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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COHEN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 22, 2008.

I hereby appoint the Honorable STEVE COHEN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

HONORING THE ASHE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL ''CANS AND PANS'' STEEL DRUM BAND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, I was honored to join the Ashe County High School ''Cans and Pans'' Steel Drum Band at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center where these fine young people performed for our Nation's wounded warriors. It was a true privilege to give these student musicians, their committed parents and their band director, Scott Turnmyre, a tour of the Capitol before they played for our brave men and women in uniform.

Earlier in the morning while we shared breakfast together, I was struck with how unique this group of young people is. Their desire to perform for our Nation's brave men and women in uniform illustrated the depth of their character and the caliber of their families and of the communities that have raised them. Their music, no doubt, lifted the spirits of our troops at Walter Reed Medical Center. The fact that they would travel hundreds of miles was nothing short of inspiring for all who were in attendance.

I want to thank Band Director Scott Turnmyre for the long hours and hard work he put into getting this trip together and for rallying the people of Ashe County to this very worthy cause. Their generous donations helped make this trip a reality.

The people at the Liaison Capitol Hill Hotel also deserve praise. When they learned about the band's plans to play for the troops at Walter Reed, they graciously reduced the band's room rates during peak tourist season. Kenny Lincoln, Monica Rao and Lisa Schmitt at the hotel went the extra mile to help make this trip possible for the Ashe County Steel Drum Band.

Mike Asgedom at the Union Station parking garage also generously reduced the parking rate for the band's charter bus. Here on Capitol Hill, Stefan Bieret and Ted Daniel in the Sergeant at Arms Office provided on-site parking for the bus while Scott, the students and their parents joined me for breakfast in the Capitol and for a tour.

Of course, I don't want to forget the fine people serving at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. They took care of every detail from parking to setup to greeting the students. Nancy Popejoy, Dayna Jamison and Latanya Torrence dotted every ''I'' and crossed every ''T,'' and I applaud them for a job well done.

I also want to thank Walter Reed Health Care System Commander, Colonel Patricia Horoho. Colonel Horoho took time out of her very busy schedule to thank personally each of the students, and she presented them each with her commander's coin in recognition of their outstanding performance. Colonel Horoho, who also is an Appalachian State University alumna, is a fine example of a dedicated leader who went above and beyond to welcome and to congratulate the students.

Yesterday's performance was an illustration of the generosity and kindness of the people of the Fifth District. It was a proud moment for Ashe County High School. The band members' director, Scott Turnmyre, and the parents are to be commended for their service to our wounded warriors at Walter Reed.

Mr. Speaker, the remarks made by President Bush and by Pope Benedict during the Pope's visit to the United States last week were profound and should be available widely. So I am offering them today to be included in the RECORD.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back.

REMARKS OF PRESIDENT BUSH AND HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XVI AT THE WHITE HOUSE, APRIL 16, 2008

President Bush: Holy Father, Laura and I are privileged to have you here at the White House. We welcome you with the ancient words commended by Saint Augustine: ''Pax Tecum.'' Peace be with you.

You've chosen to visit America on your birthday. Well, birthdays are traditionally spent with close friends, so our entire nation is moved and honored that you've decided to share this special day with us. We wish you much health and happiness—today and for many years to come.

This is your first trip to the United States since you ascended to the Chair of Saint Peter. You will visit two of our greatest cities and meet countless Americans, including many who have traveled from across the country to see with you and to share in the joy of this visit. Here in America you'll find a nation of prayer. Each day millions of our citizens approach our Maker on bended knee, seeking His grace and giving thanks for the many blessings He bestows upon us. Millions of Americans have been praying for your visit, and millions look forward to praying with you this week.

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Here in America you'll find a nation of compassion. Americans believe that the measure of a free society is how we treat the weakest and most vulnerable among us. So each day citizens across America answer the universal call to feed the hungry and comfort the sick and care for the infirm. Each day across the world the United States is working to eradicate disease, alleviate poverty, promote peace and bring the light of hope to places still mired in the darkness of tyranny and despair.

Here in America you'll find a nation that welcomes the role of faith in the public square. When our Founders declared our nation's independence, they rested their case on an appeal to the ''laws of nature, and of nature's God.'' We believe in religious liberty. We also believe that a love for freedom and a common moral law are written into every human heart, and that these constitute the firm foundation on which any successful free society must be built.

Here in America, you'll find a nation that is fully modern, yet guided by ancient and eternal truths. The United States is the most innovative, creative and dynamic country on earth—it is also among the most religious. In our nation, faith and reason coexist in harmony. This is one of our country's greatest strengths, and one of the reasons that our land remains a beacon of hope and opportunity for millions across the world.

Most of all, Holy Father, you will find in America people whose hearts are open to your message of hope. And America and the world need this message. In a world where some invoke the name of God to justify acts of terror and murder and hate, we need your message that ''God is love.'' And embracing this love is the surest way to save men from ''falling prey to the teaching of fanaticism and terrorism.''

In a world where some treat life as something to be debased and discarded, we need your message that all human life is sacred, and that ''each of us is willed, each of us is loved''—and your message that ''each of us is willed, each of us is loved, and each of us is necessary.''

In a world where some no longer believe that we can distinguish between simple right and wrong, we need your message to reject this ''dictatorship of relativism,'' and embrace a culture of justice and truth.

In a world where some see freedom as simply the right to do as they wish, we need your message that true liberty requires us to live our freedom not just for ourselves, but ''in a spirit of mutual support.''

Holy Father, thank you for making this journey to America. Our nation welcomes you. We appreciate the example you set for the world, and we ask that you always keep us in your prayers.

Pope Benedict XVI: Mr. President, thank you for your gracious words of welcome on behalf of the people of the United States of America. I deeply appreciate your invitation to visit this great country. My visit coincides with an important moment in the life of the Catholic community in America: the celebration of the 200th anniversary of elevation of the country's first Diocese—Baltimore—to a metropolitan Archdiocese and the establishment of the Sees of New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Louisville.

Yet I am happy to be here as a guest of all Americans. I come as a friend, a preacher of the Gospel, and one with great respect for this vast pluralistic society. America's Catholics have made, and continue to make, an excellent contribution to the life of their country. As I begin my visit, I trust that my presence will be a source of renewal and hope for the Church in the United States, and strengthen the resolve of Catholics to contribute ever more responsibly to the life of this nation, of which they are proud to be citizens.

From the dawn of the Republic, America's quest for freedom has been guided by the conviction that the principles governing political and social life are intimately linked to a moral order based on the dominion of God the Creator. The framers of this nation's founding documents drew upon this conviction when they proclaimed the self-evident truth that all men are created equal and endowed with inalienable rights grounded in the laws of nature and of nature's God.

The course of American history demonstrates the difficulties, the struggles, and the great intellectual and moral resolve which were demanded to shape a society which faithfully embodied these noble principles. In that process, which forged the soul of the nation, religious beliefs were a constant inspiration and driving force, as for example in the struggle against slavery and in the civil rights movement. In our time, too, particularly in moments of crisis, Americans continue to find their strength in a commitment to this patrimony of shared ideas and aspirations.

In the next few days, I look forward to meeting not only with America's Catholic community, but with other Christian communities and representatives of the many religious traditions present in this country. Historically, not only Catholics, but all believers have found here the freedom to worship God in accordance with the dictates of their conscience, while at the same time being accepted as part of a commonwealth in which each individual group can make its voice heard.

As the nation faces the increasingly complex political and ethical issues of our time, I am confident that the American people will find in their religious beliefs a precious source of insight and an inspiration to pursue reasoned, responsible and respectful dialogue in the effort to build a more human and free society.

Freedom is not only a gift, but also a summons to personal responsibility. Americans know this from experience—almost every town in this country has its monuments honoring those who sacrificed their lives in defense of freedom, both at home and abroad. The preservation of freedom calls for the cultivation of virtue, self-discipline, sacrifice for the common good, and a sense of responsibility towards the less fortunate. It also demands the courage to engage in civic life and to bring one's deepest beliefs and values to reasoned public debate.

In a word, freedom is ever new. It is a challenge held out to each generation, and it must constantly be won over for the cause of good. Few have understood this as clearly as the late Pope John Paul II. In reflecting on the spiritual victory of freedom over totalitarianism in his native Poland and in Eastern Europe, he reminded us that history shows time and again that ''in a world without truth, freedom loses its foundation,'' and a democracy without values can lose its very soul. Those prophetic words in some sense echo the conviction of President Washington, expressed in his Farewell Address, that religion and morality represent ''indispensable supports'' of political prosperity.

The Church, for her part, wishes to contribute to building a world ever more worthy of the human person, created in the image and likeness of God. She is convinced that faith sheds new light on all things, and that the Gospel reveals the noble vocation and sublime destiny of every man and woman. Faith also gives us the strength to respond to our high calling and to hope that inspires us to work for an ever more just and fraternal society. Democracy can only flourish, as your founding fathers realized, when political leaders and those whom they represent are guided by truth and bring the wisdom born of firm moral principle to decisions affecting the life and future of the nation.

For well over a century, the United States of America has played an important role in the international community. On Friday, God willing, I will have the honor of addressing the United Nations organization, where I hope to encourage the efforts underway to make that institution an ever more effective voice for the legitimate aspirations of all the world's peoples.

On this, the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the need for global solidarity is as urgent as ever, if all people are to live in a way worthy of their dignity—as brothers and sisters dwelling in the same house and around that table which God's bounty has set for all his children. America has traditionally shown herself generous in meeting immediate human needs, fostering development and offering relief to the victims of natural catastrophes. I am confident that this concern for the greater human family will continue to find expression in support for the patient efforts of international diplomacy to resolve conflicts and promote progress. In this way, coming generations will be able to live in a world where truth, freedom and justice can flourish—a world where the God-given dignity and the rights of every man, woman and child are cherished, protected and effectively advanced.

Mr. President, dear friends, as I begin my visit to the United States, I express once more my gratitude for your invitation, my joy to be in your midst, and my fervent prayers that Almighty God will confirm this nation and its people in the ways of justice, prosperity and peace. God bless America.

ENGINEERED INTELLIGENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor to focus on an issue that I have been discussing with my colleagues for almost a decade and that I have brought to this floor several times since the year 2000. That is an issue I call ''engineered intelligence.'' By that, I mean the efforts of computer engineers to develop computers with intelligence that far exceeds that of the normal human being and, likewise, the efforts of biological engineers to create either intelligence enhanced forms of human beings, or new life forms that have intelligence far beyond that of the average human.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that science will have a greater impact on the coming century than it has had in the last several centuries, knowing full well of the enormous impact that science has had in the last 100 and 200 years.

As one futurist points out, if someone describes the future 40 years from now and paints a picture that looks like a science fiction movie, that picture may be wrong, but if someone is discussing the future 40 years from now and paints a picture that does not look like a science fiction movie, then you know they are wrong. We will be living in a science fiction movie. We just don't know which one.

I believe that the issue of engineered intelligence is one that will have a greater impact on humankind than even the development of nuclear weapons. Just a few years before nuclear weapons were first exploded, Albert Einstein wrote to Roosevelt, and explained that it was possible to create such a nuclear bomb. In fact, just a few years went by before it was a reality.

Now we have not a few years, but a few decades, to wrestle with the enormous ethical, theological and sociological impacts of the technologies that are out there—just 10, 20, 30 years away. My fear is that we will over the next 10 years do what we have done over the last 10 years: Basically, waste the time that we so urgently need to deal with issues that we have just begun, that we really have not begun, to think through.

Now, as we develop more intelligent computers, we will find them useful tools in creating even more intelligent computers, a positive feedback loop. I don't know whether we will create the maniacal Hal from 2001: A Space Odyssey or the earnest Data from Star Trek. My guess is that we will create them both. There are those who say don't worry because even the most intelligent or malevolent computer is in a box, and cannot affect the outside world. But I believe there are those of the human species who would give hands to the devil, in return for a good stock tip.

I do draw solace from the fact that because a computer is intelligent or even self-aware, that this does not mean that it is ambitious. That is, will it try to affect the outside world? Will it have a survival instinct?

My washing machine does not seem to care whether I turn it off or not. In contrast, my pet mouse does seem to care. We should be working on elements to implant in computers to prevent self-awareness, survival instinct and ambition. But I know no politician is supposed to say that, because it sounds wacky; it sounds like science fiction. But if we are not talking about things that sound like science fiction, then we are not talking about the real issues that will confront us in the generation to come.

We also should focus not only on computer engineering but on the engineering of DNA. Biological engineering starts with an inherently ambitious raw material. Virtually all life forms seem to seek to survive, seem to try to affect their environment to achieve that purpose. Most of them seem to care whether their progeny survive. Now, bioengineers could create a 1,000-pound mammal with a 100-pound brain that will beat your kids on the LSAT.

These are issues that deserve the attention of all of us in the public sphere but particularly those who are our best philosophers, theologians and sociologists.

I thank the Chair for giving me the time to, once again, bring these issues before the House, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to see that these issues are confronted long before science confronts us with new reality.

I believe that the impact of science on this century will be far greater than the enormous impact science had on the last century. As futurist Christine Peterson notes: If someone is describing the future 30 years from now and they paint a picture that seems like it is from a science fiction movie, then they might be wrong. But, if someone is describing the future a generation from now and they paint a picture that doesn't look like a science fiction movie, then you know they are wrong.

We are going to live in a science fiction movie, we just don't know which one.

There is one issue that I think is more explosive than even the spread of nuclear weapons: engineered intelligence. I have spent nine years focused on this issue[1] By "engineered intelligence" I mean the efforts of computer engineers and bio-engineers who may create intelligence beyond that of a human being. In testimony at the House Science Committee,[2] the consensus of experts testifying was that in roughly 25 years we would have a computer that passed the Turing Test,[3] and more importantly exceeded human intelligence.

As we develop more intelligent computers, we will find them useful tools in creating ever more intelligent computers, a positive feedback loop. I don't know whether we will be creating the maniacal Hal from 2001, or the earnest Data from Star Trek—or perhaps both.

There are those who say don't worry, even if a computer is intelligent and malevolent—it is in a box and it cannot affect the world. But I believe that there are those of our species who would give hands to the devil, in return for a good stock tip.

I do draw solace from the fact that just because a computer is intelligent, or even self-aware, this does not mean that it is ambitious. By ambitious, I mean possessing a survival instinct together with a desire to affect the environment so as to ensure survival, and usually a desire to propagate or expand.

My washing machine does not seem to care whether I turn it off or not. My pet mouse does seem to care. So even a computer possessing great intelligence may simply have no ambition, survival instinct, or interest in affecting the world.

DARPA[4] is the government agency on the cutting edge of supercomputer research. I have urged DARPA to develop computer systems designed to maximize the computer's utility, while avoiding self-awareness, or at least ambition.

I have spoken about computer engineering. But there is a whole different area of engineering: bio-engineering. Roughly 30 or 40 years from now bio-engineers should be able to start with human DNA and create a 2,000 pound mammal with a 300 pound brain designed to beat your grandkids on the LSAT. No less troubling, they might start with canine DNA and create a mammal with near-human intelligence, and no civil rights.

DNA is inherently ambitious. Those microbes which didn't seek to survive or replicate, didn't. Even birds seem to care whether they or their progeny survive, and they seek to affect their environment to achieve that survival.

In any case, you have the bio-engineers and the computer engineers both working toward new levels of intelligence. I believe in our lifetime we will see new species possessing intelligence which surpasses our own.

The last time a new higher level of intelligence arose on this planet was roughly 50,000 years ago. It was our own ancestors, who then said hello to the previously most intelligent species, Neanderthals. It did not work out so well for the Neanderthals.

I used to view this as a contest between the bio-engineers and the computer engineers (or if you use the cool new lingo, wet nanotechnology and dry nanotechnology), in an effort to develop a new species of superior intelligence. I felt that the last decision that humans would make is whether our successors are carbon-based or silicon- based:[5] the product of bio-engineering or of computer engineering.

Now I believe we are most likely to see combinations that will involve nature, computer engineering, and bio-engineering: humans with pharmaceutical intelligence boosters; DNA enhancements; computer-chip implants; or all three. First, this will be used to cure disease, then to enhance human capacity. The partially-human will precede the trans-human.

