

Despite numerous calls for action on mine safety legislation in the Committee on Education and the Workforce, this Congress chose to do nothing to improve the safety of miners until a second tragedy—this time at a mine in Kentucky—forced action in the Senate. Now this bill is brought to the floor of the House for a vote, without any chance for members to offer amendments and improve upon the Senate's initial step. The reason offered for this rush to passage is that action is needed immediately to ensure the safety of miners. Immediate action is needed. Immediate action was needed in January, following the tragedy at Sago. Action was needed over the past 5 years as the administration withdrew or delayed action on 18 different mine safety rules. We do need to act now. But in our haste to improve safety we should take the time to ensure we do things right.

It is clear this bill will in fact improve mine safety. The Senate bill will improve the tracking and communications devices used in mines, increase penalties for noncompliance and improve mine rescue team operations. It is a good step, but we can and should do more. We should use the lessons learned from Sago and take the steps to ensure other miners do not suffer the same fate.

My colleague, Congressman MILLER, has proposed three simple and necessary amendments to this bill that would do just that. These amendments would require random testing of self-rescue devices by MSHA to ensure these vital devices are functional when needed. They would require a minimum of 2 days worth of air for trapped miners. And they would shorten to 15 months the time period for mines to install technology to track and communicate with miners underground. These are simple changes, which miners and the mine industry in West Virginia have already agreed are necessary as a part of the West Virginia Mine Safety Technology Task Force. Miners at the Sago mine and other West Virginia mines will now be protected from the problems that led to the death of those 12 miners earlier this year, not because of the bill we are debating today, but by State law. Miners across the Nation deserve and require those same protections. Passage of this bill, without such amendments, gives false hope to the families of miners in other States that a Sago-like disaster will not befall their loved ones in the future.

The core mission of MSHA is to protect workers by enforcing safety standards. These workers are not the bosses who decide if and how a business will obey the law. Instead they face the consequences of those decisions. They need strong workplace safety laws and vigorous enforcement, and that is what this Congress should be focused on providing. We do a great disservice to workers by ignoring the resources that would offer them greater protections. I urge my colleagues to consider the additional improvements we can and should make for the safety of miners across the Nation. We must refocus our time and efforts toward protecting workers.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 9, 2006

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 223, had I been present, I would have voted "no."

On rollcall No. 224, had I been present, I would have voted "no."

On rollcall No. 225, had I been present, I would have voted "no."

On rollcall No. 226, had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

CONGRATULATIONS TROY
MCCURRY**HON. JOE WILSON**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 9, 2006

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Troy McCurry, a native of Augusta, GA, and a graduate of the University of Georgia. Throughout the past 3 years, Troy has helped me serve the Second Congressional District. From working with legislative aides on special projects to helping communicate with citizens throughout South Carolina, he has been an important part of our team. I have truly appreciated his service and his commitment.

A graduate of Catholic University Law School, Troy recently accepted a position with the Republican Governors Association. I am confident that he will bring the same level of professionalism and commitment to his new job. As Troy begins the next stage of his career, I would like to sincerely thank him for his efforts.

RETIREMENT OF TOM DELAY

HON. JOHN ABNEY CULBERSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 9, 2006

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, today marks the final day in Congress for one of the greatest leaders the House of Representatives has ever seen. In his 22 years of public service to the residents of the 22nd District of Texas, TOM DELAY has always been a tireless and indispensable warrior for the Republican party and the causes of individual freedom, family values, and limited government.

Tom's years of service have been marked by devoted adherence to core conservative principles. His effectiveness can be measured in the countless advances made under his leadership strengthening our national security, restoring individual freedoms, and reigning in a runaway federal government. Tom never backed down from his beliefs and principles, and ultimately his tremendous success made him a target. There is no doubt that the Republican Party, the conservative movement, the state of Texas, and especially the Houston area have lost the services of a great friend and leader.

I will miss having TOM DELAY serving with me in the House, but I am grateful that he has

chosen to remain active in the fight to restore the American Republic. I look forward to continuing to benefit from his invaluable counsel and wisdom.

