

from the witnesses today. Despite the federal government's record, it is my sincere hope that this hearing will lead to concrete reforms in contracting practices.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 4, 2006*

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to be present for rollcall votes 121, 122, 123, and 124. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote 121, "yea" on rollcall vote 122, "nay" on rollcall vote 123, and "no" on rollcall vote 124. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my statement appear in the permanent RECORD immediately following these votes.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DC NATIONAL GUARD HOMELAND SECURITY ACT OF 2006

**HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON**

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 4, 2006*

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce the fourth bill in the Free and Equal DC series. This series includes measures that all involve obsolete or inappropriate intervention into the local affairs of the District of Columbia. The other bills in the series are the District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act, the District of Columbia Legislative Autonomy Act, and the District of Columbia Hatch Reform Act. This bill would give the Mayor of the District of Columbia the same authority over the District of Columbia National Guard (DCNG) as the governors of all 50 States have over their guard units. My work on the Homeland Security Committee convinces me that this bill is necessary now more than at any time in the District's history. In most circumstances involving a suspected terrorist incident and in all circumstances constituting local emergencies, the Mayor of the District of Columbia should have the same authority as governors. The National Guards in the 50 states operate under similar dual federal and local jurisdiction. Yet the President of the United States as the Commander in Chief alone has the authority to call up the DC National Guard for any purpose here, local or national. Each governor, however, as the head of state, has the authority to mobilize the National Guard to protect the local jurisdiction, just as local militia did historically. Today, the most likely need is to call upon the National Guard to restore order in the wake of civil disturbances and natural disasters. Today it could prove necessary to act quickly without knowing the origin of an event. The Mayor, who knows the city better than any federal official and works closely with federal security officials, should be able to call on the DCNG to cover local natural disasters or civil disturbances without relying on the President, who may be preoccupied with national matters, including perhaps war or security matters, or relying on a delegated official with little familiarity with the city. It does no harm to give the Mayor the authority. How-

ever, it could do great harm to leave him powerless to act quickly. If it makes sense that a governor would have control over the mobilization and deployment of the state National Guard, it makes the same sense for the Mayor of the District of Columbia, with a population the size of that of small states, should have the same authority.

The Mayor of the District of Columbia, acting as head of state, should have the authority to call upon the DCNG in instances that do not rise to the level of federal importance necessary to implicate the authority of the President. Today requiring action by the President of the United States could endanger the life and health of DC residents, visitors and federal employees. Procedures that require the Mayor to request the needed assistance from the Commander in Chief for a local National Guard matter are as old as the republic, and are dangerously obsolete. This bill would deprive the President of his authority over the DC National Guard. The President could still nationalize the Guard at will, as he can with the Guards of the 50 states, and particularly here in the nation's capital.

Following the September 11th terrorist attacks, I succeeded in including a provision in the Homeland Security Act recognizing that the District of Columbia must be an integral part of the planning, implementation, and execution of national plans to protect city residents, federal employees, and visitors by including the District of Columbia, as a separate and full partner and first responder in federal domestic preparedness legislation. At a minimum, such recognition also demonstrates the respect for local governance and home rule that every jurisdiction that recruits members of the military to its National Guard deserves, especially today when the Guards are no longer weekend warriors, as the Iraq war demonstrates. The confusion that accompanied the September 11 attack plainly showed the danger inherent in allowing bureaucratic steps to stand in the way of responding to emergencies in the nation's capital. September 11 has made local control of the DCNG an imperative.

This bill is another important step necessary to complete the transfer of full self-government powers to the District of Columbia that Congress itself began with the passage of the Home Rule Act of 1973. District authority over its own National Guard apparently was not raised during the Home Rule Act process. However, it was almost unthinkable then that there would be war in the homeland, much less terrorist threats to the nation's capital. What should be unthinkable after 9-11 in an era of global terrorism is allowing to stand old and antiquated layers. Giving the mayor of the District of Columbia authority to call up the National Guard could make the difference in protecting the safety of the residents, federal employees, and visitors alike. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HOBBS HIGH SCHOOL INSPIRATION AWARD

**HON. STEVAN PEARCE**

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 4, 2006*

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Hobbs High School, in Hobbs

New Mexico, which recently earned the 2006 College Board Inspiration Award.

The College Board's Inspiration Award annually honors three schools nationwide that have demonstrated extraordinary achievements in expanding access to college, particularly in financially disadvantaged areas.

Hobbs High School is a model of educational success and its receipt of this award is an accolade to their hard work and dedication to improving the opportunities available to their students.

Hobbs is a community that receives less funding per pupil than any other district in New Mexico and has twice as many people in terms of percentage living at or below the poverty level compared to the national average. However, in spite of these setbacks Hobbs High School has made extraordinary advances in expanding access to college for their students.

Approximately 55 percent of all secondary students at Hobbs High School now participate in Advanced Placement and Pre-Advanced Placement courses and they currently have the largest Advanced Placement program in the State of New Mexico. Demonstrated success has already been seen with last year's 97 percent graduation rates and the increase in the number of those individuals who went on to college upon graduation.

Hobbs High School is a wonderful example of what can be achieved when teachers, students, and community leaders come together to ensure that plentiful opportunities exist for their students. I ask my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in congratulating Hobbs High School for this wonderful academic achievement.

UKRAINIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY STATEMENT ON CHERNOBYL NUCLEAR DISASTER

**HON. SANDER M. LEVIN**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 4, 2006*

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, last Friday evening, I was honored to join Southeast Michigan's Ukrainian American Community in remembrance of a terrible tragedy: the Chernobyl nuclear disaster on April 26th, 1986.

Here in Washington, the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus organized a number of events last week to ensure that Congress adequately remembered this solemn anniversary. Through all of these events, and at the commemoration I attended in Michigan, there was a consensus that as we remember those victims of Chernobyl who lost their lives, we must continue, and indeed strengthen, our efforts to help those who are still living with its consequences.

To that end, I ask that a statement from the Ukrainian American Community in Michigan be placed in the RECORD. It calls on us all to do our part in standing with the Ukrainian people to address the consequences of this disaster that so many still struggle with 20 years later.