

House with Lebanon's Prime Minister Siniora and said, "There's no question in my mind that Lebanon can serve as a great example of what is possible in the broader Middle East; that out of tough times the country has been through will rise a state that shows that it's possible for people of religious differences to live side-by-side in peace; to show that it's possible for people to put aside past histories to live together in a way that the people want, which is, therefore, to be peace and hope and opportunity."

Three months later Prime Minister Siniora's nation is a war zone, Israel is under attack daily from Hezbollah rockets, and the United States is content with waiting for the outcome of a conflict which threatens our vital security interests. It is shocking, sad and disturbing turn of events.

Today we pass H. Res. 921 and recommit our support for Israel as it is under attack from a terrorist organization. Our prayers are with the families in Israel that want security, peace and hope. At the same time, my prayers are with the people of Lebanon who reject terror and have rebuilt their country over the past decade after years of civil war. Israeli cities and towns are being terrorized by Hezbollah rockets that should be targeted and destroyed, but I do not believe the massive attacks launched against civilian targets in Lebanon are justified.

The U.S. has an obligation to stand with our ally as well as advance our vital interests in the region—security for Israel and the survival of Lebanon. Defending these interests is complicated and extraordinarily difficult because Israel is not secure and Lebanon may not survive. Unfortunately, the Bush administration has chosen the path of apathy, not diplomatic action. It is absolutely essential that the U.S. engage the region, hold terrorists accountable, and mobilize the Arab world, along with our European allies, to end the terrorist attacks on Israel while providing Lebanon with the support and resources needed to survive and excise Hezbollah. To do anything less in the upcoming days allows the possibility for an escalation into a global security and economic nightmare that will bring this Middle East war home to America.

TRIBUTE TO MICHEL CONLEY

HON. MARILYN N. MUSGRAVE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2006

Mrs. MUSGRAVE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the memory of Officer Michel Conley of the Estes Park Police Department.

On July 31, 1976, Officer Conley and his wife Phyllis were driving up the Big Thompson Canyon. Throughout that afternoon and evening, 14 inches of rain would fall in just over 4 hours time during a tremendous thunderstorm. The rain had brought a large boulder down the canyon, obstructing the road where it came to rest.

Conley stopped and headed to a nearby lodge to alert State patrol of the obstruction. By this time the rain was heavy and the canyon was in danger. Conley, though off duty, acted with the bravery and sense of public service with which he served as a police officer and began to alert residents and visitors in the canyon, telling them to get to high ground.

He notified somewhere between 75 and 175 people, saving them from the 20-foot wall of water that came rushing down the canyon, sweeping away roads, cars, and buildings in its path. Conley's wife was able to get to higher ground, but he was not. As the wall of water came sweeping toward him he climbed a telephone pole in a desperate attempt to get above the water, but the pole was swept away and Officer Conley lost his life. Along with Officer Conley, 143 people lost their lives in the devastating flood.

At the time, the Estes Park Police Department had no formal way of honoring officers who lost their lives in acts of such honor. However, on the 30th anniversary of the flood, and his heroic efforts to save the lives of those in danger, he will be honored with a medal of valor. Today I stand to honor his selfless act of heroism. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"—John 15:13. Officer Conley did so for mere strangers and I pay tribute to his valiant act as we remember the legacy of one of the worst natural disasters in the history of Colorado.

CONDEMNING THE RECENT ATTACKS AGAINST THE STATE OF ISRAEL

SPEECH OF

HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 19, 2006

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, during these troubled times it is more important than ever for the United States to express its firm commitment to the State of Israel.

Since the very beginning of its existence, Israel has been a vital ally of the United States, enjoying a strategic partnership based on shared democratic values, friendship, and respect.

The State of Israel was established as a sovereign and independent nation 58 years ago, and it continues to be a strong friend of the United States and a beacon of democracy in the Middle East. Our democracy must stand by democratic governments such as Israel as their existence is threatened by the forces of totalitarianism and extremism.

The people of Israel have worked tirelessly to live in peace with their neighbors in the Middle East, and I commend them for their efforts. Unfortunately, that fragile peace has been shattered by the acts of terrorists bent on death and destruction, and Israel must be allowed to defend itself against these attacks.

Today a multitude of my fellow Chicagoans will join in a rally at the Federal Plaza to express their solidarity with the State of Israel. I commend these citizens and the organizers of the rally, including the Jewish Federation of Chicago. I also commend the Jewish United Fund for its financial contributions to help move children and refugees out of the northern region until this conflict is resolved.

Madam Speaker, I wish peace and prosperity to return to the region for all of its people. But a just and lasting peace can only be achieved with an end to terrorism. We stand with the State of Israel in that fight.

STEM CELL RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005—VETO MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 109-127)

SPEECH OF

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 19, 2006

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I stand today in strong support of a veto override for H.R. 810, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act. It is clear that a majority of Americans and a bipartisan majority in Congress strongly support embryonic stem cell research because it could prove to be critical for some 128 million Americans who suffer from juvenile diabetes, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, cancer, heart disease, spinal cord injury, cerebral palsy, and other diseases.

