

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TOWSON UNIVERSITY ANNUAL GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SCIENCES (TUgis) CONFERENCE

HON. JOHN P. SARBANES

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 14, 2008

Mr. SARBANES. Madam Speaker, on the occasion of its 21st annual TUgis Conference, I rise today to recognize Towson University for its excellence in geographic information sciences.

In 1984, Dr. John M. Morgan III, with tremendous vision, created a GIS lab at Towson University. He hosted the first statewide GIS conference in 1988. Since then, the Towson University Center for Geographic Information Sciences, CGIS, has grown to include approximately 35 full-time, degreed professionals dedicated to assisting government agencies, businesses, and non-profit organizations that use GIS to carry out their mission. As the program has grown in size, its reputation has also grown. CGIS has developed strong partnerships with several organizations throughout Maryland and has attracted first-rate students to Towson University who are interested in CGIS and its enormous potential.

The theme for TUgis 2008 is "Democratizing GIS: New Tools for Meeting the Public Demand for Geospatial Information." As a member of Congress, I have been interested in better understanding the needs of those I represent. One way I have been able to gain this understanding is through geospatial information about my district. One of our interns, Matthew Sadecki, who will be graduating from Towson University with a master's in GIS, has been able to construct maps of the district displaying a wide range of information. These maps help me to visualize statistical information related to the geographical layout of Maryland's Third Congressional District and better address the needs of those who live there.

Madam Speaker, I want to again thank Dr. Morgan and Towson University for all they have done to advance GIS to its current form and wish them great success with all they have yet to achieve.

IN TRIBUTE TO EARL MCPHAIL

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 14, 2008

Mr. GALLEGLY. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Ventura County, California, Agricultural Commissioner Earl McPhail, who has the distinction of being the longest serving Agricultural Commissioner in the history of the State of California.

Now, after 29 years of regulating Ventura County's agricultural industry, Earl has decided to retire. He leaves a large set of shoes to fill.

In 2006, the value of agricultural products produced by Ventura County's 2,300 farms and ranches was more than \$1.5 billion. That's an increase of more than \$282 million from the previous year. The county's top three crops in 2006 were strawberries, nursery stock, and lemons.

Earl and the 40 people who work for him enforce state and local regulations on pesticides, worker safety, and other agricultural issues, as well as inspecting flowers and produce for pests before they're shipped to other parts of the state and nation and internationally. It's a huge job with a tremendous economic impact for Ventura County, but Earl has always done it with a calmness that belies his tough resolve in protecting the industry and the industry's consumers.

Earl is a native Southern Californian who graduated with a degree in agricultural biology from the California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and is a graduate of the California Agricultural Leadership Program. He serves as president of the California Agricultural Commissioners/Sealers Association and is a member of the Ventura County Farm Bureau. He is a past member of the Ventura County Environmental Review Report Committee, Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee for National Association of Counties, the Ventura County Management Association Board of Directors, and the Santa Paula Future Farmers of America Advisory Committee.

He is equally active outside the agricultural arena. He is an elder for the Santa Paula First Christian Church and chairman of its Board of Directors. Earl serves as a coach for the Saint Bonaventure High School Baseball League, and is a past member of the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 304, Advisory Committee and the National Association of Republican County Officials.

In addition, Earl is past treasurer of the Santa Paula Little League, past president of the Santa Paula Rotary Club, past president of the Ventura County Fair, Board of Directors, and past chairman of the Ventura County 4H Sponsoring League.

Earl has earned his retirement and we thank him for three decades of professionalism and dedication to an industry and community that has grown tremendously during his tenure. I have no doubt he will continue to serve the community and be an elder statesman for the industry.

Madam Speaker, I know my colleagues will join me in wishing Earl and his wife, Willa, the best in the years ahead. Godspeed, my friend.