Now how should we react to all of this? It is important that we benefit from science even as we consider its more troubling implications. I chair the House Subcommittee on Nonproliferation which deals with the only other technologies that pose an existential threat to humankind, namely the proliferation of nuclear and biological weapons.

The history of nuclear technology is instructive. On August 2, 1939, Einstein sent Roosevelt a letter saying a nuclear weapon was possible; six years later, nuclear technology literally exploded onto the world scene. Only after society saw the negative effects of nuclear technology, did we see the prospects for nuclear power and nuclear medicine.

The future of engineered intelligence will be different. The undeniable benefits of computer and DNA research will arrive long before the problematic possibilities. Their introduction will be gradual, not explosive. And fortunately, we will have far more than six years to consider the implications—unless we choose to squander the next few decades. My fear is that our philosophers, ethicists and society at large, will ignore the issues that will inevitably present themselves until . . . they actually present themselves. And these issues require more than a few years of thought.[6]

I have been urged not to make this issue the centerpiece of my reelection campaign. One journalist has told me that he can guarantee that computers will not be self-aware or overly intelligent: "All we have to do is get them elected to Congress."

I am confident that if we plan ahead we can obtain the utility of supercomputers, and the medical treatments available from bio-engineering, without creating new levels of intelligence. We can then pause and decide whether we in fact wish to create a new intelligent species or two.

Finally, I would quote Oliver Wendell Holmes in 1913 when he said, "I think it not improbable that man, like the grub that prepares a chamber for the winged thing it never has seen but is to be—that man may have cosmic destinies that he does not understand."[7]

Likewise, it is possible that within the next 30 or 40 years, our children—or should I say "our successors"—will have less resemblance

to us than a butterfly has to a caterpillar. I don't know whether to cry or rejoice, but I do know that our best minds in philosophy, science, ethics and even theology ought to be focused on this issue.

ENDNOTES

1. I gave my first speech on the House floor regarding engineered intelligence on May 17, 2000. For speech go to http://thomas.loc.gov/home/r106query.html on page H 3306.
2. On April 9, 2003, the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Science, held a hearing titled The Societal Implications of Nanotechnology. The transcript is available at http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/science/hsy86340.000/hsy86340_0f.htm
3. A test to determine whether computers are able to demonstrate intelligence matching a human's. In particular, a human sends text-only messages to communicate with both a computer and another human located in a different room. If the human sending the messages cannot determine if the response messages are composed by the computer or by the human, then the computer has passed the Turing Test. It should also be noted that one route to developing a computer with human intelligence is by reverse engineering the human brain perhaps using nanobots.
4. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.
5. While I realize that supercomputers may not use chips with silicon substrate, I still prefer to call computer chips ''silicon''.
6. This issue is discussed in ''Brave New World War'' by Jamie Metzl. Published in Issue 8, Spring 2008, Democracy: A Journal of Ideas.
7. Oliver Wendell Holmes. ''Law and the Court,'' speech at the Harvard Law School Association of New York, 15 February 1913.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 42 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Eternal light, Who brightens our day, here in America You find a nation of compassion. We believe that You will measure us as a free society on how we treat the weakest and most vulnerable among us. Each day citizens across America answer the universal call to feed the hungry, comfort the sick, and care for the infirm.

May all citizens in this vast pluralistic society strengthen their resolve to contribute ever more responsibly to the life of this Nation, prove themselves proud of its goodness and generosity, and so reflect Your glory now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. JACKSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

CELEBRATING 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF ISRAEL

(Mr. CARNAHAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARNAHAN. Madam Speaker, today I rise to join in those sponsoring H. Con. Res. 322, celebrating the 60th anniversary of Israel's independence.

On May 14, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel; and just minutes later in the White House, President Harry Truman signed the order so the U.S. would also recognize this new Jewish State of Israel.

Since then, the U.S. has had a close and special relationship with the State of Israel, shared democratic values and common strategic interests with the people of Israel and the United States.

The people of Israel have fought costs of war, have fought terrorism, and diplomatic and economic boycotts, and still they remain committed to peace and security in their country and the region.

I have had the privilege to visit the country twice and witness the strength and resilience of the people of Israel. They are committed to freedom of speech and freedom of religion. In this thriving democracy, we need to continue that support and the commitment to the peace process, and I congratulate Israel on the 60th anniversary of their independence.

FISA

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Today marks the 66th day since this House allowed the Protect America Act that affects foreign intelligence surveillance to expire. For over 2 months now, we have needlessly hampered our intelligence agencies' ability to conduct surveillance on foreign terrorists because some in this Chamber would rather allow the trial lawyers to have an opportunity to sue telecommunications companies that assisted the government following the September 11 terrorist attack in some 50 frivolous lawsuits in the San Francisco courts.

Sixty-six days have passed while the House considers bills such as the Beach Protection Act, National Landscape Conservation System Act, Arts Require Timely Service Act, and the National Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation Act. This body is failing in its responsibility to protect the American people by continuing to delay passage of a foreign intelligence surveillance bill that will provide our intelligence community with the tools they need to listen in on international phone calls from terrorists plotting to attack the United States.

No matter what my friends on the other side of the aisle say, this is an urgent matter.

WE NEED LEADERSHIP

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the Democrat majority in this House has said they have a plan to lower gas prices and help make America more energy independent. Since January 2007, we have seen no plan but we have seen the price of gas go up over $1 per gallon.

Our outdated domestic refinery capacity, our dependence on foreign oil, and a growing global demand for oil are responsible for the increase in oil prices. So we need to target those issues. We need to build more refineries in the United States, promote all alternative energy sources, and tap unexplored oil and natural gas reserves, including ANWR. This majority wants to target the American taxpayer and raise taxes on American companies.

We need to stop turning our backs on the resources we have here at home and start reinvigorating our energy infrastructure. We need to start investing in American ingenuity and alternative fuels and stop trying to tax our way to energy independence while blaming American companies.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th.

SAN JACINTO DAY

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, April 21 is known as San Jacinto Day in Texas. In 1836, Texas was in a fight for independence from the dictator of Mexico, Santa Anna. On March 6, 1836, 186 volunteers from all races had fought and died at the Alamo trying to hold off the massive invading armies of Santa Anna. Meanwhile, General Sam Houston was forming an army of Texans and Tejanos—Tejanos were Texans of Mexican descent—to stand and fight the three invading armies of Mexico.

Finally, on the swampy, marshy plains of southeast Texas where the San Jacinto River meets Buffalo Bayou, General Sam and the boys took a stand. In broad daylight in midafternoon on April 21, 1836, the volunteers for Texas freedom charged a Mexican army over twice their number. This fierce bunch of frontiersmen from all the States overwhelmingly defeated the invaders.

In 18 minutes, Texas had won independence and the largest amount of land in North American history changed hands because of a single battle.

Texas remained a free and independent republic for 9 years, electing General Sam as its first president. Then Texas was admitted to the U.S. by just one vote. And the rest, as they say, is Texas history.

And that's just the way it is.

HONORING ISRAEL ON ITS 60TH ANNIVERSARY

(Mr. MILLER of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today also to honor the state of Israel which will celebrate its 60th anniversary in May. The relationship between the United States and Israel is indeed a special one. Israel has been our close friend and ally through the Cold War and now in the global war on terror. It is a relationship that will continue to strengthen in the years to come.

Even after 60 years, Israel continues to fight for its very survival against relentless attacks by Hamas and Hezbollah and other terrorist groups. The United States and Israel must always stand in complete solidarity against those nations and groups that seek to destroy Israel. We have stood together against anti-Semitism for the last 60 years, and we will continue to do so for many years to come.

I congratulate the Israeli government and the Israeli people on their special day. May God continue to bless the very close American relationship with Israel not only in this special year, but for all eternity.

OIL HITS $118 A BARREL

(Mr. DUNCAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, oil has hit $118 a barrel. Gas is $3.50 to $4 a gallon. Fox News this morning said some experts say it will be $5 a gallon by later this summer.

Most environmental radicals and extremists seem to come from very wealthy or very upper-income families. They want gas to go even higher so people will drive less. Perhaps the wealthy leaders of the Sierra Club and some of these other environmental groups aren't being hurt, but they are really hurting the poor and the lower income and the working people of this country.

We don't need to produce all of our oil here domestically, but if we would just start producing a little bit more, then some of the OPEC countries and foreign energy producers would hold their prices down. We need to not let this country be sent into a deeper recession by environmental extremists and radicals.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JACKSON of Illinois) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, April 18, 2008.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on April 18, 2008, at 10:00 a.m.:

That the Senate passed with an amendment H.R. 1195.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

LORRAINE C. MILLER,
Clerk of the House.

RESIGNATION FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation from the House of Representatives:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, April 9, 2008.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI, I am hereby resigning my position as the United States Representative for the 4th District of Maryland effective 11:59 p.m. EST, May 31, 2008.

I have chosen that date because it allows me the necessary time to complete several ongoing projects and allows Governor O'Malley sufficient time to call a special election to fill the remainder of my term and maintain the super delegate seat at this year's Democratic Convention.

It has been my honor to serve the constituents of the 4th Congressional District for the past 16 years. I will do everything in my power to assist my successor with the transition.

Sincerely,

ALBERT R. WYNN,
Member of Congress.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, April 9, 2008.

Hon. MARTIN O'MALLEY,
Governor, State of Maryland, Maryland State House, State Circle, Annapolis, MD.

DEAR GOVERNOR O'MALLEY, I am hereby resigning my position as the United States Representative for the 4th District of Maryland effective 11:59 p.m. EST, May 31, 2008.

I have chosen that date because it allows me the necessary time to complete several ongoing projects and allows you sufficient time to call a special election to fill the remainder of my term and maintain the super delegate seat at this year's Democratic Convention.

It has been my honor to serve the constituents of the 4th Congressional District for the past 16 years. I will do everything in my power to assist my successor with the transition.

Sincerely,

ALBERT R. WYNN,
Member of Congress.

□ 1415

COMMUNICATION FROM THE HONORABLE JOHN A. BOEHNER, REPUBLICAN LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable JOHN A. BOEHNER, Republican Leader:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, April 17, 2008.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI: Pursuant to Section 605(a) of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008 (P.L. 110–161), I am pleased to appoint Dr. David Schonfeld of Glendale, Ohio and Mr. Lawrence E. Tan of Newark, Delaware to the Commission on Children and Disasters.

Both Dr. Schonfeld and Mr. Lawrence Tan have expressed interest in serving in this capacity and I am pleased to fulfill their requests.

Sincerely,

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Republican Leader.

COMMUNICATION FROM DISTRICT LIAISON, THE HONORABLE TODD TIAHRT, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from Jill Craven, District Liaison, the Honorable TODD TIAHRT, Member of Congress:

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 15, 2008.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: This is to formally notify you, pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that I have been served with a preliminary hearing subpoena for testimony issued by the Court of the Eighteenth Judicial District of Kansas.

After consulting with the Office of General Counsel, I have determined that compliance with the subpoena is consistent with the privileges and rights of the House.

Sincerely,

JILL CRAVEN.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the

vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

COPPER SALMON WILDERNESS ACT

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3513) to amend the Oregon Wilderness Act of 1984 to designate the Copper Salmon Wilderness and to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate segments of the North and South Forks of the Elk River in the State of Oregon as wild or scenic rivers, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3513

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Copper Salmon Wilderness Act of 2008''.

SEC. 2. DESIGNATION OF THE COPPER SALMON WILDERNESS.

(a) DESIGNATION.—Section 3 of the Oregon Wilderness Act of 1984 (16 U.S.C. 1132 note; Public Law 98–328) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''eight hundred fifty-nine thousand six hundred acres'' and inserting ''871,593 acres'';

(2) in paragraph (29), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(30) certain land in the Siskiyou National Forest, comprising approximately 11,922 acres, as generally depicted on the map entitled 'Copper Salmon Wilderness Proposal' and dated April 1, 2008, to be known as the 'Copper Salmon Wilderness'.''.

(b) MAPS AND LEGAL DESCRIPTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture (referred to in this Act as the ''Secretary'') shall file a map and a legal description of the Copper Salmon Wilderness with—

(A) the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives.

(2) FORCE OF LAW.—The map and legal description filed under paragraph (1) shall have the same force and effect as if included in this Act, except that the Secretary may correct typographical errors in the map and legal description.

(3) BOUNDARY.—If the boundary of the Copper Salmon Wilderness shares a border with a road, the Secretary may only establish an offset that is not more than 150 feet from the centerline of the road.

(4) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—Each map and legal description filed under paragraph (1) shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the Forest Service.

SEC. 3. WILD AND SCENIC RIVER DESIGNATIONS, ELK RIVER, OREGON.

Section 3(a)(76) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1274(a)(76)) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''19-mile segment'' and inserting ''28.2-mile segment'';

(2) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''; and'' and inserting a period; and

(3) by striking subparagraph (B) and inserting the following:

''(B)(i) The approximately 0.6-mile segment of the North Fork Elk from its source in sec. 21, T. 33 S., R. 12 W., Willamette Meridian, downstream to 0.01 miles below Forest Service Road 3353, as a scenic river.

''(ii) The approximately 5.5-mile segment of the North Fork Elk from 0.01 miles below Forest Service Road 3353 to its confluence with the South Fork Elk, as a wild river.

''(C)(i) The approximately 0.9-mile segment of the South Fork Elk from its source in the southeast quarter of sec. 32, T. 33 S., R. 12 W., Willamette Meridian, downstream to 0.01 miles below Forest Service Road 3353, as a scenic river.

''(ii) The approximately 4.2-mile segment of the South Fork Elk from 0.01 miles below Forest Service Road 3353 to its confluence with the North Fork Elk, as a wild river.''.

SEC. 4. PROTECTION OF TRIBAL RIGHTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed as diminishing any right of any Indian tribe.

(b) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.—The Secretary shall seek to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Coquille Indian Tribe regarding access to the Copper Salmon Wilderness to conduct historical and cultural activities.

SEC. 5. DESIGNATION OF POTENTIAL WILDERNESS AREA, SISKIYOU NATIONAL FOREST, OREGON.

(a) DESIGNATION.—In furtherance of the purposes of the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), certain National Forest System land in the State of Oregon administered by the Forest Service as part of the Siskiyou National Forest and compromising approximately 1,708 acres, as generally depicted on the map entitled ''Copper Salmon Wilderness Proposal'' and dated April 1, 2008, are designated as a potential wilderness area for eventual inclusion in the Copper Salmon Wilderness designated by paragraph (30) of section 3 of the Oregon Wilderness Act of 1984 (16 U.S.C. 1132 note; Public Law 98–328), as added by section 2.

(b) MAP AND LEGAL DESCRIPTION.—As soon as practicable after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall file with the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate a map and legal description of potential wilderness area designated by subsection (a). The map and legal description shall have the same force and effect as if included in this Act, except that the Secretary may correct clerical and typographical errors in the map and description. In the case of any discrepancy between the acreage specified in subsection (a) and the map, the map shall control. The map and legal description shall be on file and available for public inspection in the Office of the Chief of the Forest Service.

(c) MANAGEMENT.—Except as provided in subsection (d) and subject to valid existing rights, the Secretary shall manage the potential wilderness area designated by subsection (a) as wilderness until its designated as wilderness under subsection (e).

(d) ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For the purposes of implementing the planned ecological restoration approved by the Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Environmental Assessment for the Coastal Healthy Forest Treatments, dated May 25, 2007, the Secretary may use motorized equipment and mechanized transport in the potential wilderness area until its designated as wilderness under subsection (e).

(2) LIMITATION.—To the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary shall use the minimum tool or administrative practice necessary to accomplish ecological restoration under paragraph (1) with the least amount of adverse impact on wilderness character and resources.