On behalf of the Houston area and on behalf of my fellow Republican House members, congratulations to a fine leader, a great friend, and a devoted husband and father on a job well done.

FREEDOM FOR ARMANDO
BETANCOURT REINA**HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 9, 2006

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Armando Betancourt Reina, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Betancourt Reina is an independent journalist and has been a chronicler of truth amid the lies and deceit of Castro's villainous regime. Mr. Betancourt Reina works and writes to inform the world about the nightmare that is the Castro regime. Unfortunately, writing and reporting the truth is not allowed under Castro's tyrannical dictatorship. All attempts to portray the absolute lack of freedom in totalitarian Cuba are viciously attacked and their authors are imprisoned and harassed.

According to Directorio and the Committee to Protect Journalists, Mr. Betancourt Reina was detained on May 23, 2006, in the city of Camagüey where the police were carrying out violent evictions. He was covering yet another atrocity committed by the regime against the Cuban people. In an attempt to suppress the truth about these violent evictions from the world, Castro's thugs arrested and imprisoned Mr. Betancourt Reina. Mr. Betancourt is locked in the totalitarian gulag, but he has not yet been charged with a "crime."

I remind my colleagues that, under Castro's totalitarian regime, any freedom of the press, any effort to display the atrocities of the regime under the spotlight of truth, is met with swift and violent repression.

Let me be very clear, Mr. Betancourt Reina is currently languishing in the depraved conditions of the totalitarian gulag for his truthful articles. The U.S. State Department describes the conditions in the gulag as, "harsh and life threatening." The State Department also reports that police and prison officials beat, neglect, isolate, and deny medical treatment to detainees and prisoners. It is a crime of the highest order that people are imprisoned in these nightmarish conditions simply for reporting the facts.

Mr. Betancourt Reina is a brilliant example of the heroism of the Cuban people. Despite incessant repression, harassment, incarceration and abuse, he remains committed to the conviction that freedom of the press and democracy are the inalienable right of the Cuban people. Let us never forget and always support those who are struggling to liberate people from the grip of tyranny.

Mr. Speaker, it is as inconceivable as it is unacceptable that, while the world stands by in silence and acquiescence, independent journalists who write the truth about totalitarian regimes are systematically tortured. My colleagues, we must demand the immediate and

unconditional release of Armando Betancourt Reina and every political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. JAMES
"JIMMY" AYCOCK

HON. WALTER B. JONES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 9, 2006

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. James "Jimmy" Aycock, a native of Fremont, North Carolina, for his dedicated service to his community.

A man of strong faith, Jimmy has been blessed by God with outstanding musical talent. For years, he has shared his talent with others in his community and helped young people develop their own musical talents.

Jimmy began his expansive musical career at the age of 14 and has been a presence on the Carolina scene for more than 50 years as an accomplished pianist, composer, and musical arranger.

In May of this year, the town board of Fremont, North Carolina honored Jimmy with a resolution of appreciation for his 40 years of dedicated service to the community. The resolution expressed gratitude for Jimmy's unselfish contributions of his time and energy.

As a teacher in the North Carolina public school system for more than three decades, Jimmy has made tireless contributions to the musical education of the state's young people. Appointed by Governors Jim Martin and Jim Hunt to serve on the North Carolina Arts Council, he has also volunteered his time and talent by playing at cancer benefits and performing for the Governor of North Carolina.

In an upcoming documentary intended for national broadcast, Jimmy will be the first artist honored in a program by November Entertainment entitled "Carolina Icons." The program aims to exemplify the best of North Carolina's artistic culture. The documentary will feature interviews with Jimmy and those who know him, as well as video of his work in the classroom and in concert.

For Jimmy's long-time service to his community and generous contributions of his time and musical talent, recognition and praise are long overdue.

Jimmy Aycock is a man who has given so much of himself to God and to his fellow man, and I consider it an honor and a privilege to call him a friend.

HONORING THE SILVER CRESCENT
FOUNDATION AND WINNERS OF
THE 2006 SILVER CRESCENT
AWARD

HON. BOB INGLIS

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 9, 2006

Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Silver Crescent Foundation and the winners of the 2006 Silver Crescent Award.