Stem cell research is essential for the future of medicine in America; one that should be allowed to transcend political lines so that critical gains can be made to save millions of human lives. One such life is that of my constituent, 24-year-old Bishoy Abo-Saif. In his letter to me, Bishoy described his daily struggle with cerebral palsy. He has been to Canada, the United Kingdom, Hungary, Poland and the Ukraine looking for alternative therapies for his disease. Nothing has worked. Even though he has accomplished academic goals, he still feels he is on the sidelines. As he stated to me, "the wheelchair is always in the way." However, he said that, "stem cell treatment is the only hope to overcome his condition."

Most scientists agree that embryonic stem cell research offers the greatest hope to people like Bishoy. America has always been on the cutting edge of new innovation and now we stand on the brink of groundbreaking medical advancements that would dramatically alter the lives of people such as Bishoy. We must not prohibit this promising research.

But the opponents of this measure have put forward disingenuous arguments that fly in the face of widely accepted scientific research and proven potential. They wrongly portray the decision on funding for additional stem cell research as a choice between one life or another. In fact, we are choosing between disposing of embryonic stem cells or using those cells to save countless lives and advance lifesaving science in previously unrealized ways. It is incomprehensible that anyone would allow politics and personal preference to trump hard facts and science. And, like the overwhelming majority of Americans, I am deeply disappointed and dismayed over President Bush's decision to issue his first veto on this bill, dashing the hopes so many families who are battling critical illnesses have pinned on the promising potential of stem cell research.

President Bush acted to snuff out the hopes of millions of Americans only to please a small right-wing constituency which has politicized this medical issue. Once again, the Bush administration has put politics before science sadly taking hope and health away from countless families. We should not delay or deny the potentially lifesaving research offered by stem cell technology. Bishoy and millions of other Americans are counting on us. As Bishoy stated in his letter, "our hopes and

dreams are in your hands, please do not shatter them. Allow me and others to regain what we have lost.”

I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on the veto override to H.R. 810.

PARK RIDGE, IL,
July 17, 2006.

DEAR CONGRESSWOMAN SCHAKOWSKY: My name is Bishoy Abo-Saif. I am 24 years old. Currently I am studying for my Master’s degree in Social Work, at Dominican University, in River Forest, Illinois. However, I feel that I live in two completely different worlds. These two worlds could not be further apart. Since birth I have had severe physical limitations caused by a condition called Cerebral Palsy. I am one of the lucky few who is not affected cognitively by this devastating condition.

I am writing to you today to implore you to support H.R. 810, for this piece of legislation is vital to millions of people who are afflicted with my condition and other neurological disorders. Since I was diagnosed, at 9 months of age, my parents’ mission was to help me lead a normal life. Unfortunately, the many doctors we visited painted a very bleak picture. A picture, which had no light at the end of the tunnel. One doctor after the other kept telling my parents that I would never walk. Cerebral Palsy is a condition that affects people in different ways. It ranges from severe to mild. Despite the years spent in physical and occupational therapies, the progress is always minimal at best, much to the dismay of the patients and their families.

In our efforts to beat the odds, we kept looking for alternative treatments outside the U.S. We went to Canada, the United Kingdom, Hungary, Poland and Ukraine. The success of these treatments was very limited. Many were not covered by our insurance and the trips were arduous.

To this end, H.R. 810 holds the key to unlock the chains that trap me and others in my condition from experiencing life as it should be experienced. Ever since I was a child, I could not experience activities which other children take for granted. I never knew how it feels like to run or jump, or hit a ball.

Even now despite the fact that I have accomplished academic goals, I still feel that I am on the sidelines, so to speak. The wheelchair is always in the way.

Stem Cell treatment is the only hope to overcome this condition. Doctors have made great strides with animal experiments in the lab. It has been proven that Stem Cells have the ability to regenerate the damaged cells in the brain.

Stem Cell treatment is the catalyst for great progress in the field of medicine. It is the answer to many unsolved medical conditions. This Congress has the opportunity to make history by voting for H.R. 810, which will make a real tangible difference in the lives of the millions for whom Stem Cell treatment is the only answer. People will be able to take steps, regain function of their legs, hands, and affected parts of the brain will regenerate. People will become whole. Our hopes and dreams are in your hands; please do not shatter them. Allow me and others to regain what we have lost.

H.R. 810 is an imperative piece of legislation which will change my life and the lives of millions of other people like me.

Thank you.
Yours truly,

BISHOY ABO-SAIF.

PROPOSED FEDERAL LOAN TO
THE DAKOTA, MINNESOTA AND
EASTERN RAILROAD

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2006

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to an unprecedented federal loan that is fraught with risk, would enrich a private company at public expense and threatens the people of my state, Minnesota, as well as one of our state’s most treasured institutions—the Mayo Clinic.