(e) EVENTUAL WILDERNESS DESIGNATION.—The potential wilderness area designated by subsection (a) shall be designated as wilderness on the earlier of—

(1) the date on which the Secretary publishes in the Federal Register notice that the conditions in the potential wilderness area that are incompatible with the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.) have been removed; or

(2) the date that is 10 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(f) INCORPORATION INTO COPPER SALMON WILDERNESS; ADMINISTRATION.—On its designation as wilderness under subsection (e), the potential wilderness area designated by subsection (a) shall be—

(1) incorporated into the Copper Salmon Wilderness; and

(2) administered in accordance with the Wilderness Act, the Oregon Wilderness Act of 1984, and other laws applicable to the Copper Salmon Wilderness, except that, with respect to the potential wilderness area, any reference in the Wilderness Act to the effective date of that Act shall be deemed to be a reference to the date on which the lands are designated as wilderness under subsection (e).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from West Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, today the House of Representatives starts our celebration of Earth Day with the consideration of two measures to designate wilderness on Federal lands in opposite ends of the country, Oregon, and in my home State of West Virginia.

As chairman of the Committee on Natural Resources, I think it appropriate to recognize that in many places of this great Nation of ours, there remain areas with special features, unique landscapes teeming with wildlife that deserve and command conservation.

The pending measure, introduced by our colleague, Representative PETER DEFAZIO, would designate portions of the National Forest System land in Oregon as wilderness and potential wilderness, and designate segments of the Elk River as wild and scenic.

These areas include some of the last remaining stands of Port Orford Cedars in the Elk River watershed. Furthermore, the fisheries of the Elk River are known as one of the best salmon and steelhead producers in the continental United States.

This bill has broad support from the Governor of Oregon, the Curry County Commission, the Mayor of Port Orford, the Port Orford Chamber of Commerce, the Friends of the Elk River, Trout Unlimited, and the American Fisheries Society, the Oregon Chapter.

I wish to commend our colleague, a member of our Natural Resources Committee and our Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Representative DEFAZIO, for his outstanding work on this bill.

I support H.R. 3513.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I will simply rise to say this: I believe that Chairman RAHALL has adequately described this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RAHALL. I have no further requests for time. We're ready to yield back if the gentleman from Tennessee is.

Mr. DUNCAN. I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of H.R. 3513, the Copper Salmon Wilderness Act.

The Copper Salmon Wilderness Act would permanently protect nearly 13,000 acres in the headwaters of the Elk River on the southern coast of Oregon, and designate more than 11 additional miles of the river as either Wild or Scenic under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. This legislation would protect some of the last remaining stands of Port-Orford-cedar in the Elk River watershed, which has the distinction as one of the most productive salmon and steelhead rivers outside of Alaska. This is rugged, wild territory, and I am hopeful that it may finally become wilderness in the 110th Congress:

Renowned among fishermen, the Elk River watershed is one of the last intact watersheds on the southwest Oregon Coast and is widely regarded as Oregon's last, best coastal salmon and steelhead stream. Oregon State University researchers have concluded that the Elk River is one of the healthiest habitats in the lower 48 states for anadromous fish, and the stream is home to chinook salmon, winter steelhead, coho salmon, cutthroat trout, and rainbow trout.

One of the things about this legislation about which I am most proud is that diverse stakeholders have been working together for more than a decade to gain broad support for protecting the Copper Salmon area. H.R. 3513 enjoys backing from Curry County Commissioners, local elected officials, the local Chamber of Commerce, hunting and fishing groups, tribes, the timber industry, and all local conservation groups. This is a model for the community-based consensus approach to designating wilderness.

Copper Salmon is truly a rare coastal Oregon gem. It is almost entirely intact ancient forest, which supports healthy fish runs and great elk herds, blacktailed deer, bears, and other wildlife. It is adjacent to the existing Grassy Knob Wilderness, and combined, these two areas will be one of the largest intact areas of forest in the Coast Range. This is an area that deserves protection for the enjoyment of future generations.

I am a proud advocate of protecting the Copper Salmon area, and urge my colleagues to join me in the passage of H.R. 3513, the Copper Salmon Wilderness Act.

Mr. RAHALL. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3513, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WILD MONONGAHELA ACT: A NATIONAL LEGACY FOR WEST VIRGINIA'S SPECIAL PLACES

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5151) to designate as wilderness additional National Forest System lands in the Monongahela National Forest in the State of West Virginia, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5151

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Wild Monongahela Act: A National Legacy for West Virginia's Special Places''.

SEC. 2. DESIGNATION OF WILDERNESS, MONONGAHELA NATIONAL FOREST, WEST VIRGINIA.

(a) DESIGNATION.—In furtherance of the purposes of the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), the following Federal lands within the Monongahela National Forest in the State of West Virginia are designated as wilderness and as either a new component of the National Wilderness Preservation System or as an addition to an existing component of the National Wilderness Preservation System:

(1) Certain Federal land comprising approximately 5,144 acres, as generally depicted on the map entitled ''Big Draft Proposed Wilderness'' and dated March 11, 2008, which shall be known as the ''Big Draft Wilderness''.

(2) Certain Federal land comprising approximately 11,951 acres, as generally depicted on the map entitled ''Cranberry Expansion Proposed Wilderness'' and dated March 11, 2008, which shall be added to and administered as part of the Cranberry Wilderness designated by section 1(1) of Public Law 97–466 (96 Stat. 2538).

(3) Certain Federal land comprising approximately 7,156 acres, as generally depicted on the map entitled ''Dolly Sods Expansion Proposed Wilderness'' and dated March 11, 2008, which shall be added to and administered as part of the Dolly Sods Wilderness designated by section 3(a)(13) of Public Law 93–622 (88 Stat. 2098).

(4) Certain Federal land comprising approximately 698 acres, as generally depicted on the map entitled ''Otter Creek Expansion Proposed Wilderness'' and dated March 11, 2008, which shall be added to and administered as part of the Otter Creek Wilderness designated by section 3(a)(14) of Public Law 93–622 (88 Stat. 2098).

(5) Certain Federal land comprising approximately 6,792 acres, as generally depicted on the map entitled ''Roaring Plains Proposed Wilderness'' and dated March 11, 2008, which shall be known as the ''Roaring Plains West Wilderness''.

(6) Certain Federal land comprising approximately 6,030 acres, as generally depicted on the map entitled ''Spice Run Proposed Wilderness'' and dated March 11, 2008, which shall be known as the ''Spice Run Wilderness''.

(b) MAPS AND LEGAL DESCRIPTION.—

(1) FILING AND AVAILABILITY.—As soon as practicable after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, shall file with the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate a map and legal description of each wilderness area designated or expanded by subsection (a). The maps and legal descriptions shall be on file and available for public inspection in the office of the Chief of the Forest Service and the office of the Supervisor of the Monongahela National Forest.

(2) FORCE AND EFFECT.—The maps and legal descriptions referred to in this subsection shall have the same force and effect as if included in this Act, except that the Secretary may correct errors in the maps and descriptions.

(c) ADMINISTRATION.—Subject to valid existing rights, the Federal lands designated as wilderness by subsection (a) shall be administered by the Secretary in accordance with the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.). The Secretary may continue to authorize the competitive running event permitted from 2003 through 2007 in the vicinity of the boundaries of the Dolly Sods Wilderness addition designated by paragraph (3) of subsection (a) and the Roaring Plains West Wilderness Area designated by paragraph (5) of such subsection, in a manner compatible with the preservation of such areas as wilderness.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE OF WILDERNESS ACT.—With respect to the Federal lands designated as wilderness by subsection (a), any reference in the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.) to the effective date of the Wilderness Act shall be deemed to be a reference to the date of the enactment of this Act.

(e) FISH AND WILDLIFE.—As provided in section 4(d)(7) of the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1133(d)(7)), nothing in this section affects the jurisdiction or responsibility of the State of West Virginia with respect to wildlife and fish.

SEC. 3. BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT, LAUREL FORK SOUTH WILDERNESS, MONONGAHELA NATIONAL FOREST.

(a) BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT.—The boundary of the Laurel Fork South Wilderness designated by section 1(3) of Public Law 97–466 (96 Stat. 2538) is modified to exclude two parcels of land, as generally depicted on the map entitled ''Monongahela National Forest Laurel Fork South Wilderness Boundary Modification'' and dated March 11, 2008, and more particularly described according to the site-specific maps and legal descriptions on file in the office of the Forest Supervisor, Monongahela National Forest. The general map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the Office of the Chief of the Forest Service.

(b) MANAGEMENT.—Federally owned land delineated on the maps referred to in subsection (a) as the Laurel Fork South Wilderness, as modified by such subsection, shall continue to be administered by the Secretary of Agriculture in accordance with Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.). Any reference in the Wilderness Act to the effective date of that Act shall be deemed to be a reference to the effective date of Public Law 97–466 and this Act.

SEC. 4. MONONGAHELA NATIONAL FOREST BOUNDARY CONFIRMATION.

The boundary of the Monongahela National Forest is confirmed to include the tracts of land as generally depicted on the map entitled ''Monongahela National Forest

Boundary Confirmation'' and dated March 13, 2008, and all Federal lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, encompassed within such boundary shall be managed under the laws and regulations pertaining to the National Forest System.

SEC. 5. ENHANCED TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES.

(a) PLAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with interested parties, shall develop a plan to provide for enhanced nonmotorized recreation trail opportunities on lands not designated as wilderness within the Monongahela National Forest.

(2) NONMOTORIZED RECREATION TRAIL DEFINED.—For the purposes of this subsection, the term ''nonmotorized recreation trail'' means a trail designed for hiking, bicycling, and equestrian use.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit to Congress a report on the implementation of the plan required under subsection (a), including the identification of priority trails for development.

(c) CONSIDERATION OF CONVERSION OF FOREST ROADS TO RECREATIONAL USES.—In considering possible closure and decommissioning of a Forest Service road within the Monongahela National Forest after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture, in accordance with applicable law, may consider converting the road to nonmotorized uses to enhance recreational opportunities within the Monongahela National Forest.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from West Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. RAHALL. Today, it is my privilege to bring to the floor of the House of Representatives the ''Wild Monongahela Act: A National Legacy for West Virginia's Special Places.''

This legislation is supported by the entire West Virginia delegation: In this body, my colleagues Representatives ALAN MOLLOHAN and SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO, and in the other body, our Senators, ROBERT C. BYRD and JAY ROCKEFELLER.

The pending measure would designate 37,771 acres of Federal land as wilderness within the Monongahela National Forest.

Included in this legislation is the expansion of three existing wilderness areas: Cranberry, Dolly Sods and Otter Creek. Additionally, three new wilderness areas would be established: The Big Draft, the Roaring Plains West, and Spice Run.

The issue of wilderness has captivated many Americans since the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964. According to this landmark statute, these are places ''where the Earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.''

To be in a wilderness area is, to me, truly a humbling experience. To be part of designating wilderness is even more humbling because wilderness is an effort to retain the landscape as God has created it.

As the Reverend Dennis Sparks, Executive Director of the West Virginia Council of Churches wrote to me, and I quote, ''We believe that carefully protecting this wonderful national forest and its wilderness-quality lands not only has a sound biblical basis, but is also the best and most practical course of action for safeguarding the world which we will pass along to our children.''

A great many people have worked to make this legislation possible: Matt Keller, Dave Saville, Mary Wimmer, Beth Little, Mayor John Manchester of Lewisburg, West Virginia, Bob Bittner, Jr., Mike Price, as well as the Reverend Sparks. And there are many others with whom I've hiked and with who I've worked on this legislation for which time will not allow me to name them all.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the Monongahela National Forest Supervisor, Clyde Thompson, as well as to Sammie Lammie, for his excellent map making.

And finally, to the Governor of West Virginia, Joe Manchin, and to the Division of our Natural Resources Director, Frank Jezioro. We have and will continue to work to ensure that appropriate wildlife management activities can take place in the areas designated by this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I submit the following exchange of letters for the RECORD.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, April 17, 2008.

Hon. NICK J. RAHALL II,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources, Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: On April 2, 2008 the Committee on Natural Resources favorably reported an amended version of H.R. 5151, the ''Wild Monongahela Act: A National Legacy for West Virginia's Special Places.'' As you are aware, the bill was primarily referred to Committee of Natural Resources, while the Agriculture Committee received an additional referral.

H.R. 5151 seeks, among other policy objectives, to designate as ''wilderness'' certain Federal Lands within the Monongahela National Forest in the State of West Virginia. Clause 1(a) of Rule X confers upon the Agriculture Committee jurisdiction over bills relating to forestry in general and forests other than those created from the public domain. In the past, the Committee on Agriculture has worked cooperatively with the Committee on Natural Resources regarding matters that generally concern forestry.

It is my understanding that the Committee on Natural Resources wishes to have the House of Representatives consider the bill next week. Given the need to expedite this legislation, I will agree to discharge H.R. 5151 from further consideration by the Committee on Agriculture. I do so with the understanding that this action in no way waives the Committee on Agriculture's jurisdictional interests in the subject matter of the legislation or serves as a precedent for future referrals. Furthermore, in the event a House-Senate conference is requested on this matter, the Committee on Agriculture reserves the right to seek the appointment of conferees.

I ask that you insert a copy of our exchange letters into the Congressional Record during consideration of this measure on the House floor.

Thank: you very much for your courtesy in this matter and I look forward to continued cooperation between the Committee on Natural Resources and the Committee on Agriculture as we deal with forestry issues in the future.

Sincerely,

COLLIN C. PETERSON,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, April 18, 2008.

Hon. COLLIN C. PETERSON,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture, Longworth H.O.B., Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter on April 18, 2008, indicating jurisdictional interests in H.R. 5151, the ''Wild Monongahela Act: A National Legacy for West Virginia's Special Places.'' As you are aware, the Committee on Natural Resources favorably reported an amended version of the bill on April 2, 2008, and would like to have the House of Representatives consider the legislation next week.

I acknowledge your jurisdictional interests in the bill, and note that the Committee on Natural Resources and the Committee on Agriculture have had a history of working cooperatively on matters that generally concern forestry. I appreciate your willingness to discharge the bill without further consideration by the Agriculture Committee and understand that this action will in no way waive your Committee's jurisdictional interests in the subject matter of the legislation or serve as a precedent for future referrals.

Furthermore, in the event that a conference with the Senate is requested on this matter, I would support naming Agriculture Committee members to the conference committee. A copy of our exchange letters regarding this bill will be inserted into the Congressional Record during floor consideration.

Thank you for your courtesy in this matter and I look forward to continued cooperation between our respective Committees as we deal with forestry issues in the future.

With warm regards, I am

Sincerely,

NICK J. RAHALL II,
Chairman.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlelady from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO).

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on Earth Day in support of H.R. 5151, the Wild Monongahela Act: A National Legacy for West Virginia's Special Places, introduced by my colleague from West Virginia's Third District and the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, Congressman NICK RAHALL.

I'm proud to be an original cosponsor of this important legislation, and I

commend the chairman for all of his hard work on this bill.

In 1964, Congress enacted the Wilderness Act that permanently protected some of the most natural and undisturbed places in America. Today the U.S. Forest Service preserves the natural and cultural resources and values of the forest system, including those of the Monongahela National Forest for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of this and future generations.

West Virginia's wilderness is part of our history and heritage, and it is passed on as a legacy. This bipartisan bill will protect approximately 38,000 acres of the Mon Forest in West Virginia through the designation of three additional wilderness areas and expansion of three existing Federal wilderness areas including: Big Draft, Cranberry Expansion, Dolly Sods Expansion, Dry Fork Expansion, Roaring Plains West and Spice Run.

West Virginia's national forest provides an excellent outdoor experience with our State's majestic mountains, winding rivers and superb hunting, camping, fishing, backpacking and other activities. Protecting these additional acres of pristine forest will ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy the natural beauty of our home State of West Virginia.

Over the last several months I've engaged in discussion with many of my constituents, many whom are avid hunters, anglers, mountain bikers and outdoorsmen who have a unique and vested interest in the impact of the wilderness designation on their local community. The people of this area are well acquainted with wilderness, and H.R. 5151 reflects their desire to preserve their natural treasures, while maintaining important flexibility for the local residents.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is vitally important to guaranteeing that future generations of Americans can experience the natural wonder and beauty of West Virginia. I applaud Chairman RAHALL and his staff for all of their hard work on this bill and all those in West Virginia who have seen it come to this point.

I encourage my colleagues to support the legislation, and I encourage each of them to experience firsthand the pristine natural beauty of West Virginia and the Mon National Forest.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. But, in conclusion, I want to commend the staff of our Natural Resources Committee as well, Mr. Jim Zoia, who's been with me for numerous years and knows our people in West Virginia, has been with this legislation almost daily.