HONORING JOSHUA JAMES MURPHY

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 14, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Joshua James Murphy, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 66, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Joshua has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Joshua has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Joshua James Murphy for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

CONGRATULATIONS TO FRATERNAL ORDER OF EAGLES AERIE #1758

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 14, 2008

Mr. SHUSTER. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to extend congratulations to the members and leadership of the Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie #1758 in Waynesboro on the occasion of their 100th anniversary.

One-hundred years ago, citizens of Waynesboro organized Aerie #1758 with a simple objective, to "make human life more desirable by lessening its ills and promoting peace, prosperity, gladness, and hope." They have succeeded!

Over the last 100 years, the Eagles have been an integral part of the Waynesboro community—providing civic leadership, raising funds for children, the elderly, and medical research, and improving the borough in ways great and small. The Eagles have made Waynesboro an immeasurably better place to live, work, and raise families.

I would like to thank the Waynesboro Fraternal Order of Eagles for all they have done for Waynesboro, the state, and the country. Congratulations to the members and leadership of Aerie #1758 and to Eagles who have assembled from across the country to be in Waynesboro on this occasion. Best wishes to them for the next 100 years and beyond!

RECOGNIZING DR. JASON BIGGS FOR HIS ACHIEVEMENTS AND SERVICES TO OUR COMMUNITY

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 14, 2008

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the dedication and commitment of Dr. Jason Biggs to our community of Guam. Dr. Biggs' scholarly achievements and his commitment to youth outreach and educational programs are appreciated by educators and students on Guam. Today he serves as an assistant professor in the University of Guam's Marine Laboratory and is the first Chamorro to hold a tenure-track position within the Marine Lab. He is the son of Joel G. Biggs and Anita R. Cruz.

Dr. Biggs is a graduate of George Washington High School and the University of Guam (UOG), both located in the village of Mangilao, Guam. He obtained his bachelor's and master's degrees in biology from UOG. This academic foundation prepared him to pursue an advanced degree at the University of Utah, and in 2005 he successfully earned his doctor of philosophy in pharmacology and toxicology. Dr. Biggs brings his knowledge and love of learning to our university and our schools. He is a superb role model to our young people.

Dr. Biggs works to promote science and scientific careers to youth through outreach programs. He has authored a textbook designed to introduce concepts in chemistry, biology, and biodiversity to elementary school students to encourage learning through interactive experiments.

Dr. Biggs served in various professional capacities as he pursued his doctorate. He participated in important research as a Molluscan DNA-Barcoder and Specialist of Chemical Ecology of Conidae for the Museum of Natural History in Paris. This research project brought him to the South Pacific country of Vanuatu where he worked with 50 other marine scientists. Dr. Biggs also worked as a forensics consultant for the office of Forensic Science, New Jersey State Police and he now brings these forensic skills to assist in local police efforts.

On behalf of the people of Guam, I commend and congratulate Dr. Jason Biggs for his achievements and his service to our island community. I look forward to hearing of his future academic successes at the University of Guam and his future contributions to our island.

HONORING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PREVENTION OF ELDER ABUSE

HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 14, 2008

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 20th anniversary of the National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse for their dedication to protecting the safety, security and dignity of America's most vulnerable citizens.

The National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (NCPEA) is a multidisciplinary association of researchers, practitioners, educators, and advocates dedicated to protecting seniors. In 1988 Dr. Rosalie Wolf founded NCPEA and served as its President until her passing 2000. Under her guidance and the leadership of her successors, Randolph Thomas and Pam Teaster, NCPEA kept diligently pursued its mission to prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older persons and adults with disabilities through research, advocacy, public and professional awareness, interdisciplinary exchange, and coalition building.

In 1989 NCPEA published the Journal of Elder Abuse and Neglect, what is now the Nation's leading source of information on research and practice in the field. NCPEA has devoted itself to, and impacted the national debate on elder abuse prevention in a manner that has proved to be both substantial and comprehensive. NCPEA has participated in forums to set national policy to various Institutions such as the National Institute of Medicine, the Department of Justice and the Health Resources and Services Administration. In addition, they have forged a strong international presence and including participation in the United Nations Year of the Older Person, leadership involvement with the United Kingdom Action on Elder Abuse, Latin American Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse as well as the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse.