The Dakota, Minnesota and Eastern Railroad, DM&E, is seeking a massive federal government-sponsored loan of \$2.5 billion through the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Program to expand rail infrastructure in order to transport coal from fields of Wyoming’s Powder River Basin. To sell this taxpayer-financed scheme to Congress and residents along the proposed line, the railroad is making big promises. But go beyond the promises and a troubling picture emerges—one stained with questionable accounting, dubious ethics and the threat of real harm for Minnesota communities and institutions.

As a Member of Congress, I am strongly opposed to asking taxpayers to provide an unsecured \$2.5 billion loan to the DM&E, a company that an established, independent firm, Bearing Point, found to be “a poor credit risk.” Bearing Point’s assessment of the railroad concluded: “DM&E currently appears to be a thinly-capitalized, low-volume railroad,” whose “asset acquisitions were funded largely by government loans and subsidies.” Mr. Speaker, I have attached a description and summary of the Bearing Point analysis for the RECORD.

A recent report from the federal Office of Management and Budget shows the stakes for taxpayers are high since the federal government—U.S. taxpayers—would be responsible for covering all losses if DM&E defaults on the loan. Still, the railroad and their powerful friends in Congress who have greased the wheels for this scheme show no hesitation in taking taxpayers for a ride and offer no assurances that \$2.5 billion of our tax dollars will be paid back.

Our nation is spending hundreds of billions of dollars to fight wars in Iraq and Afghanistan while federal budget deficits are adding trillions of dollars of debt on the backs of our children. Yet some of my colleagues in Congress appear eager to gamble unprecedented public funds on a risky railroad scheme that will profit politically connected business executives and leave hard working taxpayers with all the risk. This is bad public policy and it is bad business. The proposed \$2.5 billion, no-collateral loan is more than all the loans ever granted by the Federal Railroad Administration combined. In fact, this loan would be one of the largest ever granted by the federal government to any private company.

Why does the DM&E need to seek this massive federal support? Could it be that private sector investors who have a fiduciary responsibility to invest soundly know a boondoggle when they see one? Unfortunately, it appears the DM&E has been far more successful in attracting Members of Congress who seem willing to ignore their responsibility to the American people to ask the tough ques-

tions and demand protections and accountability. It is not Congress’ role to be the lender of last resort for high risk, private sector boondoggles. This is all the more true considering the threat the DM&E project poses to Minnesota.

The proposed DM&E line would send dozens of mile-long coal trains through the heart of Rochester, Minnesota every day. Any threat to Rochester’s continued growth is a serious concern for Minnesota since it is one of the fastest growing cities in the state and an anchor of Minnesota’s high-tech economy. Rochester is best known as the home of the renowned Mayo Clinic. The Mayo Clinic is one of the world’s premier medical centers, an economic engine for Minnesota and a health care asset for our entire country. This week’s US News & World Report “Best Hospital Issue” celebrates Mayo’s success, ranking the Clinic among the country’s top medical facilities for treating illnesses ranging from cancer to kidney disease.

The 95,000 residents of Rochester expect the trains to tie up traffic and cause daily headaches for local business owners. Mayo Clinic doctors and researchers anticipate the trains will create an environment hostile and incompatible with the work of a world-class medical facility that relies on sensitive medical equipment and conducts delicate scientific testing. In addition to impacts on the community’s long-term economic prosperity and quality of life, the railroad expansion also raises imminent safety concerns.

The DM&E’s proposed expansion would annually direct thousands of trains through downtown Rochester at a speed of 50 miles an hour. Several of Rochester’s downtown rail crossings are only hundreds of yards away from the Mayo Clinic. A derailment or hazardous materials spill at any of these locations would be disastrous for local residents and Mayo’s vulnerable patient population.

In fact, the DM&E has one of the worst railroad safety records in America. In the past 6 years, 17 people have been killed and 93 people have been injured in 227 DM&E accidents at public and private rail crossings. In 2004, the DM&E reported train accidents at a rate over 13 times higher than the national average, and one of these accidents created a hazardous material spill that forced the evacuation of 100 citizens in my home state. The Federal Railroad Administration itself announced as recently as October 2005 that DM&E has “serious safety problems.” I urge the Federal Railroad Administration to take into account this dreadful safety record and the risk to Minnesota residents this proposed expansion poses.

Wrapping a profit driven scheme in the thin veneer of public good, the DM&E and its supporters in Congress are pushing a bad deal for Minnesota and imposing a financial risk upon America’s taxpayers that is irresponsible and unjustifiable. The Federal government does need to make major new investments in transportation infrastructure, but investments consistent with our national goals and in a transparent process that allows Congress to conduct necessary oversight and stewardship of scarce tax dollars. Public dollars should support taxpayer priorities, not the whims of one company and their patrons in Congress. As is too often the case today, Congress has had no opportunity for oversight, no opportunity to ask hard questions of the DM&E and