Rick Healy, our chief counsel. And I wish as well to commend the ranking minority member on my committee, Mr. DON YOUNG, for his assistance and willingness to work with us on this as well, and today's acting ranking member, Mr. JIMMY DUNCAN, for his help on this legislation.

I have no further requests for time, and I'll reserve, pending any further requests that the ranking member has.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 5151 will designate portions of the Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia as wilderness, and it is my understanding that Members of Congress whose districts are affected support the bill.

Although we should give considerable deference to those who have been elected to represent the people in the area, I do not necessarily agree that wilderness designation is always the wisest conservation decision we can make. Wilderness designation is the most restrictive policy we can impose on an area, and there are often far better, more creative ways to conserve our forests and other natural areas. In many instances, it is a mistake to foreclose active management options that can improve fish and game habitat, increase recreational access and lessen the severity of wildfires. And to protect our economic well-being, provide jobs for young people and protect our national security, our country is going to need continued access to the rich resources our own public lands provide.

We now have over 100 million acres in wilderness areas, and we keep adding to that at a record level. And we are very close to getting to the point where that's beginning to hurt us economically at a time when we don't need more blows to our economy.

Nevertheless, I do wish the people of West Virginia good luck living around these wilderness areas, and I know that they, like the people of my State, will in the long run prove to be better guardians of their mountains, rivers and wildlife than bureaucrats in Washington.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RAHALL. I yield back, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5151, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

COFFMAN COVE ADMINISTRATIVE SITE CONVEYANCE ACT OF 2008

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 831) to provide for the conveyance of certain Forest Service land to the city of Coffman Cove, Alaska, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 831

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Coffman Cove Administrative Site Conveyance Act of 2008''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) CITY.—The term ''City'' means the city of Coffman Cove, Alaska.

(2) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Agriculture.

SEC. 3. CONVEYANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to valid existing rights, the Secretary shall convey to the City, without consideration and by quitclaim deed all right, title, and interest of the United States, except as provided in subsections (c) and (d), in and to the parcel of National Forest System land described in subsection (b).

(b) DESCRIPTION OF LAND.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The parcel of National Forest System land referred to in subsection (a) is the approximately 12 acres of land identified in U.S. Survey 10099, as depicted on the plat entitled ''Subdivision of U.S. Survey No. 10099'' and recorded as Plat 2003–1 on January 21, 2003, Petersburg Recording District, Alaska.

(2) EXCLUDED LAND.—The parcel of National Forest System land conveyed under subsection (a) does not include the portion of U.S. Survey 10099 that is north of the right-of-way for Forest Development Road 3030–295 and southeast of Tract CC–8.

(c) RIGHT-OF-WAY.—The United States may reserve a right-of-way to provide access to the National Forest System land excluded from the conveyance to the City under subsection (b)(2).

(d) REVERSION.—If any portion of the land conveyed under subsection (a) (other than a portion of land sold under subsection (e)) ceases to be used for public purposes, the land shall, at the option of the Secretary, revert to the United States.

(e) CONDITIONS ON SUBSEQUENT CONVEYANCES.—If the City sells any portion of the land conveyed to the City under subsection (a)—

(1) the amount of consideration for the sale shall reflect fair market value, as determined by an appraisal; and

(2) the City shall pay to the Secretary an amount equal to the gross proceeds of the sale, which shall be available, without further appropriation, for the Tongass National Forest.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from West Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, the pending measure was introduced by the ranking member of the Natural Resources Committee, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG).

The bill would direct the U.S. Forest Service to convey a 12-acre administrative site in the middle of Coffman Cove, Alaska to that city.

□ 1430

The land under discussion is in the center of the town near a new ferry terminal. This conveyance will help the city's efforts to diversify its economic base.

Additionally, the location of the site has been difficult for the Forest Service to manage.

I support passage of H.R. 831.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 831 introduced by our distinguished colleague, DON YOUNG, conveys approximately 12 acres of National Forest System land to the City of Coffman Cove. The City of Coffman Cove, Alaska, is a small community with about 200 residents that developed around the Tongass National Forest logging camp and work site. The 12-acre Forest Service site is now in the middle of town, and a new ferry terminal is planned for an adjacent parcel. The location of most of the Forest Service site makes it difficult and inefficient for the Forest Service to manage and an obstacle to the future development and design of the city's downtown. Conveyance of the Forest Service site would benefit both the Forest Service and the city in this regard.

In short, this noncontroversial bill simply conveys to Coffman Cove a small parcel of Forest Service land for which the Forest Service has no use. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Chairman RAHALL for scheduling this noncontroversial bill for floor consideration today.

H.R. 831 will provide for the conveyance of approximately 12 acres of surplus Forest Service land to the city of Coffman Cove, Alaska. The 12-acre parcel sits in the middle of town adjacent to the site of a new Inter-Island Ferry Terminal that the city hopes to use to help spur economic growth. In addition to being an obstacle to the ferry terminal and any new economic development in the city's downtown, the location of the parcel makes it difficult and inefficient for the Forest Service to manage. As such, the conveyance provided for in this bill would benefit both the city and the Forest Service, and according to the Congressional Budget Office, it will do so at little or no cost to the taxpayer.

To give you some background, Mr. Speaker, Coffman Cove is a small, isolated community with about 200 residents that developed around a Tongass National Forest logging camp and work site. While the timber industry and the jobs it once provided in the region have largely disappeared, the community remains, and opportunities for economic growth and expansion are limited by the fact that it is surrounded on all sides by the 17-million-acre Tongass National Forest. I don't expect to change that anytime soon, but I think it is more than reasonable to convey 12 acres of surplus Federal land located within the community's economic center.

Mr. Speaker, this bill provides a fair and commonsense solution to a problem. The tiny parcel of land is of no use to the Forest Service and it is an impediment to the growth and economic well-being of an isolated community surrounded by a National Forest larger than the State of West Virginia. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 831.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield back.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 831, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

MORLEY NELSON SNAKE RIVER BIRDS OF PREY NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA ACT

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3734) to rename the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area in the State of Idaho as the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area in honor of the late Morley Nelson, an international authority on birds of prey, who was instrumental in the establishment of this National Conservation Area, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3734

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area Act".

SEC. 2. RENAMING OF SNAKE RIVER BIRDS OF PREY NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA.

(a) RENAMING.—Public Law 103–64 is amended—

(1) in section 2(2) (16 U.S.C. 460iii–1(2)), by inserting "Morley Nelson" before "Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area"; and

(2) in section 3(a)(1) (16 U.S.C. 460iii–2(a)(1)), by inserting "Morley Nelson" before "Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area shall be deemed to be a reference to the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area.

(c) TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.—Public Law 103–64 is further amended—

(1) in section 3(a)(1) (16 U.S.C. 460iii–2(a)(1)), by striking "(hereafter referred to as the 'conservation area')"; and

(2) in section 4 (16 U.S.C. 460iii–3)—

(A) in subsection (a)(2), by striking "Conservation Area" and inserting "conservation area"; and

(B) in subsection (d), by striking "Visitors Center" and inserting "visitors center".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from West Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, the pending measure introduced by our colleague, MIKE SIMPSON, renames the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area in the State of Idaho as the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area.

Morley Nelson was an ardent advocate for birds of prey and was instrumental in establishing the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area. The National Conservation Area includes approximately 500 acres and is one of the densest known nesting populations of eagles, falcons, owls, hawks, and other birds of prey in North America.

I do commend our colleague, MIKE SIMPSON from Idaho, for his work on the bill. I support the passage of H.R. 3734.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, it's appropriate that the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area be named after Morley Nelson. Morley Nelson demonstrated how private voluntary wildlife conservation efforts can be far more effective than big Federal programs and showed that punitive laws, like the Endangered Species Act, can inhibit and interfere with more creative approaches.

He worked with Idaho Power to redesign their towers and power lines so eagles would not be electrocuted when they landed on them. This not only saved the eagles; it saved Idaho Power the substantial cost of power disruptions.

He worked with private falconers to create a captive breeding and release program that was so successful, the peregrine falcon was one of the first species taken off the endangered species list. The Fish and Wildlife Service has yet to achieve a comparable recovery after more than 30 years.

I am pleased to see Morley Nelson recognized for his great conservation achievements.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3734.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIONAL HEALTH CARE DECISIONS DAY

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 323) expressing Congressional support for the goals and ideals of National Health Care Decisions Day.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 323

Whereas National Health Care Decisions Day is designed to raise public awareness of the need to plan ahead for health care decisions related to end-of-life care and medical decision-making whenever patients are unable to speak for themselves and to encourage the specific use of advance directives to communicate these important decisions;

Whereas the Patient Self-Determination Act (42 U.S.C. 1395cc(f) et seq.), guarantees patients the right to information about their rights under State law regarding accepting or refusing medical treatment;

Whereas it is estimated that only a minority of Americans have executed advance directives, including those who are terminally ill or living with life-threatening or life-limiting illnesses;

Whereas advance directives offer individuals the opportunity to discuss with loved ones in advance of a health care crisis and decide what measures would be appropriate for them when it comes to end-of-life care;

Whereas the preparation of an advance directive would advise family members, health care providers, and other persons as to how an individual would want to be treated with respect to health care;

Whereas to avoid any legal or medical confusion due to the emotions involved in end-of-life decisions, it is in the best interest of all Americans that each person over the age of 18 communicate his or her wishes by creating an advance directive;

Whereas the Conditions of Participation in Medicare and Medicaid, section 489.102 of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this resolution), require all participating facilities to provide information to patients and the public on the topic of advance directives;

Whereas the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has recognized that the use of advance directives is tied to quality health care and has included discussions of advance directives in the criteria of the Physician Quality Reporting Initiative;

Whereas establishing National Health Care Decisions Day will encourage health care facilities and professionals as well as chaplains, attorneys, and others to participate in a collective, nationwide effort to provide clear, concise, and consistent information to the public about health care decision-making, particularly advance directives; and

Whereas as a result of National Health Care Decisions Day, recognized on April 16, 2008, more Americans will have conversations about their health care decision, more Americans will execute advance directives to make their wishes known, and fewer families and health care providers will have to struggle with making difficult health care decisions in the absence of guidance from the patient: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Health Care Decisions Day;

(2) supports the goals and ideals of advance care planning for all adult Americans;

(3) encourages each person in the United States who is over the age of 18 to prepare an advance directive to assist his or her loved ones, health care providers, and others as they honor his or her wishes;

(4) calls upon all members of this body to execute such documents and discussions for themselves; and

(5) encourages health care, civic, educational, religious, and for- and non-profit organizations to encourage individuals to prepare advance directives to ensure that their wishes and rights with respect to health care are protected.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I reserve the balance of my time. My good friend from Georgia, I know, has some important comments.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 323, expressing congressional support for the goals and the ideals of National Health Care Decisions Day.

National Health Care Decisions Day was recognized by hundreds of organizations across the United States last Wednesday, April 16, and it is appropriate for this body to stand with those organizations in recognition of this important day.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, though, I want to thank the distinguished chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, Mr. DINGELL, and his staff for their cooperation in helping us get this to the floor. I want to thank the ranking member, Mr. BARTON, and the minority staff and the 100 Members, many of them members of the Energy and Commerce Committee who are cosponsors of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, the goals of the resolution are twofold. First, it aims to raise awareness of the importance for everyone at all stages of life to take the time to discuss important end-of-life medical decisions with their loved ones.

Second, this resolution recognizes the emphasis of over 450 organizations spanning all 50 States that worked together on April 16 to educate Americans about their options in preparing advanced medical directives and appointing medical powers of attorney.

Of these groups, 75 are national organizations, including AARP, the American Bar Association, the American Medical Association, National Right to Life, and an additional 370 State and community organizations participated in the National Health Care Decisions Day efforts.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of the National Health Care Decisions Day, thousands of people across the country have received information on advanced directives through newspaper articles, television, and radio broadcasts, all released last week on April 16. I want to thank and congratulate all those involved for their hard work on this important cause. I am also proud of the broad bipartisan support this resolution has garnered.

Companion legislation sponsored by Senators WYDEN and ENZI has already passed the Senate, and now over 100, as I mentioned earlier, of my fellow House Members of both sides of the aisle have signed on to this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I want to urge the American people to invest time and effort into seeking out information on advanced directives. Advanced directives allow individuals to maintain control over their health care decisions even at the end of their lives, regardless of the circumstances they may face at that time. And I also encourage Americans to educate themselves on the options and details of the various types of advanced directives so that their wishes may be correctly documented and carried out.

Let me be very clear: This bill does not express what an individual's end-of-life decision should be. Those are the decisions that should be left to the individual undertaking this difficult but important step.

This resolution merely seeks to raise awareness about advanced directives themselves. And that's why this resolution is being supported by such a diverse range of organizations. Educating individuals and making them aware of their choices is a key to respecting and preserving life.

Mr. Speaker, as a physician, I cannot stress enough that these decisions should be made with the input of medical professionals and should be accessible to the patient's doctor in the time of greatest medical need. Too many times, families are left to guess what medical decisions their family member would have wanted. Think about the Terri Schiavo case a couple years ago. But physicians are sometimes left to guess as well.

A recent study by the U.S. Agency for Health Care Research and Quality

found that 75 percent of physicians whose patients had advanced directives were not even aware that those directives existed. This is a problem, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that as we get electronic medical records and HIT, Health Information Technology, becomes more sophisticated and intraoperable, these advanced directives can be stored electronically and be made accessible to the medical staff in an instant, really, in a timely manner.

So, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want to encourage all Americans to set aside time to have what may very will be one of the most vital conversations that any family can have.

I urge my fellow Members to vote in support of this resolution and to recognize the critical role of education in allowing Americans to effectively express their end-of-life wishes.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS) will control the time.

There was no objection.

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 323, expressing congressional support for the goals and ideals of National Health Care Decisions Day.

As a cosponsor of this resolution, I understand the importance of making our health decisions clear to our family members and other loved ones through advanced directives. While it is very difficult for us to face the prospects of our own mortality, many of us write wills in order to ensure that our loved ones are adequately provided for in our absence. Unfortunately, we often do not take that care in making provisions regarding our end-of-life medical care.

Nobody can predict when disease, tragedy, or other medical conditions will render one unable to make medical decisions for ourselves. Accordingly, we must plan ahead in case of such a tragedy to ensure that our wishes are properly carried out.

Advanced directives are an integral part of any care-delivery plan. They are simply a statement by a competent person that articulates the medical, legal, and personal wishes regarding medical treatment in the event of future incapacity.

Where advanced directives are present, medical professionals, families, and loved ones are best able to make critical care decisions should a patient become unable to make sound judgments about their health care.

The resolution before us commemorates National Health Care Decisions Day on April 16, 2008. Although this specific day occurred last week, the goals and ideals of today should be recognized perpetually.

□ 1445

This resolution encourages those 18 years of age and older to prepare advance directives. It also encourages medical, civic, educational, religious and other nonprofit organizations to promote advance directive preparation, particularly among their constituents.

I would like to thank my colleague on the other side of the aisle, Representative PHIL GINGREY, for his work in raising this important issue. Our colleagues in the Senate have already recognized the need to highlight advance directives, and I urge us here in the House to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank my friend from New York for his support of this resolution. And again, I want to thank the chairman of the committee, Mr. DINGELL, for allowing this to be brought to the floor under suspension and for his support, and for the support of the majority staff, and also to my distinguished colleague, the ranking member of Energy and Commerce, Representative BARTON, and the minority staff.

I urge all of my colleagues to support the resolution, as Representative TOWNS just said.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 323.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROTECTING THE MEDICAID SAFETY NET ACT OF 2008

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5613) to extend certain moratoria and impose additional moratoria on certain Medicaid regulations through April 1, 2009, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5613

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008''.

SEC. 2. MORATORIA ON CERTAIN MEDICAID REGULATIONS.

