Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in an expression of appreciation to Mr. Theodore Gundlach for his years of service to his community and to wish he and his family the very best in the future.

WELCOME TO PRESIDENT NURSULTAN NAZARBAYEV

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 26, 2006

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to welcome to the United States, our true friend and strong ally, the President of Kazakhstan, His Excellency Nursultan Nazarbayev.

Since gaining independence in 1991, Kazakhstan has overcome numerous obstacles and challenges to emerge as one of the world's most dynamic and promising nations. Much of the credit for that should go to President Nazarbayev who led his country through difficult and painful reforms which brought about strong economic and democratic change.

Economically, Kazakhstan is accelerating beyond neighboring countries and most other countries in the world. It is evident that citizens of Kazakhstan are being offered a better tomorrow because the leadership remains committed in investing in its people and country.

Democratically, the ongoing economic liberalization inspired by President Nazarbayev would not be possible without the establishment of democratic institutions coupled with a civil society unique to the social-political nature of Kazakhstan and its people. The creation of over 5,000 NGO's, the founding of an independent judiciary, and the institutionalizing of a pluralistic, multi-party system are just a few examples of the impressive ''resume of freedom'' that this nation has built over the last decade. Kazakhstan is setting a noble example of what can be accomplished through democracy.

Democratization and domestic initiatives are intricately linked to foreign policy. Kazakhstan's dedication to the war on terror is admirable and deeply appreciated by the United States. It is important that the United States and Kazakhstan continue to work together to defeat those who want to destroy our most treasured values.

Today, Kazakhstan is a strong promoter of global peace and stability and I commend President Nazarbayev for taking concrete steps to bring together people of different religions by initiating the Congress of World and Traditional Religions which has become a respected forum where believers of all faiths can work in partnership to find better ways for a better future.

Additionally, Kazakhstan continues to serve as a model to the global community in its leadership on nonproliferation by voluntarily disarming what was once the world's fourth largest nuclear arsenal.

Mr. Speaker, Kazakhstan has a rich cultural heritage and a bright future. The people of Kazakhstan should be proud of their achievements and their leader. It is my hope that the United States and Kazakhstan will continue to build bridges, share ideas, and work closely together for years to come. I am confident that President Nazarbayev's visit to Washington is a strong testament of our growing strategic partnership, and I join many of my colleagues in wishing him a joyful and productive stay in our Nation's Capital.

THANKING MR. RON KURTZ FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE HOUSE

HON. VERNON J. EHLERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 26, 2006

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, on the occasion of his retirement in September 2006, we rise to thank Mr. Ron Kurtz for 26 years of outstanding service to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Ron began his career at the House working as a Systems Programmer. In that capacity, Ron has served this great institution for the last 26 years as a valuable employee of House Information Resources (HIR) within the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer. Ron has made significant contributions in the implementation and management of the mainframe computing environment and, more recently, as a key member of the Storage Area Network (SAN) team. Ron's impeccable management of the mainframe computing environment, through emergencies such as the anthrax contamination event, was key to maintaining continuity of such essential House applications as payroll, the Legislative Information Management Systems (LIMS) and Committee Calendars (CCALS). Additionally, Ron has expertly managed the mainframe environment through numerous advances in technology to include integration with a Storage Area Network as part of the overall HIR business continuity efforts.

On behalf of the entire House community, we extend congratulations to Ron for his many years of dedication and outstanding contributions to the U.S. House of Representatives. We wish Ron many wonderful years in fulfilling his retirement dreams.

ENHANCING THE GLOBAL FIGHT TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 26, 2006

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, today I chaired a briefing and hearing of the House International Relations Committee to examine means to enhance the global fight to end human trafficking.

When I held the first hearing on trafficking as chairman of the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights back in 1999, only a handful of countries had laws explicitly prohibiting the practice of human trafficking. Individuals who engaged in this exploitation did so without fear of legal repercussions. Victims of trafficking were treated as criminals and illegal immigrants, and had no access to assistance to escape the slavery-like conditions in which they were trapped. Few seemed to even be aware that this modem form of slavery was taking place, and those who did failed to recognize it as a violation of fundamental human rights.

However, the situation has changed markedly over the past 6 years. Significant credit for improvements must be attributed to the enactment of the trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, together with two reauthorizations of that Act in 2003 and 2005, all of which I sponsored. These three laws created a comprehensive framework for combating trafficking in persons abroad, as well as the trafficking of American girls and young women within the U.S. As a result of these three laws, our government has been a leader in addressing this serious human rights violation and encouraging other governments to do the same.