The prestigious Silver Crescent Award for Manufacturing Excellence is a salute to manufacturers in the State of South Carolina. This

award is intended to promote wealth, innovation, and job creation in the State, and to recognize companies in South Carolina who excel in manufacturing.

I am pleased to announce the winners of this year's Silver Crescent Award for Manufacturing Excellence. The three award winners are Jarden Plastic Solutions, Westminster's U.S. Engine Valve, and Bridgestone Firestone's Graniteville plant. Jarden Plastic Solutions is located in my district in Greer, and they are an industry innovator specializing in high-volume precision injection molding. The company designs, engineers, and manufactures everything from recreational equipment to advanced healthcare tools. Bridgestone Firestone is one of the world's top tire producing plants. They are no strangers to success. In 2003, Bridgestone Firestone's Graniteville plant was also named one of the top 10 plants in North America by Industry Week. Finally, Westminster's U.S. Engine Valve is a first class provider of automotive engine components. This is the second time they have received the Silver Crescent Award. These three manufacturers know the keys to success, and I am proud that they call South Carolina home.

To build the next generation of manufacturers and engineers, the Silver Crescent Foundation organizes Camp Success. The goal of Camp Success is to get middle school and high school kids excited about engineering, math, and science. The camp uses state of the art technology to give kids the firm foundation they will need to become highly skilled professionals. By investing time, effort, and money in our kids, Camp Success ensures that South Carolina and our Nation will have the tools necessary to compete in tomorrow's global economy.

I am extremely proud of the Silver Crescent Foundation's efforts in the State of South Carolina. Under the leadership of President Tony Smith along with excellent award sponsors like the South Carolina Research Authority and the Advanced Technology Institute, the Silver Crescent Foundation is leading the way toward a bright future for South Carolina's manufacturers and a new generation of engineers and manufacturers.

Mr. Speaker, please join me as I commend this year's winners, the Silver Crescent Foundation, and everyone involved in the success of South Carolina manufacturing.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 9, 2006

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I was inadvertently detained and missed the rollcall vote No. 237. Had I been present I would have voted "no."

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE OFFICIAL NAMING OF THE JOHN H. BRADLEY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OUTPATIENT CLINIC

HON. MARK GREEN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 9, 2006

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to submit this statement in commemoration of the official renaming of the Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic in Appleton after an extraordinary man, John H. Bradley.

For many years, the Appleton Veterans Clinic has helped administer life-saving medical services to Wisconsin's retired servicemen and women. Now it will bear the name of a man who administered life-saving medical care to his comrades on the battlefield—Pharmacist Mate Second Class John "Jack" Bradley. Not only was Jack one of the six men who participated in raising the American flag at Iwo Jima, he also received our country's second highest award for heroism during combat, the Navy Cross, for his extraordinary efforts in aiding a wounded Marine under intense enemy fire. Jack suffered severe shrapnel wounds a few days after his heroic act, and returned home to Antigo, Wisconsin with his wife Betty after his recovery. He avoided any recognition of his participation in the flag raising, and never told his family he had been awarded the Navy Cross.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank Betty Bradley and the entire Bradley family for their support throughout the naming process. It is an honor to take part in the dedication of the John H. Bradley Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic; a fitting tribute to such an extraordinary man. On behalf of Wisconsin's 8th district and the United States Congress, we thank Jack Bradley, and hope the veteran's clinic in his name stands as a lasting tribute to his dedicated service and cherished memory.

COMMUNICATIONS OPPORTUNITY,
PROMOTION, AND ENHANCEMENT
ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. JANE HARMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 8, 2006

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5252) to promote the deployment of broadband networks and services:

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Chairman, the House passed the Communications Opportunity, Promotion, and Enhancement (COPE) Act. I voted with 105 of my Democratic colleagues in favor of the COPE Act, which will spur much-needed competition in the market for pay-television and high-speed internet services. While communities have expressed concern about the local impact of this bill—and I pledge to work with cities in my district to address those concerns—I believe the act is a crucial step toward providing more affordable broadband services to more consumers.