(a) EXTENSION OF CERTAIN MORATORIA IN PUBLIC LAW 110–28.—Section 7002(a)(1) of the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007 (Public Law 110–28) is amended—

(1) by striking ''prior to the date that is 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act'' and inserting ''prior to April 1, 2009'';

(2) in subparagraph (A), by inserting after ''Federal Regulations)'' the following: ''or in the final regulation, relating to such parts, published on May 29, 2007 (72 Federal Register 29748)''; and

(3) in subparagraph (C), by inserting before the period at the end the following: '', including the proposed regulation published on May 23, 2007 (72 Federal Register 28930)''.

(b) EXTENSION OF CERTAIN MORATORIA IN PUBLIC LAW 110–173.—Section 206 of the Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP Extension Act of 2007 (Public Law 110–173) is amended—

(1) by striking ''June 30, 2008'' and inserting ''April 1, 2009'';

(2) by inserting '', including the proposed regulation published on August 13, 2007 (72 Federal Register 45201),'' after ''rehabilitation services''; and

(3) by inserting '', including the final regulation published on December 28, 2007 (72 Federal Register 73635),'' after ''school-based transportation''.

(c) ADDITIONAL MORATORIA.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall not, prior to April 1, 2009, take any action (through promulgation of regulation, issuance of regulatory guidance, use of Federal payment audit procedures, or other administrative action, policy, or practice, including a Medical Assistance Manual transmittal or letter to State Medicaid directors) to impose any restrictions relating to a provision described in subparagraph (A), (B), or (C) of paragraph (2) if such restrictions are more restrictive in any aspect than those applied to the respective provision as of the date specified in paragraph (3) for such provision.

(2) PROVISIONS DESCRIBED.—

(A) PORTION OF INTERIM FINAL REGULATION RELATING TO MEDICAID TREATMENT OF OPTIONAL CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to clause (ii), the provision described in this subparagraph is the interim final regulation relating to optional State plan case management services under the Medicaid program published on December 4, 2007 (72 Federal Register 68077) in its entirety.

(ii) EXCEPTION.—The provision described in this subparagraph does not include the portion of such regulation as relates directly to implementing section 1915(g)(2)(A)(ii) of the Social Security Act, as amended by section 6052 of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (Public Law 109–171), through the definition of case management services and targeted case management services contained in proposed section 440.169 of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations, but only to the extent that such portion is not more restrictive than the policies set forth in the Dear State Medicaid Director letter on case management issued on January 19, 2001 (SMDL #01–013), and with respect to community transition case management, the Dear State Medicaid Director letter issued on July 25, 2000 (Olmstead Update 3).

(B) PROPOSED REGULATION RELATING TO REDEFINITION OF MEDICAID OUTPATIENT HOSPITAL SERVICES.—The provision described in this subparagraph is the proposed regulation relating to clarification of outpatient clinic and hospital facility services definition and upper payment limit under the Medicaid program published on September 28, 2007 (72 Federal Register 55158) in its entirety.

(C) PORTION OF PROPOSED REGULATION RELATING TO MEDICAID ALLOWABLE PROVIDER TAXES.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to clause (ii), the provision described in this subparagraph is the final regulation relating to health-care-related taxes under the Medicaid program published on February 22, 2008 (73 Federal Register 9685) in its entirety.

(ii) EXCEPTION.—The provision described in this subparagraph does not include the portions of such regulation as relate to the following:

(I) REDUCTION IN THRESHOLD.—The reduction from 6 percent to 5.5 percent in the threshold applied under section 433.68(f)(3)(i) of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations, for determining whether or not there is an indirect guarantee to hold a taxpayer harmless, as required to carry out section 1903(w)(4)(C)(ii) of the Social Security Act, as added by section 403 of the Medicare

Improvement and Extension Act of 2006 (division B of Public Law 109–432).

(II) CHANGE IN DEFINITION OF MANAGED CARE.—The change in the definition of managed care as proposed in the revision of section 433.56(a)(8) of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations, as required to carry out section 1903(w)(7)(A)(viii) of the Social Security Act, as amended by section 6051 of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (Public Law 109–171).

(3) DATE SPECIFIED.—The date specified in this paragraph for the provision described in—

(A) subparagraph (A) of paragraph (2) is December 3, 2007;

(B) subparagraph (B) of such paragraph is September 27, 2007; or

(C) subparagraph (C) of such paragraph is February 21, 2008.

SEC. 3. FUNDS TO REDUCE MEDICAID FRAUD AND ABUSE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of reducing fraud and abuse in the Medicaid program under title XIX of the Social Security Act, there is appropriated to the Secretary of Health and Human Services, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, $25,000,000, for each fiscal year (beginning with fiscal year 2009). Amounts appropriated under this section shall remain available for expenditure until expended and shall be in addition to any other amounts appropriated or made available to the Secretary for such purposes with respect to the Medicaid program.

(b) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than September 30 of 2009 and of each subsequent year, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate a report on the activities (and the results of such activities) funded under subsection (a) to reduce waste, fraud, and abuse in the Medicaid program under title XIX of the Social Security Act during the previous 12 month period, including the amount of funds appropriated under such subsection (a) for each such activity and an estimate of the savings to the Medicaid program resulting from each such activity.

SEC. 4. STUDY AND REPORTS TO CONGRESS.

(a) SECRETARIAL REPORT IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS.—Not later than July 1, 2008, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate a report that—

(1) outlines the specific problems the Medicaid regulations referred to in the amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) of section 2 and in the provisions described in subsection (c)(2) of such section were intended to address;

(2) detailing how these regulations were designed to address these specific problems; and

(3) cites the legal authority for such regulations.

(b) INDEPENDENT COMPREHENSIVE STUDY AND REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than July 1, 2008, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall enter into a contract with an independent organization for the purpose of—

(A) producing a comprehensive report on the prevalence of the problems outlined in the report submitted under subsection (a);

(B) identifying strategies in existence to address these problems; and

(C) assessing the impact of each regulation referred to in such subsection on each State and the District of Columbia.

(2) ADDITIONAL MATTER.—The report under paragraph (1) shall also include—

(A) an identification of which claims for items and services (including administrative activities) under title XIX of the Social Security Act are not processed through systems described in section 1903(r) of such Act;

(B) an examination of the reasons why these claims for such items and services are not processed through such systems; and

(C) recommendations on actions by the Federal government and the States that can make claims for such items and services more accurate and complete consistent with such title.

(3) DEADLINE.—The report under paragraph (1) shall be submitted to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate not later than March 1, 2009.

(4) COOPERATION OF STATES.—If the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines that a State or the District of Columbia has not cooperated with the independent organization for purposes of the report under this subsection, the Secretary shall reduce the amount paid to the State or District under section 1903(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396b(a)) by $25,000 for each day on which the Secretary determines such State or District has not so cooperated. Such reduction shall be made through a process that permits the State or District to challenge the Secretary's determination.

(c) FUNDING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Out of any money in the Treasury of the United States not otherwise appropriated, there are appropriated to the Secretary without further appropriation, $5,000,000 to carry out this section.

(2) AVAILABILITY; AMOUNTS IN ADDITION TO OTHER AMOUNTS APPROPRIATED FOR SUCH ACTIVITIES.—Amounts appropriated pursuant to paragraph (1) shall—

(A) remain available until expended; and

(B) be in addition to any other amounts appropriated or made available to the Secretary of Health and Human Services with respect to the Medicaid program.

SEC. 5. ASSET VERIFICATION THROUGH ACCESS TO INFORMATION HELD BY FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

(a) ADDITION OF AUTHORITY.—Title XIX of the Social Security Act is amended by inserting after section 1939 the following new section:

''ASSET VERIFICATION THROUGH ACCESS TO INFORMATION HELD BY FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

''SEC. 1940. (a) IMPLEMENTATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the provisions of this section, each State shall implement an asset verification program described in subsection (b), for purposes of determining or redetermining the eligibility of an individual for medical assistance under the State plan under this title.

''(2) PLAN SUBMITTAL.—In order to meet the requirement of paragraph (1), each State shall—

''(A) submit not later than a deadline specified by the Secretary consistent with paragraph (3), a State plan amendment under this title that describes how the State intends to implement the asset verification program; and

''(B) provide for implementation of such program for eligibility determinations and redeterminations made on or after 6 months after the deadline established for submittal of such plan amendment.

''(3) PHASE-IN.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—

''(i) IMPLEMENTATION IN CURRENT ASSET VERIFICATION DEMO STATES.—The Secretary shall require those States specified in subparagraph (C) (to which an asset verification program has been applied before the date of the enactment of this section) to implement an asset verification program under this subsection by the end of fiscal year 2009.

''(ii) IMPLEMENTATION IN OTHER STATES.—The Secretary shall require other States to submit and implement an asset verification program under this subsection in such manner as is designed to result in the application of such programs, in the aggregate for all such other States, to enrollment of approximately, but not less than, the following percentage of enrollees, in the aggregate for all such other States, by the end of the fiscal year involved:

''(I) 12.5 percent by the end of fiscal year 2009.

''(II) 25 percent by the end of fiscal year 2010.

''(III) 50 percent by the end of fiscal year 2011.

''(IV) 75 percent by the end of fiscal year 2012.

''(V) 100 percent by the end of fiscal year 2013.

''(B) CONSIDERATION.—In selecting States under subparagraph (A)(ii), the Secretary shall consult with the States involved and take into account the feasibility of implementing asset verification programs in each such State.

''(C) STATES SPECIFIED.—The States specified in this subparagraph are California, New York, and New Jersey.

''(D) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in subparagraph (A)(ii) shall be construed as preventing a State from requesting, and the Secretary approving, the implementation of an asset verification program in advance of the deadline otherwise established under such subparagraph.

''(4) EXEMPTION OF TERRITORIES.—This section shall only apply to the 50 States and the District of Columbia.

''(b) ASSET VERIFICATION PROGRAM.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this section, an asset verification program means a program described in paragraph (2) under which a State—

''(A) requires each applicant for, or recipient of, medical assistance under the State plan under this title on the basis of being aged, blind, or disabled to provide authorization by such applicant or recipient (and any other person whose resources are material to the determination of the eligibility of the applicant or recipient for such assistance) for the State to obtain (subject to the cost reimbursement requirements of section 1115(a) of the Right to Financial Privacy Act but at no cost to the applicant or recipient) from any financial institution (within the meaning of section 1101(1) of such Act) any financial record (within the meaning of section 1101(2) of such Act) held by the institution with respect to the applicant or recipient (and such other person, as applicable), whenever the State determines the record is needed in connection with a determination with respect to such eligibility for (or the amount or extent of) such medical assistance; and

''(B) uses the authorization provided under subparagraph (A) to verify the financial resources of such applicant or recipient (and such other person, as applicable), in order to determine or redetermine the eligibility of such applicant or recipient for medical assistance under the State plan.

''(2) PROGRAM DESCRIBED.—A program described in this paragraph is a program for verifying individual assets in a manner consistent with the approach used by the Commissioner of Social Security under section 1631(e)(1)(B)(ii).

''(c) DURATION OF AUTHORIZATION.—Notwithstanding section 1104(a)(1) of the Right to Financial Privacy Act, an authorization provided to a State under subsection (b)(1) shall remain effective until the earliest of—

''(1) the rendering of a final adverse decision on the applicant's application for medical assistance under the State's plan under this title;

''(2) the cessation of the recipient's eligibility for such medical assistance; or

''(3) the express revocation by the applicant or recipient (or such other person described in subsection (b)(1), as applicable) of the authorization, in a written notification to the State.

''(d) TREATMENT OF RIGHT TO FINANCIAL PRIVACY ACT REQUIREMENTS.—

''(1) An authorization obtained by the State under subsection (b)(1) shall be considered to meet the requirements of the Right to Financial Privacy Act for purposes of section 1103(a) of such Act, and need not be furnished to the financial institution, notwithstanding section 1104(a) of such Act.

''(2) The certification requirements of section 1103(b) of the Right to Financial Privacy Act shall not apply to requests by the State pursuant to an authorization provided under subsection (b)(1).

''(3) A request by the State pursuant to an authorization provided under subsection (b)(1) is

deemed to meet the requirements of section 1104(a)(3) of the Right to Financial Privacy Act and of section 1102 of such Act, relating to a reasonable description of financial records.

''(e) REQUIRED DISCLOSURE.—The State shall inform any person who provides authorization pursuant to subsection (b)(1)(A) of the duration and scope of the authorization.

''(f) REFUSAL OR REVOCATION OF AUTHORIZATION.—If an applicant for, or recipient of, medical assistance under the State plan under this title (or such other person described in subsection (b)(1), as applicable) refuses to provide, or revokes, any authorization made by the applicant or recipient (or such other person, as applicable) under subsection (b)(1)(A) for the State to obtain from any financial institution any financial record, the State may, on that basis, determine that the applicant or recipient is ineligible for medical assistance.

''(g) USE OF CONTRACTOR.—For purposes of implementing an asset verification program under this section, a State may select and enter into a contract with a public or private entity meeting such criteria and qualifications as the State determines appropriate, consistent with requirements in regulations relating to general contracting provisions and with section 1903(i)(2). In carrying out activities under such contract, such an entity shall be subject to the same requirements and limitations on use and disclosure of information as would apply if the State were to carry out such activities directly.

''(h) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall provide States with technical assistance to aid in implementation of an asset verification program under this section.

''(i) REPORTS.—A State implementing an asset verification program under this section shall furnish to the Secretary such reports concerning the program, at such times, in such format, and containing such information as the Secretary determines appropriate.

''(j) TREATMENT OF PROGRAM EXPENSES.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, reasonable expenses of States in carrying out the program under this section shall be treated, for purposes of section 1903(a), in the same manner as State expenditures specified in paragraph (7) of such section.''.

(b) STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS.—Section 1902(a) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (69) by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (70) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (70), as so amended, the following new paragraph:

''(71) provide that the State will implement an asset verification program as required under section 1940.''.

(c) WITHHOLDING OF FEDERAL MATCHING PAYMENTS FOR NONCOMPLIANT STATES.—Section 1903(i) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1396b(i)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (22) by striking ''or'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (23) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; or''; and

(3) by adding after paragraph (23) the following new paragraph:

''(24) if a State is required to implement an asset verification program under section 1940 and fails to implement such program in accordance with such section, with respect to amounts expended by such State for medical assistance for individuals subject to asset verification under such section, unless—

''(A) the State demonstrates to the Secretary's satisfaction that the State made a good faith effort to comply;

''(B) not later than 60 days after the date of a finding that the State is in noncompliance, the State submits to the Secretary (and the Secretary approves) a corrective action plan to remedy such noncompliance; and

''(C) not later than 12 months after the date of such submission (and approval), the State fulfills the terms of such corrective action plan.''.

(d) REPEAL.—Section 4 of Public Law 110–90 is repealed.

SEC. 6. ADJUSTMENT TO PAQI FUND.

Section 1848(l)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(l)(2)), as amended by section 101(a)(2) of the Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP Extension Act of 2007 (Public Law 110–173), is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)(i)—

(A) in subclause (III), by striking ''$4,960,000,000'' and inserting ''$3,790,000,000''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new subclause:

''(IV) For expenditures during 2014, an amount equal to $3,690,000,000.'';

(2) in subparagraph (A)(ii), by adding at the end the following new subclause:

''(IV) 2014.—The amount available for expenditures during 2014 shall only be available for an adjustment to the update of the conversion factor under subsection (d) for that year.''; and

(3) in subparagraph (B)—

(A) in clause (ii), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(B) in clause (iii), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new clause:

''(iv) 2014 for payment with respect to physicians' services furnished during 2014.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5613, the Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008. This is a bipartisan bill, critically important to our Nation's safety net. The Committee on Energy and Commerce reported it favorably with a strong bipartisan vote of 46–0.

I want to commend and thank our subcommittee chairman, Mr. PALLONE, and our distinguished colleague and cosponsor of the legislation, Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, for their leadership on this matter. And I want to express to my good friends and the ranking members on the committee and the subcommittee, Mr. BARTON and Mr. DEAL, for their superb cooperation.

I also want to thank my colleagues on the Committees on Ways and Means and Financial Services for the splendid cooperation and help they gave us in moving this legislation to the floor expeditiously. The support of Chairmen Rangel and Stark were both necessary and very much appreciated.