Just this past weekend, I experienced the impact of this leadership during a trip to Iraq. Millions of people who lack job opportunities are misled by ads for well-paying jobs and leave their countries for what is presented to them to be the chance of a lifetime. Last year, the Chicago Tribune did a series of articles detailing a practice by employment brokers and subcontractors to bring laborers into Iraq through fraud or coercion. The seizure of the workers' passports and recruitment ''fees'' made it diffIcult for them to escape employment in a war zone. After the State Department trafficking report confirmed this practice, my Subcommittee held a hearing in which Colonel Robert Boyles testifled that the military had issued an order that all contracts include a clause allowing termination without penalty, prohibits the use of unlicensed employment brokers, and ends the practice of confiscating worker passports.

With the compliance inspections set to begin this month, one of the major objectives of my visit to Iraq was to ensure that the order on labor trafficking would be enforced. Major General Bruce Moore, the Chief of Staff for our military in Iraq, assured me that compliance was being checked on this. As of the time of our subcommittee hearing, 90 percent of the contracts had been modified, and the military is ensuring that the other 10 percent will be modified and that implementation of the order will be complete.

Also on my trip this weekend, I spoke with State Department officials about trafficking in Kuwait and Germany. According to reports earlier this year, more than 40 Indian youth had been stranded in Kuwait when their passports had been confiscated by unscrupulous job brokers and had been penalized by Kuwaiti police. State Department officials told me that they have launched an aggressive program entitled FALCON for Fostering Awareness of Labor Conditions to let foreign workers know their rights. In Germany, State Department officials described efforts to discourage patronage of brothels during the World Cup earlier this year in which women and girls were coerced into prostitution. Efforts were especially concentrated on ensuring that the U.S. military did not patronize such establishments. Since the end of the World Cup, the U.S. has continued to work with the German government to ensure that coerced prostitution is ended to the extent possible and facilities are established to help prostitutes who want to escape that life.

One of the key components of the 2000 Act is the requirement that the Secretary of State provide Congress with a list of those countries whose governments are not fully complying with minimum standards to eliminate trafficking

and are not making significant efforts to do so. These countries, designated as ''Tier 3,'' may be subject to certain sanctions, including the withholding of non-humanitarian, non-trade-related assistance. These sanctions can be waived if the government makes significant efforts to comply with the minimum standards, or pursuant to a determination by the President that the provision of assistance would promote the purposes of the statute or is otherwise in the national interest of the United States. The President is to submit a notification to Congress no later than 90 days from the submission of the annual report as to the determination made for each Tier 3 country. I have received numerous reports from our government representatives and non-governmental organizations as to how the implementation of this tier ranking and the consequent threat or imposition of sanctions have dramatically impacted the trafficking practices in the relevant countries.

The determinations for 2006 were due on September 1st and it was the intention of the Committee to examine those determinations at the hearing. It was therefore deeply disappointing that the determinations still had not been provided by the President three weeks later. This raises grave concerns that were examined later in the hearing, including whether the Administration is giving due priority to its stated commitment to combat human trafficking. This delay past the legislative mandate sends the wrong message to these Tier 3 countries as to the urgency with which this serious human rights violation needs to be addressed. And in this instance, it was a missed opportunity to apply additional pressure on these countries through the attention that would have been focused on them at this important hearing.

We did, however, have the opportunity to inquire about the implementation of the Department of Health and Human Services' assistance program as mandated by the 2000 Act. The purpose of such programs is to expand benefits and services to trafficking victims in the United States without regard to the victim's immigration status. Unfortunately, evidence of the need for such assistance within our own country is growing. Just this month, it was reported that a woman from my home state of New Jersey pled guilty to being part of a smuggling ring that brought in more than 20 young women and teenagers from Honduras to work in a bar. These women were virtually imprisoned in apartments, and are alleged to have been beaten, raped, and subjected to forced abortions.

