response to numerous reports of female troops deployed in Iraq being sexually assaulted by fellow soldiers, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld established a task force to review its policies and programs concerning sexual assault and the treatment and support of victims.

Several weeks ago the Sexual Assault Task Force reported its findings, and it put a spotlight on serious deficiencies in the way the military has handled sexual assault cases. For example, the Department of Defense has no system for tracking reports of sexual assault; a lack of privacy and confidentiality dissuades victims from reporting incidents of sexual abuse; DoD lacks uniform policies and program to coordinate care and support for sexual assault victims; and there is no commonly accepted definition of sexual assault.

The Secretary's Task Force report does a good job of identifying shortcomings in its management of sexual abuse cases, but it is wanting in arriving at hard solutions for eliminating the problem. For that reason, I am introducing legislation today that would authorize the establishment of the Office of Victim Advocate at the Secretary level.

The DoD Office of the Victim Advocate would provide access to services for victims and survivors associated with the military. Moreover, it would establish policies procedures and practices by which the privacy and confidentiality of persons seeking assistance for assaults and abuse inflicted upon them by military personnel can be protected. The Office would review complaints of persons and investigate the ones where victims may be in need of or benefit from services of a victim advocate. The proposed Office would evaluate the delivery of services by the various military departments and coordinate the services provided by those departments.

The Defense Department can be more aggressive in its handling of sexual abuse cases and that is the goal and mission of the Office of the Victim Advocate. I am hopeful that my colleagues on the House Armed Services Committee will assign this issue a high priority within the Office of the Secretary of Defense and support this legislation.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION SHORTCOMINGS

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 2004

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member commends to his colleagues the following editorial from the May 27, 2004, Lincoln Journal Star. The editorial highlights some of the shortcomings of the Transportation Security Administration and its baggage screening system. Clearly, the creation of a large, new Federal force is not necessarily the best way to address legitimate security concerns.

[From the Lincoln Journal Star, May 27, 2004]

NUCLEAR PLANT SPECIAL FORCE
QUESTIONABLE

An alarmed Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham wants more and tighter security at government facilities that have radioactive material that could be fashioned into nuclear devices.

No argument here. The dangers of lax security at such sites are too awful to contemplate and too real to dismiss.

According to an account from The Associated Press, Abraham, in calling earlier this month for reforms, cited poor performance in mock security exercises and other failings—cheating on readiness tests, lost keys—by guards from private contractors.

Chief among Abraham's solutions to the problems he found: a federal police force to guard the facilities and an elite force to protect areas with the most sensitive nuclear weapons material.

Sounds impressive, until you consider how the last special force set up for national security has done.

That force—the hardworking men and women of the Transportation Security Administration—still hasn't proved that it can reliably protect the nation's commercial airports.

To be sure, they're trying.

Since the agency started work Nov. 19, 2002, it geared up with some 60,000 people to screen passengers and their luggage. Congress has since limited that number to 45,000, so the agency has raised and lowered staffing at airports here and there to meet demand.

The agency professionals have confiscated thousands of banned objects from often bewildered, sometimes bemused travelers: guns and garrotes; straight razors and knitting needles; tin snips and butter knives.

There is also little doubt the agency has thwarted dangerous incidents long before they reached any newspaper's front page and for that it should be honored and thanked.

But the Transportation Security Administration's still young and still learning some hard lessons. Among them that shake public faith:

In November, a college student secreted box cutters through airport checkpoints and onto at least two planes. He sent an e-mail to federal authorities saying he had put the items aboard two specific Southwest Airlines flights. The objects were not found until five weeks later.

In November, an Eppley Airfield baggage screener was charged with dealing cocaine after 8 ounces of cocaine, 7 grams of crack cocaine and manufacturing equipment were found in his Omaha home. According to the AP, between 1993 and 1997 the man was convicted of six misdemeanors including obstructing an officer and disorderly conduct.

In October, it was reported that written tests given potential baggage screeners never