H.R. 5613 places a 1-year moratorium on seven regulations recently issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The regulations would have restricted payments to critical safety net providers such as hospitals and nursing homes, as well as payments for graduate medical education training. The regulation would have reduced or eliminated payments that allow children with severe mental illness to remain in family settings, and payments to schools transporting poor children with disabilities. The Governors of all 50 States oppose these rules, as do the State Medicaid directors, State legislators, and the National Association of Counties.

More than 2,000 national and local groups such as the American Hospital Association, the American Federation of Teachers and the March of Dimes support this legislation. They know of the devastating effect these rules would have upon local communities, upon the hospitals, and upon vulnerable beneficiaries.

Without this moratorium, schools would be forced to lay off workers starting in June. Hospitals and nursing homes would be forced to cut off services and to lay off workers as well. In troublesome economic times, we cannot afford to lose good-paying jobs or to cut services that enable people with disabilities to be gainfully employed.

H.R. 5613 will postpone the implementation of these seven rules for 1 year, giving Congress time to evaluate the effect they would have on States, providers and beneficiaries.

I want to again commend my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, including my dear friend, Mr. BARTON, and Mr. DEAL for their leadership and hard work on this matter. I urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 5613.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. BARTON of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my good friend, Chairman JOHN DINGELL of the Energy and Commerce Committee, in support of H.R. 5613, the Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008.

Given the fact that Secretary Leavitt of Health and Human Services indicated that he would recommend to the President of the United States that he veto the bill before us in its current form, I do wish we could have brought the bill to the floor under a rule with several potential amendments and a motion to recommit so that we can have a little bit fuller debate rather than putting it on the suspension calendar. Having said that, I am very glad that it is coming to the floor as a stand-alone bill, and that Chairman DINGELL and Chairman PALLONE of the subcommittee have followed regular order in passing this legislation.

I want to thank Chairman DINGELL and Chairman PALLONE for holding a

legislative hearing as well as a subcommittee markup and a full committee markup on the bill that's now before us. I also want to thank them for having an open process, where staff on both sides of the aisle could work together, amendments could be shared, and some of those amendments could be agreed upon and incorporated into the bill that's before us today. I would not have been able to support H.R. 5613 as originally introduced, but I can support the bill that's before us this afternoon. I'm proud that, on occasion, we do put good public policy ahead of partisan politics, and the bill before us, again, is an example of what I believe to be better public policy.

I do hope that we take this opportunity to take the issue before us, if this bill becomes law, and actually work on it for the year that the moratorium is in place. The bill before us would place a year-long moratorium on seven Medicaid rules. It does not mean that the suspended rules themselves are all bad and don't address a problem that needs to be addressed. It does mean that many of the interest groups and many of the States had significant problems with those rules, and so it was felt prudent to have a moratorium where we could hopefully, in the interim, determine how to fine tune and maybe change some of those rules.

We do need to save money in Medicaid. We do need to do something on this system of intergovernmental transfers. For those of you who don't understand what an intergovernmental transfer is, as used in Medicaid, a State will give money to the Federal Government that is then matched by the Federal Government and sent back to the State. The State will give some of that money to, in this case a hospital system, but then keep some of the money that it initially gave. So it's kind of a shell game where you put up some money to get it matched, and once you get the matched back, the money you put up you use for another purpose, not for a health purpose, but maybe for a different purpose, like building a highway or something like that. One of the suspended rules would have addressed this intergovernmental transfer, and I hope that in the next year, on a bipartisan basis, we can address the intergovernmental transfer issue itself.

Mr. DINGELL. Will the gentleman from Texas yield?

Mr. BARTON of Texas. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. DINGELL. I want to again commend my friend from Texas for his superb performance on this legislation. And I want to assure him that I share his concerns on the intergovernmental transfer matter, and that we will be going into it. I thank my friend.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. I thank the distinguished chairman.

We simply cannot pretend on a day that we're suspending these rules that there are not fundamental financial difficulties facing Medicaid. So while we agree to suspend the rules for the next year, I hope we can also agree, as the chairman just indicated that he did, that we're going to continue to work on the problems these rules were designed to address so that over time we can reach agreement on how to save money under Medicaid.

I do believe the bill before us is a good bill. It does have a pay-for. It is, on a net basis, a slight revenue increase to the Federal Treasury, so it is paid for. And if we spend the next year working together, if we implement some of the things in this bill, the bill gives $25 million a year to combat waste, fraud and abuse in Medicaid, if we use that money wisely, we will uncover some savings. And if we look at some of these suspended rules, we can perhaps work together to fine tune them so that a year from now, at the beginning of the next administration, we don't have to extend the moratorium.

In short, Mr. Speaker, while this is not a perfect bill, it's a good bill. Don't let the pursuit of perfection prevent the accomplishment of what is something that is good and possible.

I would urge a ''yes'' vote on H.R. 5613, especially on my side of the aisle, among the Republicans in the House of Representatives.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN).

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Dingell-Murphy bill, H.R. 5613, which would delay seven Medicaid regulations that would shift billions of dollars in costs from the Federal Government to States, counties, school districts, hospitals, and other medical providers. There is absolutely no justification for such a cost shift, especially at a time when many States are struggling to avoid budget cuts as their economies slow and revenues decline. The bill would delay the implementation of these regulations until April 1, 2009.

The Oversight Committee held hearings on this matter. We heard testimony from public and teaching hospital administrators, an emergency room physician, a child welfare worker and a school nurse. They explained how the regulations would shift costs to States and localities and what that cost would mean for access to services for beneficiaries. We also heard from a representative from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which issued these regulations.

And since Medicaid is a Federal-State program, one would think that when the Federal Government changes the rules, as these regulations would do, it would first try to determine what the impact of these changes would be on the different States. Well, we followed up with the head of the CMS for Medicaid, and he told us that he had not done a State-by-State specific analysis of the impact and he had no plans to do such an analysis. So our committee made our own analysis. We did a survey of Medicaid directors for 43 States and the District of Columbia, and they told us that if CMS were allowed to implement all seven Medicaid regulations, their States would lose nearly $50 billion in Federal funds over the next 5 years. The result of these cost shifts would not be greater efficiency, it would not be a savings of money, it would simply come out of the reimbursements, and fewer eligible populations. They would disrupt the existing systems for care of fragile populations, such as adults with severe mental illness or children with special health care needs. They would undercut the financial stability of hospitals and emergency rooms that treat Americans without health insurance. They would impose large, new administrative burdens and costs on State Medicaid programs without any offsetting policy benefit.

In short, the best professional judgment was that the regulations would have harmful fiscal and programmatic consequences for their States and the people that look to the Medicaid program as the safety net for health care.

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The bill before us gives the department and the Congress the time to look into these issues in the detail they deserve without making fundamental changes in Federal Medicaid policy.

I urge support for this bipartisan legislation.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. HARMAN).

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, it's an honor to serve under Chairman DINGELL on the Energy and Commerce Committee and to support this effort to keep the Medicaid safety net intact. That our chairman shepherded this must-pass bill through our committee with unanimous support is testament to his enormous legislative skill and bipartisanship.

Unless we pass this bill, Mr. Speaker, public hospitals and the essential services they provide will be at grave risk. A major public hospital in my district, Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, is among them. It is the only level 1 trauma center near top terror targets like LAX and the ports of Long Beach and L.A. In the event of an attack, Harbor would be on the front lines. As a teaching hospital, it helps train the next generation of doctors.

Mr. Speaker, if all seven Medicaid regulations are implemented, Los Angeles County will lose $240 million in annual funding, the equivalent of closing a public hospital like Harbor. Harbor is already overcrowded. It needs more help, not less. It needs to offer more services, not to close. H.R. 5613 will stop these catastrophic cuts, and it deserves our full support.

I urge our colleagues to vote ''aye'' and to join in overriding a White House veto should one occur.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. TIM MURPHY) worked very hard on this important

legislation and is a cosponsor of it. Regrettably, he is detained, unfortunately, on an aircraft and is not able to be with us today to speak in favor of this bill on which he worked so hard. And I want the RECORD to show that the House owes the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. TIM MURPHY) a real debt of thanks for his hard work here and for his remarkable leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield 2 minutes to my dear friend the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS).

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend Chairman DINGELL and, of course, Congressman MURPHY and Congressman BARTON for placing this 1-year moratorium on the CMS Medicaid rules that would devastate patients, persons with disabilities, hospitals, States, and our entire safety net. Instead, these are the very entities and people that we should be helping, not hurting. CMS went well beyond the authority Congress allowed in enacting these rules.

Therefore, as a cosponsor, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this measure and support our Nation's Governors who have called for this moratorium and rightfully so. So I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I simply want to reiterate that as the ranking member on the Energy and Commerce Committee, I strongly support this piece of legislation. It did receive the votes of every Republican on the committee. It passed 46–0. I had wished it would not have been a suspension calendar bill, but I am happy it is a stand-alone bill, and I would encourage my colleagues to vote for this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank again my colleague from Texas. He is always a gentleman.

I want to note that last night the Commerce Committee dedicated a picture hung in the committee in honor of our good friend Mr. BARTON. It is a fine-looking picture of a distinguished former chairman of the committee, and I would urge my colleagues, if they want to look at a distinguished Member of this body hanging on the wall in the committee and to look at a very fine piece of art, they should come over and see the excellent picture of our good friend Mr. BARTON hanging there in the committee.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5613, the Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008. After unsuccessful attempts at S–CHIP over the last several months, over 33,000 children in my district are still uninsured.

Now the most vulnerable of beneficiaries of Medicaid, children and the disabled, are faced with a major crisis. This bill has bipartisan support, this is not about politics. It's about helping hardworking families and the poorest among us.

This bill includes a moratorium of 7 CMS regulations, preventing the stripping of over $20 billion in Federal Medicaid funding over the next 5 years to States for vital programs and services. These programs and services will only shrink and shrivel if they are put against the wall to eat up these costs.

Even school districts, like Rialto Unified School District from my district, will face difficult challenges in providing direct health services to the 30,000 students it currently serves.

Cutting these valuable services at a time when many States, including California are facing record budget deficits is not an option. The poorest amongst us on Medicaid are most affected. We cannot turn our backs during these troubling times of increasing foreclosures and rising gas prices.

Cancer does not distinguish between incomes, why should health care coverage?

I support H.R. 5613, and urge my colleagues to do the honorable thing and vote for this bill.

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my strong support for H.R. 5613, the "Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008." This bill stops George Bush's draconian attempt to gut the Medicaid program, which provides medical care to millions of low-income children and families.

If we fail to enact this bill, more than $20 billion in vital Federal funding for States will disappear. This is $20 billion that helps schools provide transportation for physically disabled children, allows local governments to contribute to the State Medicaid share, and trains physicians.

This President has presided over the greatest transition from boom to bust since the 1920s. As families face foreclosure and rising food and gas costs, States see declining sales tax receipts and greater numbers in need of assistance. Our President would add insult to injury for working families by dismantling their safety net.

The seven regulations proposed by the Bush administration would undermine longstanding practices upon which States have built their Medicaid programs. The regulations are opposed by a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers; all the Nation's Governors from both sides of the aisle; and a host of public health, physician, and patient advocates. The bill passed unanimously out of the Energy and Commerce Committee. In this day and age, that is a remarkable phenomenon. I am proud to join colleagues from both sides of the aisle to vote in favor of this moratorium and to protect the health care safety net for America's working families.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, today I join a bipartisan House to stand up to the Bush administration to prevent it from irresponsibly slashing the Medicaid budget. States that work with the Federal government to run and fund Medicaid programs are already facing budgetary restraints, flat funding, and shortfalls. The administration's proposed cuts to Medicaid would exacerbate their budgetary crunch, and would directly affect the quality of care given to low-income kids, seniors, families and people living with disabilities.

The bill before us today, H.R. 5613, would place a 1-year moratorium on seven Medicaid regulations proposed by the administration. This 1-year moratorium would give Congress more time to evaluate the potential effects of his proposed cuts on State Medicaid programs and the individuals that they serve. Several groups have warned that the unexpected slashes in Federal Medicaid dollars could force States to shift their Medicaid costs to patients, who would be hard pressed to make up the differences in health care costs. At present, some 30 million low-income children depend on the Medicaid program.

The Government Accountability Office testified that it had not recommended the specific changes proposed by the administration, nor had officials there had time to adequately study the potential effects of these changes for 6 of the 7 regulations. Before the President starts tinkering with domestic programs upon which millions of our most vulnerable citizens rely, he owes it to them to do his homework. If he won't, then Congress owes it to the American people to investigate his proposed changes so we can fully understand their effect on poor and working families.

Nearly 2,000 groups from across the country, including school districts, hospitals, case management providers, and organizations serving people with disabilities and mental illnesses have joined us in support of the Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this bill and urge my colleagues to cast their votes in favor of it.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5613 the Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act, and urge my colleagues to join me in voting for it.

Last week, my colleagues and I on the Energy and Commerce Committee unanimously approved H.R. 5613, the Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act. This bill places moratoria on seven regulations issued by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS. If allowed to go into effect as currently written, these regulations would seriously erode federal funding to the states for a range of Medicaid services, including rehabilitation and medical services for schoolchildren with disabilities, and would totally eliminate federal Medicaid matching funds for Graduate Medical Education at a time when my state is already in the grip of a growing physician shortage.

I am particularly concerned about the detrimental effect that these regulations would have on students and schools in my district and districts across the country. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, schools are required to provide medical and rehabilitation services that are necessary for children to enter and continue to attend school. If federal matching funds are reduced or eliminated, our schools will still be required pay for these services, meaning other vital services and programs would have to be significantly cut back or eliminated.

Another major concern of mine is the extent to which these regulations would reduce or eliminate federal matching payments for many of our community hospitals, seriously undermining access to care for poor and disabled women, children, and persons with disabilities. Our hospitals are already struggling under low Medicaid reimbursement rates and higher rates of uncompensated care as my State's economy has worsened. Like schools, hospitals are under a federal mandate—this one to examine and stabilize every patient who walks through their emergency room doors. These regulations could significantly increase hospitals' burden of uncompensated care.

I am also concerned about provisions in several of the regulations that could well undo the progress we have made over many years in enabling persons with mental and physical

disabilities to live independently and participate as fully as they are able in the workforce and the life of their communities rather than being confined to institutional settings.

Because of all these factors, I again encourage my colleagues to join me in voting for this bill.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5613, the Protecting Medicaid Safety Net Act. The rules issued by CMS in August were said to be cost saving measures and a way to reduce waste, fraud, and abuse.

If these 7 regulations go into effect Texas would lose $3.4 billion in Federal Medicaid funding over the next 5 years and nationwide cuts to Medicaid funding could total around $50 billion. These regulations attack the core mission of Medicaid by eliminating much needed services for children, the elderly, and the poor.

These cuts will also have a devastating impact on state's Medicaid funds; consequently hurting the most vulnerable populations who are helped by the Medicaid safety net. This population accesses services and support care from Medicaid because they cannot access services elsewhere due to costs or restrictions on benefits.

If these regulations go into effect, I don't know where the states will find the funds to continue operating programs such as school administrative and transportation services, coverage for rehabilitative services, and outpatient hospital services. Especially since the lack of Medicaid funding will create budget crises in most states as they scramble to pay for services or eliminate them altogether.

This bill gives Congress enough time to understand the consequences of these regulations and come up with a solution we all can agree on rather than cutting these necessary services.

I am disappointed that the Administration has threatened to veto this bill. This piece of legislation is the result of a lot of hard work on both sides of the aisle.

I am particularly upset that the Administration seems to have forgotten once again about its Texas roots. Texas, along with California and New York stand to lose the largest amount of funding from these Medicaid cuts and this is money our states cannot afford to lose.

This bill has the support of 2,000 organizations and the National Governors Association. I urge my colleagues to support this bill and stop these cuts.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, over the past year, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS, have introduced a series of Medicaid regulations that have caused grave concern to our States and beneficiaries. States are struggling as the economy sinks into recession, and these proposed regulations, if not suspended, will add billions in Medicaid costs to our States at a time when their tax revenues are falling and Medicaid caseloads are growing.