It has been my honor to work closely with NCPEA in the past 5 years. NCPEA was one of the five founding organizations of the bipartisan Elder Justice Coalition, and as the sponsor of H.R. 1783, the Elder Justice Act, I am proud to have their support and grateful for

NCPEA's consistent leadership in the work of the Coalition.

On March 28, 2008, NCPEA will celebrate their 20th anniversary with a celebration right here in our Nation's capital, and I am proud to recognize NCPEA's 20 years of dedication to the protection and safety of our aging population.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate NCPEA on their 20th year of hard work on behalf of our Nation's seniors, and I wish them continued success in the future.

HONORING TARAN RAY WINNIE

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 14, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Taran Ray Winnie, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 397, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Taran has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Taran has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Taran Ray Winnie for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN J. HALL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 13, 2008

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the (H. Con. Res. 312) revising the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008, establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2009, and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2010 through 2013:

Mr. HALL of New York. Mr. Chairman, I reluctantly voted yesterday against the substitute budget offered by Ms. LEE of California. I express that reluctance because this substitute included a number of individual provisions that I am very proud to support.

I strongly applaud the fact that the substitute budget included full funding for vital education programs, including No Child Left Behind. I believe Congress must continue working toward the goal of eliminating unfunded mandates. For too long, President Bush and his Republicans supporters have forced local communities to bear the brunt of the cost of No Child Left Behind's mandates. This has caused undue stress on local government's budgets, and led to an unacceptable increase in local property taxes in the nineteenth district of New York and across the country.

I'm also proud to support the commitment this bill has for full, guaranteed funding for veterans' healthcare. The ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have created a new generation of veterans with new healthcare needs. We must make sure that the VA healthcare system will accommodate this new influx of patients, while continuing to provide high quality care for veterans from previous generations. As a member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I am committed to the fact that the VA must honor the pact we make with our soldiers; if they fight to defend our Nation, our Nation will always make sure they have the care they need.

I was also pleased that the substitute budget included additional steps to provide more immediate help to those people struggling to deal with our troubled economy. I was proud to support the bipartisan economic stimulus package when it passed the House earlier this year, and while it was a good start, I believe we need more relief specifically targeted to working and middle class families who are feeling the worst right now. Relief for these people will only come from our commitment to increasing assistance for unemployment insurance, food stamps, Federal Medical Assistance Percentage payments to states, and housing assistance as is contained in the substitute budget.

Although I've highlighted these specific provisions, there are a number of other highly commendable parts of this amendment I would have been proud to support. The proposal includes much-needed provisions to crack down on corporate welfare and a commitment to expand health coverage to all Americans, which I wholeheartedly support. It also includes the repeal of the Bush tax cuts, which have helped to put us on the path to fiscal ruin while providing no relief for working families.

I strongly support these provisions, and would embrace the opportunity to vote for them. Unfortunately, after years of Republican rule, our Nation finds itself in the midst of a fiscal nightmare, and I believe the only way to restore some semblance of financial discipline is through the admirable budget that chairman SPRATT has put together. It is a difficult decision, but one I do not make lightly. I am also concerned that the substitute amendment failed to include much needed reform of the AMT. The AMT unnecessarily burdens over 30,000 families in my district and threatens to dip further into the middle class. Any budget that fails to deal with the AMT fails to deal with one of our most pressing national concerns.

The underlying budget resolution, which I did vote for, contains significant funding increases for many of the programs I have discussed. The resolution also balances the budget and provides vital AMT relief for taxpayers. In light of our difficult fiscal situation, I believe that the underlying budget represents a strong step forward, and I believe it was deserving of my support.