Such horrific stories make us all too aware that this modern form of slavery has silently infiltrated and poisoned the fabric not only of the U.S., but of virtually every society around the world. It is extremely important that this awareness be amplified, so that public outrage will further motivate those of us in government, shame those who are creating the demand for trafficking victims, and ultimately stop those responsible for perpetrating these human rights violations. We were privileged to have with us at the hearing a prominent public figure who is using his position on the world stage to publicize the reality and prevalence of human trafficking. Not only has Ricky Martin given his time and talent to promote the cause as a goodwill ambassador for the United Nations Children's Fund, but he has also established a foundation that is engaged in numerous activities on behalf of trafficking victims and children. As just one indication of his personal commitment to the most vulnerable among us, he visited the affected areas in Thailand following the 2004 tsunami. In April 2005, he entered into a partnership with Habitat for Humanity to construct over 220 homes to provide shelter and safety, particularly for those children orphaned by the disaster.

All three of our witnesses provided the Committee with valuable information and perspectives with which we can indeed enhance our global fight to end human trafficking.

CELEBRATING THE THIRD ANNUAL PRINCE GEORGE'S CLASSIC WEEKEND

HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 26, 2006

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to welcome visitors from around the country to Maryland for the Third Annual Prince George's Classic Weekend.

Hosted by the Prince George's Black Chamber of Commerce (PGBCC), this weekend celebrates black college football, educational achievement, tradition, community pride, and unity. On Saturday, September 30, 2006 at Bulldog Stadium, the Bowie State University Bulldogs will face the North Carolina Central University Eagles. These are two of the top teams in the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA), the Nation's oldest black athletic conference, and the game promises to be a first-rate contest.

Mr. Speaker, the Classic comprises much more than one football game, as an entire weekend of events throughout Prince George's County is planned, beginning tomorrow evening—including a Welcome Reception, services at Ebenezer AME Church in Fort Washington, a Black College Showcase, a Battle of the Bands, the Harlem Renaissance Golf Classic, a Fashion Show featuring the work of local and national couture designers, and a Comedy Show.

This exciting weekend would not be possible without the support of numerous individuals and organizations, and I especially want to acknowledge the new President of Bowie State University, Dr. Mickey Burnim; Dr. Calvin Lowe, BSU President emeritus, BSU Coach Mike Lynn, Jr., PCBCC President Hubert ''Petey'' Green, and Mike Little, President of the Prince George's Classic.

I want to welcome all participants to our state for the Third Annual Prince George's Classic weekend, and I urge my colleagues to join me in wishing them a wonderful celebration.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 26, 2006

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, on Monday September 25, 2006, I missed the following votes: Rollcall No. 471: H.R. 5059, To designate the Wild River Wilderness in the White Mountain National Forest in the State of New Hampshire, and for other purposes.; Rollcall No. 472: H.R. 5062, To designate as wilderness certain National Forest System land in the State of New Hampshire; and Rollcall No. 473: H. R. 6102, To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 200 Lawyers Road, NW in Vienna, Virginia, as the 'Captain Christopher P. Petty and Major William F. Hecker, III Post Office Building'. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea'' on Rollcall No. 471, Rollcall No. 472, and Rollcall No. 473.

IN HONOR OF THE 2ND BATTALION, 127TH INFANTRY

HON. MARK GREEN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 26, 2006

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and privilege to recognize before this House the courageous men and women of the Wisconsin National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry who recently returned from their deployment overseas.

For over a year, the 127th Infantry was based at Camp Navistar on the border of Kuwait and Iraq. The vast majority of their missions were near Camp Cedar, otherwise known as the ''Cedar Run,'' where they served under perilous conditions as escorts for military and civilian convoys in armored trucks. The infantry was also called on to take longer missions into war-torn Baghdad, battling deadly roadside bombs and surprise enemy attacks. These brave men and women put their lives on the line each and every day to fight for democracy and freedom. But their commitment wasn't without heartache. Three courageous members of the 127th Infantry lost their lives carrying the torch of liberty in Iraq and their service will always be remembered.

Mr. Speaker, there's no question the 127th Infantry helped nourish the seeds of liberty in Iraq, and their service and sacrifice are to be commended. It is my honor to recognize their brave efforts today, and on behalf of the citizens of Wisconsin's Eighth Congressional District, I say thank you and welcome home. You truly are our heroes.

RECOGNIZING OCTOBER AS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

HON. JERRY MORAN

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 26, 2006

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the month of October as national domestic violence awareness month. Though we have made great strides in bringing attention to the tragedy of domestic violence, more than 4 million Americans continue to find themselves victims of physical, psychological and sexual abuse. Domestic violence crosses every line of ethnicity, geography, and income. Abuse occurs in every single community in our country—every community—and it must be fought in every community.

It wasn't very long ago that family violence was considered just that—a family matter. A