The seven regulations issued by CMS erode the foundation of the Medicaid system by preventing beneficiaries from accessing the care they need. These proposed regulations would endanger access to care by severely limiting payments to public hospitals, eliminate coverage for outpatient services that keep beneficiaries from unnecessary emergency room use, and by restricting support for transportation services for children with disabilities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Chairman DINGELL for his superb leadership on this issue and for introducing and garnering bipartisan support for this unfortunate but very necessary moratorium. This important legislation will help protect beneficiaries from harmful cuts and alleviate the immediate concerns that the Medicaid regulations cause for long term care patients, residents and providers alike. The bill also establishes an independent review of these regulations prior to the expiration of the moratorium next year. In addition, it provides $25 million to HHS each year, beginning in FY 2009, to fight fraud and abuse in the Medicaid program.

This moratorium is a temporary fix, allowing Congress an opportunity to review these regulations as thoroughly as possible before they are implemented and the burden is borne by our constituents.

While CMS argues that these changes will create efficiencies in the program, there is no evidence to support this claim. What is known is that these changes will cause extreme harm to our most vulnerable citizens—low-income children, the disabled, and the elderly. By utterly disregarding the immense public outcry surrounding the enactment of these rules, this administration is placing desperately needed services in jeopardy without thoroughly weighing the effects these regulations will have on States.

Now more than ever, in the face of major State budget deficits, we cannot allow the Federal Government to make major regulatory changes to Medicaid that will result in billions of additional costs to states.

I am a proud, original cosponsor of Chairman DINGELL's H.R. 5613, the Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008 and urge all my colleagues in this 110th Congress to stand with me and stop this Administration from implementing these foolish and potentially devastating regulations.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008.

Since its inception, Medicaid has been a joint State and Federal partnership to provide health care to the country's neediest and most vulnerable populations. Unfortunately, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS, recently issued a series of Medicaid regulations that will significantly shift costs to States and restrict services to needy individuals. These regulations will force States to stop providing beneficiaries access to certain Medicaid services.

Among the damaging Medicaid regulations issued by CMS, I am especially concerned about the restrictive rules on targeted case management services that help people with disabilities remain in their community. Nearly 200,000 people in Maryland receive some type of Medicaid case management services, and these new rules will put more than $60 million in Federal funds for Maryland at risk. CMS also proposes to eliminate or severely restrict Federal Medicaid funding for rehabilitation services, graduate medical education, hospital outpatient services, safety net institutions, and school-based transportation and outreach programs. While CMS claims that the elimination of $20 billion in Federal Medicaid funding will create efficiencies in the program, it did not consult with Congress on these far reaching regulations.

With so many States, including Maryland, facing huge budget shortfalls and trying to figure out how to provide Medicaid services to their populations, now is not the time for the Federal Government to cut back on its share of funding. The legislation before us today would delay implementation of the regulations put forth by CMS so that Congress can examine their full impact.

Mr. Speaker, we have a responsibility and an obligation to our vulnerable citizens—low-income children, the disabled, and the elderly—to effectively provide access to adequate and quality health care services. I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in full support of H.R. 5613—the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008.

The millions of people who depend on this critical safety net and I thank and applaud Chairman DINGELL for once again protecting our Nation's critically important Medicaid program.

It is a shame that every year Democrats have to fight back at least one attempt to cut funding and provisions in this program that is so vital to the Nation's poor—the majority of which are people of color.

The administration and the Secretary's policies are going in the absolute wrong direction. Rather Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance funding needs to be increased to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of un- and under-insured which includes 9 million children. This administration's failed economic policies have left more people vulnerable.

Racial and ethnic minorities suffer worse morbidity and mortality because of lack of access. Caps on Medicaid in the territories don't even allow us to cover residents at 100 percent of poverty and per capita spending is a shamefully small fraction of that of our fellow Americans in the States.

This Nation's healthcare system as we all know has become a sick-care system and not only is it not doing a good job at that, it is in crisis and on the verge of catastrophe.

The proposed actions restricting payments for graduate medical education and blanket regulations against payment for certain services, threaten to not only make the healthcare situation in this country worse for the poor, but for everyone, and to threaten the competitiveness and security of our Nation.

I look forward to the new Democratic administration, who will work with Chairman DINGELL and others to transform health care in this country and reduce the skyrocketing costs through emphasis on prevention and equal access to quality, comprehensive culturally competent care for everyone who lives here. The foundation of this effort must be stronger Medicaid and SCHIP.

By stopping the assault on these two programs; by stopping payments to hard working providers and for the training of the healthcare workforce needed, we set the stage for that transformation to begin.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, for your continued leadership.

I urge passage of H.R. 5613 to protect this important safety net.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my strong support for the passage of H.R. 5613, the Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act. I commend my colleagues Representative DINGELL and Representative MURPHY for introducing this bill, which would extend until March 31, 2009 the moratorium on several Medicaid regulations that would strip an estimated $20 billion over 5 years from the Medicaid program.

Mr. Speaker, for more than 40 years, Medicaid has served as the Nation's health care safety net, providing access to health services for millions who cannot afford private insurance in a dynamic and changing economy.

Today, more than 57 million children, poor, disabled and elderly individuals rely on Medicaid for care. The program now serves more people than Medicare, and with the ranks of the uninsured growing, and the threat of an economic recession, the Medicaid program is more important than ever.

Mr. Speaker, hospitals are the backbone of America's health care safety net, providing care to all patients who come through their doors, regardless of their ability to pay. But, hospitals are experiencing severe payment shortfalls when treating Medicaid patients.

Despite these financial pressures, the Administration continues to call for further cuts in federal funds for the Medicaid program that will affect hospitals and the patients they serve.

Despite concerns raised by Congress, CMS continues to take steps to implement these regulations. These rules range from limiting payments for teaching hospitals, public hospitals and hospital outpatient services to reducing school-based services for children and case management for the disabled.

Last year, Congress imposed a year-long moratorium (P.L. 110–28) on two regulations the proposed and final cost-limit rule and the proposed graduate medical education (GME) rule. The moratorium on implementation of these rules expires May 25, 2008.

CMS's regulatory budget-cutting policies will have a devastating effect on my home State of New Jersey's Medicaid program, along with the hospitals and physicians serving our Nation's most vulnerable population—poor children and mothers, the disabled and elderly individuals. Much of Congress has expressed opposition to these rules.

This bill would delay implementation of regulations affecting: CPEs; IGTs; GME; coverage of rehab services for people with disabilities; outreach and enrollment in schools, in addition to specialized medical transportation to school for children covered by Medicaid; coverage of hospital outpatient services; case management services that allow people with disabilities to remain in the community; and state provider tax laws.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that CMS's regulatory budget-cutting policies will have a devastating effect on my home State of New Jersey's Medicaid program, along with the hospitals and physicians serving our Nation's most vulnerable population—poor children and mothers, the disabled and elderly individuals.

Mr. Speaker, we need to pass H.R. 5613 today. I urge my colleagues to vote for this bill legislation.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5613, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

WORLD GLAUCOMA DAY

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 981) recognizing March 6, 2008, as the first-ever World Glaucoma Day, established to increase awareness of glaucoma, which is the second leading cause of preventable blindness in the United States and worldwide, as amended.

The Clerk read the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 981

Whereas glaucoma is a progressive disease of the optic nerve, robbing individuals of both peripheral and central vision;

Whereas glaucoma affects all age groups, including infants, children, and the elderly;

Whereas glaucoma disproportionately affects underserved minority populations, with African-Americans having a three times greater risk of developing this disease than White Americans, and it is the leading cause of irreversible vision loss in African-Americans and Hispanics;

Whereas glaucoma is the second leading cause of preventable vision loss in the United States, afflicting 2,200,000 Americans, and it is the leading cause of permanent blindness worldwide, afflicting 67,000,000 persons;

Whereas awareness is absolutely crucial, as glaucoma often has no symptoms until vision loss occurs, and it is estimated that, in the United States, more than half of the individuals with glaucoma are unaware that they have it and, in developing countries, 90 percent of individuals with glaucoma are unaware that they have it;

Whereas with early diagnosis and ongoing treatment, 90 percent of the cases where blindness occurs can be avoided and awareness is crucial, so that individuals with known risk factors for glaucoma and those over the age of 40 should have regular, comprehensive eye examinations that include careful evaluation of the optic nerve and measurement of eye pressure;

Whereas the National Eye Institute (''NEI'') within the National Institutes of Health (''NIH'') has been a worldwide leader in glaucoma research, elucidating the genetic basis of different types of the disease (including risk factors) and the potential for gene therapy approaches, identifying factors that can protect the optic nerve from damage, evaluating the potential for optic nerve cell regeneration, and better understanding how elevated intraocular pressure leads to optic nerve damage and how pressure-reducing drugs ultimately developed from NEI-led research can reduce glaucoma progression;

Whereas it is the role of the NEI to support research to prevent, diagnose, and cure glaucoma-related vision impairment and blindness, which disproportionately affects underserved minority populations; and

Whereas the public needs to know the insidious nature of glaucoma, that there are means for detecting and treating it to save sight, and the importance of compliance associated with those treatments, and the first-ever World Glaucoma Day is an observance planned to increase global awareness in that regard: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the United States House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the first-ever World Glaucoma Day;

(2) supports the efforts of the National Eye Institute within the National Institutes of Health to continue research on the causes of glaucoma, including genetic and environmental risk factors, glaucoma prevention, the relationships between damage to the optic nerve and loss of vision, societal and individual impacts, diagnostics, and treatment to save and potentially restore sight; and

(3) congratulates the American Glaucoma Society for its efforts to expand awareness of the prevalence and economic burden of glaucoma.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of H. Res. 981, recognizing March 6, 2008, as the first-ever World Glaucoma Day. As a cosponsor of this resolution, I am proud to speak out in favor of greater support for glaucoma awareness and prevention.

Glaucoma is the second leading cause of preventable vision loss in the United States and the leading cause of permanent blindness worldwide. It afflicts 67 million people by some estimates. While glaucoma affects all age groups, it is of special concern to me because it disproportionately affects underserved minority populations, particularly African Americans over age 40 and Mexican Americans over 60.

The resolution before us supports the observance of World Glaucoma Day, which would raise awareness about glaucoma on a global scale. Awareness is especially important since nearly 90 percent of individuals with glaucoma are unaware that they have it. Moreover, regular comprehensive eye exams can lead to early diagnosis and treatment that can lessen the impact of this devastating disease.

The resolution also supports the efforts of the National Eye Institute and its commitment to continue research on the causes of glaucoma. By learning more about the causes of this insidious disease, we may one day find a cure.

The resolution also congratulates the American Glaucoma Society for its efforts to raise awareness about the prevalence of the disease. The American Glaucoma Society helps to preserve vision by supporting glaucoma specialists and scientists through the advancement of education and research.

I also wish to thank the Friends of the Congressional Glaucoma Caucus Foundation, a nonprofit foundation funded in part by the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention, for its outstanding contributions in providing free glaucoma screening for 200,000 people from 2001 to date, while administering the programs that include follow-up and treatment services across the country. Further, I must point out that I am a cosponsor of H.R. 3005, the Glaucoma Screening Act of 2007. This measure was introduced by Representatives SERRANO and BOOZMAN and Mr. MENENDEZ of the Senate. I urge my colleagues on the House Energy and Commerce Committee to hold a hearing on this bill soon.

Finally, I want to thank my colleague, Congresswoman TAMMY BALDWIN, for her leadership on H. Res. 981, which recognizes March 6, 2008, as the first-ever World Glaucoma Day. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of its adoption.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) will control the time of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON).

There was no objection.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to start by thanking my colleague Congresswoman BALDWIN for introducing this legislation along with 100-plus additional Members who have signed on as cosponsors to this important resolution. I would also like to praise the extensive grassroots effort made by numerous eye disease and prevention groups to ensure that this bill passes today in the House of Representatives.

It is an honor for me to speak in favor of this legislation today. This bill recognizes March 6, 2008, as the first-ever World Glaucoma Day. This day was established to increase awareness of glaucoma, which is the second leading cause of preventable blindness in the United States and worldwide. I can speak from personal experience regarding the importance of eye health and getting the appropriate screenings throughout a person's lifetime.

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that cause progressive damage of the optic nerve at the point where it leaves the eye to carry visual information to the brain. This disease robs individuals of both peripheral and central vision. If left untreated, many types of glaucoma progress towards gradually worsening visual damage and could and may lead to blindness. Once incurred, visual damage is irreversible.

It is estimated that glaucoma affects 2.2 million Americans and 67 million people worldwide, that 4.5 million people globally are blind due to glaucoma, and that number will rise to 11.2 million by 2020.

There are several types of glaucoma. Some may occur as a complication of other visual disorders, but the vast majority occurs without any known cause. Glaucoma affects all age groups, including infants and children. In most cases, however, glaucoma appears later in life, and its frequency increases with age.

There is no cure for glaucoma yet, and vision loss is irreversible. Therefore, early detection is essential to limiting visual impairment and preventing the progression towards severe visual handicap or blindness. With early diagnosis and treatment, 90 percent of cases where blindness occurs can be avoided.

My colleague from New York just said this important fact: This is a preventable disease. Individuals with numerous factors and those over the age of 40 should have a regular comprehensive eye exam. World Glaucoma Day is one of the many efforts to increase awareness of the importance of eye health. There are several ways to detect and treat glaucoma to save sight, and it is essential that the message reaches every single person.

I'm honored to support this legislation and to work for its passage. But today, Mr. Speaker, we have a message that is there for all Americans and the world to hear, and that is glaucoma is preventable. Awareness is something we should all have and be mindful that we can work towards a cure in the very near future.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1515

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This is very important legislation to me. In the early part of my life, I worked for the Industrial Home for the Blind, which is now referred to as the Helen Keller Foundation. I had the opportunity to see and to talk to people, in many instances who were blind because they did not get the attention at an early stage and as a result they lost their vision.

So I think what we are doing here today is so important, that we pass this legislation which encourages people to seek treatment, encourages people to get eye exams. I think that is the thing we need to do. Because as my colleague indicated, early detection sometimes can prevent this.

On that note, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I too join my colleague from New York in talking about not only the importance of what we are doing here today, but also to thank the many groups from around the country that have taken time to touch base with their Member of Congress about the importance of not only treatments of glaucoma, but the awareness of glaucoma.

Today, we are on the floor for the first ever opportunity to say we are going to highlight this important effort and battle that we are doing, and we are going to make progress on that. It really comes about through awareness, where people who perhaps are hearing about glaucoma for the first time and understanding about the pressure that is put on the eye that can cause this blindness, but is preventable. I hope that the time that we spend today will find itself in messages to thousands of people who recognize that their time to come to Washington, DC to tell their story about this, really did matter, and paid off.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to notify the gentleman that I do not have any additional speakers, and I will find out if he does. But I would encourage him to run through his speakers.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TOWNS. I do not have any additional speakers. I think we have the right to close.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from New York, Mr. TOWNS, for taking the time to come in a little bit early today to work on behalf of the gentlewoman, Congresswoman BALDWIN, on this important effort. She and I joined together on this effort. We joined together and had the support from some 100 other Members of Congress, who have heard the message, who believe that it is important that we have this resolution on the floor today. We are proud that we have done this. It is a meaningful effort that this entire House of Representatives do this. I will be very proud of what the House does today to pass the bill.

I thank the Speaker for allowing this bill to come to the floor today.

With that, I yield back my time.

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague for the outstanding work that he has done. I also would like to thank Congresswoman BALDWIN for her outstanding work as well, who has been detained and not able to get here. But she has worked real hard on this because she understands how important it is in terms of early detection.

Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 981, which recognizes March 6, 2008, as the first-ever World Glaucoma Day and I wish to thank my colleague, Mr. SESSIONS, for joining me in introducing this resolution.

Glaucoma is the second leading cause of preventable vision loss in the United States. It is a group of diseases that damages the optic nerve and leads to vision loss. An estimated 2.2 million Americans have glaucoma. An additional 2 million have glaucoma, but do not know it, as glaucoma often has no symptoms until vision loss occurs.

If left untreated, glaucoma leads to blindness, which has occurred in about 120,000 Americans. Worldwide, nearly 70 million people are affected by the disease.

Every American over the age of 60 is at risk of developing glaucoma, which also disproportionately affects minority populations. African Americans have a three times greater risk of developing this disease than white Americans, and it is the leading cause of irreversible vision loss in African Americans and Hispanics.

With early diagnosis and ongoing treatment, however, 90 percent of the cases where blindness occurs can be avoided. Awareness is crucial, so that individuals with known risk factors for glaucoma and those over the age of 40 should have regular, comprehensive eye examinations that include careful evaluation of the optic nerve and measurement of eye pressure.

So Mr. Speaker, I am happy today that the House of Representatives is considering this resolution, which seeks to expand global awareness about the incidence and burden of glaucoma.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I also want to recognize the American Glaucoma Society for its efforts to expand awareness of the prevalence and economic burden of glaucoma. Their advocacy surrounding the first-ever World Glaucoma Day has been truly valuable in promoting eye health.

Mr. TOWNS. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 981, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE REEF

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1112) recognizing 2008 as the International Year of the Reef.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1112

Whereas the International Coral Reef Initiative has designated 2008 as the International Year of the Reef;

Whereas the International Year of the Reef is a global effort to raise public awareness of the value of coral reefs and the significance of the threats faced by coral reef systems, and to mobilize action to develop and implement innovative solutions and strategies to protect and conserve these important natural resources;

Whereas over 225 organizations in 50 countries and territories participated during the first International Year of the Reef in 1997;

Whereas coral reef systems provide economic, environmental, and cultural benefits to millions of people around the world and are vital in protecting shorelines and supporting coastal economies;

Whereas coral reef systems are the most diverse ecosystem on earth, supporting at least 1,000,000 known species of plants and animals and 25 percent of all marine life;

Whereas coral reef systems contribute $375,000,000,000 each year to the worldwide economy;

Whereas over 50 percent of all federally managed fisheries species in the U.S. depend upon coral reefs for part of their life cycle;

Whereas coral reef systems provide for one-fourth of the total fish catch in the developing world;

Whereas coral reefs around the world are confronted by many grave threats, including destructive fishing methods, damage by marine vessels and divers, development, pollution, ocean acidification, increasing sea temperatures, bleaching, and invasive species; and

Whereas increased public awareness, as well as public and private investment, can prevent the further degradation of the world's coral reef systems in order to preserve this precious resource for future generations: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the United States House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the International Year of the Reef;

(2) supports strong programs in environmental and marine research at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and other Federal agencies to better understand the threats faced by coral reef systems;

(3) supports the efforts of the International Coral Reef Initiative to promote public awareness and encourage public stewardship of the world's coral reefs; and

(4) encourages further research and development efforts to preserve coral reefs around the world.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H. Res. 1112, the resolution now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am very pleased to be here today to speak in support of H. Res. 1112, a resolution I have introduced with my friend from Illinois, MARK KIRK. The resolution expresses the support of the House of Representatives for the International Coral Reef Initiative designation of the year 2008 as the International Year of the Reef, and for strong environmental and marine research efforts that will allow us to better understand the threats facing the planet's coral reef systems.

From the Great Barrier Reef that spans over 1,600 miles just off Australia's northeast coast, to the coral reefs found within the Red Sea, to the coral reef system that began forming off the Florida coast nearly 7,000 years ago, coral reefs are among the most vibrant and diverse ecosystems on the planet. Known as the Rain Forest of the Sea, these important treasures are not only the source of food and shelter to millions of sea creatures, they also provide environmental, cultural, and economic value for people around the world.

However, coral reefs across the planet are in peril and face an uncertain future. Global estimates suggest that 10 percent of the earth's coral reefs have already been seriously degraded, and an even greater share of reefs face serious decline. Rising sea temperatures, damage by divers and marine vessels, pollution, and other manmade threats have raised the specter that over the next century, a vast number of the world's coral reef systems will cease to exist.

One of the most troubling threats facing coral reefs is ocean acidification, a phenomenon that occurs when the ocean becomes so acidic that corals and other shell-making organisms are unable to produce the calcium carbonate or to use the calcium carbonate that they need to form their shells. Another disturbing trend is the onset of coral bleaching, which results from rising sea temperatures causing corals to expel the algae that live within their tissues and provide the corals' different colors. Once the algae has been expelled, corals lose their color and, lacking the nourishment provided by photosynthesis that algae provides, the coral dies.

In 1994, recognizing the increasing degradation of the world reefs, the U.S. partnered with other countries to establish the International Coral Reef Initiative. Through its efforts, the International Coral Reef Initiative has mobilized regional and national governments to pursue science-based management of coral reef systems, spurred the establishment of coordinated coral reef protection efforts, and assembled organizations and stakeholders throughout the world to address pollution and other manmade threats that imperil the coral reefs of the world.

The International Coral Reef Initiative has declared 2008 the International Year of the Reef. The Initiative is leading an international effort to continue to bring the preservation of coral reefs into the global spotlight so that we can do what needs to be done to protect these vital national resources for generations to come.

I would like to commend the International Coral Reef Initiative for its efforts and express my enthusiasm for the level of interest, participation, and action that has been generated as a result of its work. I would also like to thank Chairman GORDON and Ranking Member HALL, as well as their staff, for bringing this resolution to the floor. I look forward to working with them further to ensure that the world's coral reefs are protected and preserved, and I urge passage of the resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 1112, recognizing 2008 as the International Year of the Reef. For almost 15 years, the United States has been an active participant

in the protection of coral reefs around the world. In 1994, the U.S. was one of the founding governments of the International Coral Reef Initiative, ICRI. ICRI is a partnership among governments, international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations that strive to preserve coral reefs and related ecosystems. This year, the U.S. and Mexico share responsibilities for the joint secretariat of the ICRI.

The first International Year of the Reef was designated by ICRI in 1997, and this campaign proved to be very successful. Over 225 organizations in more than 50 countries participated and helped raise awareness of the importance of coral reef conservation and catalyzed international conversations and national level policy initiatives. This was certainly true in the U.S.A. when in 1998 an executive order established the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force that led to coordination and the strengthening of U.S. Government actions to preserve and protect coral reef ecosystems. In 2000, this task force developed the National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs, a comprehensive strategy to conserve those coral reefs.

An example of the commitment of the U.S. Government to such coral reef conservation efforts included the establishment in 2006 of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument. President Bush set aside almost 140,000 square miles to receive the most extensive maritime environmental protection permitted under U.S. law. This national monument, which is, by the way, the largest in the U.S., includes a substantial number of coral reefs and related ecosystems.

The goals of the 2008 International Year of the Reef campaign include strengthening awareness about the ecology, economic and cultural value of coral reefs; improving understanding of critical threat to reefs and generating both innovative and practical solutions to reduce such threats; and action to develop and implement effective management strategies for conservation and sustainable use of coral reefs.

These worthwhile objectives will ensure the continued awareness of the American people in the environments that are not only beautiful, but provide substantial economic benefits. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration will lead the U.S. effort on this campaign, and I applaud NOAA's hard work in preserving coral reefs for the enjoyment of future generations. Their dedication does not go unnoticed in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 1112.

And with that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Oklahoma. He and I have had the privilege firsthand of visiting some of the endangered reefs and hearing from some of the world's leading experts, and his eloquent comments about the leadership of our Nation in this regard are well put.

I have no speakers at this time, and would reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Washington, it has indeed been a pleasure to work with, and we have accomplished many things.

With that, I would like to yield such time as he might consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

Mr. KIRK. I thank my colleague from Oklahoma, and appreciate the leadership, and especially my friend from Washington for bringing forward this legislation. It is a strong resolution that follows up on a congressional recognition of 2008 as the International Year of the Reef in support of research and development to preserve coral reefs around the world.

We all know that coral reef systems are vital to the ecology of our planet. They provide food and jobs and recreation to millions of people around the world. Most importantly, they provide key environmental benefits, including resistance to climate change and protection of shorelines from harmful erosion.

Coral reefs and their surrounding ecosystems are now under siege. They face damage from marine vessels, destructive fishing methods, development, and especially increased ocean pollution. Climate change has contributed to increasing sea temperatures, which also threaten these critical habitats. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 60 percent of the world's coral reefs may be destroyed by the year 2050 if the present rate of destruction continues.

The International Coral Reef Initiative deemed 2008 as the International Year of the Reef. It established a global campaign to raise awareness about the value and importance of coral reefs and their threats to sustainability. The effort also aims to mobilize action to develop and implement innovative solutions and strategies to protect and preserve this important natural resource.

It's very important for the United States to lend its support and resources to this effort. I would also say it's very important for the Congress to complete its work on another piece of legislation that my friend and I backed, the Tropical Forest and Coral Reef Conservation Act, H.R. 2185. My colleague, Mr. BAIRD, and I supported this resolution, which is based on legislation coauthored by myself and Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. It would offer a key ''debt for nature swaps'' in developing countries to protect key coral reefs.

□ 1530

This legislation was based on work by my previous colleague, the former Member from Ohio, Rob Portman. We worked together since the late 1980s to pioneer a new strategy to support international ecology; that is, offering reductions for the debt of developing nations in return for investments in protecting key ecosystems. Using this technique, we created the largest park in the Western Hemisphere, the Beni Biosphere Reserve in Bolivia.

All combined, debt-for-nature swaps have now saved an area 50 times larger than Yellowstone National Park. The key addition of the Tropical Forest and Coral Conservation Act is to extend this debt-for-nature authority to the Department of the Treasury to protect coral reefs. This legislation passed the House overwhelmingly on October 9, 2007, but still remains pending in the Senate. Like so many other things, we would like to see the Senate complete the good work of the House of Representatives.

My hope is that by passing this legislation we continue to call attention on the attack of coral reefs across the world, on their critical role in preserving the biological diversity of the world, and especially the United States and its Caribbean coastline, and, most importantly, to pass the Tropical Forest and Coral Reef Conservation Act, so that we can offer more than just help on a resolution, that we can have visible support to developing nations so that they can protect their coral reefs, much as the United States should do on our own shores. I thank the gentleman from Washington.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend Mr. KIRK for his leadership on this and thank him for mentioning Representative Portman, who is really a champion of efforts to preserve the global environment.

Mr. Speaker, it is entirely appropriate that we do this today, on Earth Day. I wore a tie which my wife gave me for Christmas which has a picture of my twin 3-year-old boys on it. When we talk preserving rain forests or preserving coral reefs, I think all of us have this commitment, that our children and our grandchildren should one day be able to enjoy these. But if we do not act promptly, quite frankly, I fear that they will not be able to.

I have witnessed firsthand the degradation of some of what were the most the magnificent reefs on Earth. If you did not know what they are supposed to look like, you might not recognize the difference. But when you go underwater and things that are supposed to be there are not, species of fish, certain types of corals, gone; when you see corals that have been knocked over; when you see bleaching of almost every coral you see; when you see areas where marine anchors have been dragged across them; when you see areas where excessive human pressure in the form of divers and other things have damaged the reefs; when you see invasive species that are devouring some of the creatures that should be there; when you see runoff from nearby rivers; that is what is happening already. As populations grow, as temperatures increase,

as ocean acidification worsens, it is a very, very real possibility that reefs which we are able to enjoy, that countless species depend on, that many nations depend on for their very survival, some of the coastal nations, our own areas in Florida and elsewhere on the coast depend on for security from storms, when you see these precious resources in peril, it is deeply moving and profoundly troubling.

By recognizing the International Year of the Reef, I hope we can follow what Mr. KIRK said and urge Congress to take more actions to protect these valuable resources. I am proud that we can cosponsor this in a bipartisan fashion, and I will urge passage.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BAIRD. I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma, I thank Mr. KIRK and all the cosponsors of this resolution. Again, this resolution is somewhat of a symbolic act. What we really need to do in addition to this is support the various efforts, both nationally and internationally, to preserve these magnificent resources for generations yet to come and for the entire world.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time and would yield back the balance of my time and urge a ''yes'' vote.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1112.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CELEBRATING 35 YEARS OF SPACE-BASED OBSERVATIONS OF THE EARTH BY THE LANDSAT SPACECRAFT

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 891) celebrating 35 years of space-based observations of the Earth by the Landsat spacecraft and looking forward to sustaining the longest unbroken record of civil Earth observations of the land, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 891

Whereas the year 2007 represents 35 years of continuous collection of space-based observations of the Earth's land cover by the United States Landsat satellites, which have enabled increased scientific understanding of the interrelationships of the Earth's land cover, energy balance, and biogeochemical processes as well as the realization of numerous societal benefits from the applied uses of the data;

Whereas on July 23, 1972, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration launched Landsat 1, originally called the Earth Resources Technology Satellite, as the first civilian Earth observation satellite to study the Earth's land cover and monitor natural resources;

Whereas since 1972, the United States Geological Survey has led the data archiving and distribution efforts for the Landsat program, which has continued to collect data without interruption through the successful launches of Landsats 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7, and has established the longest and most comprehensive record of global land surface data ever collected;

Whereas the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the United States Geological Survey, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Defense, and the private sector have all played a role in Landsat's history;

Whereas Landsat greatly enhanced remote sensing science, helped give rise to a global change research plan and international initiatives to study the Earth system, and led to new types of careers in engineering and natural sciences;

Whereas Landsat data have been used for multiple scientific and applied purposes including cartography, land surveys and land use planning, agricultural forecasting, water resource management, forest management, mapping of sea ice movement, assessment of tropical deforestation, food security, mineral and oil exploration, and global change research;

Whereas Landsat data are being widely used by Federal, local, county, and State governments, and by foreign nations, nongovernmental organizations, private industry, and universities;

Whereas Landsat data are collected at a scale that enables the study of both natural and human-induced changes in land cover over time and their impacts on the Earth's ecosystems;

Whereas Landsat data illuminated for the first time how human decisions, such as the expansion of cities, led to large-scale impacts on the environment;

Whereas the U.S. Climate Change Science Program has recognized Landsat and its long-term data record as instrumental to the study of climate and environmental change, noting that ''Landsat data are invaluable for studying the land surface and how it affects and is affected by climate''; and

Whereas the scientific and societal benefits of the Landsat program and its 35-year data record illustrate the significant return on the public investment in Earth observations and the need for continued support for this critical national asset: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its appreciation to all of the dedicated scientists, engineers, and program personnel who have contributed to the successful development and operation of the Landsat program over the past 35 years;

(2) looks forward to another 35 years of continuous Landsat-like observations of the Earth;

(3) urges the continuation of the Landsat program and data record so as to sustain Landsat's value to scientific research, especially the study of global and climate change, and to the myriad applied uses of the data for societal benefit; and

(4) believes that the Nation should continue to support the research, technological improvements, educational outreach, and development of decision making tools required to expand the use of Landsat data separately and as integrated with other Earth observations data.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 891, the resolution now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise on this occasion, again I mention it is on Earth Day, to seek support for House Resolution 891, as amended, celebrating 35 years of space-based observation of the Earth by the Landsat spacecraft.

This resolution celebrates the world's longest unbroken record of civil Earth observations of the land beginning with the launch of the first Landsat satellite on July 23, 1972. The data collected from Landsat satellites have helped advance our scientific understanding of global change and fostered applications that benefit our private sector, as well as our State, local, regional and Federal Government activities.

Mr. Speaker, the scientific and applied uses of these space-based land observations are vast. Landsat data are used to monitor crop patterns, manage natural resources such as water and forests, assist in land use and urban growth planning, help protect wildlife habitats and support national security objectives, to name just a few examples. Landsat's 35 year data record has also been critical in helping to understand the interactions between land cover changes and variations in the Earth's climate.

The most recent report of the U.S. Climate Change Science Program Report references Landsat as one of two critical satellites. It states, ''Without these satellite observations, the current pace of discovery and innovation in global land use and land cover change climate research would not be possible.''

Mr. Speaker, this celebration of Landsat's continuous 35 years record of land observations provides a clear example of the societal benefits derived from our Nation's space program. But there is more to be gained from Landsat data. Increases in computing and communications capabilities are stimulating innovative approaches to using Earth observations data such as Landsat. One need only look to the Internet, where anyone can access images of neighborhoods, cities and regions to see firsthand the ways in which Landsat data are finding their ways into our lives.

Mr. Speaker, in reflecting on the contributions that Landsat has made over

the past 35 years and the growing applications of these data, we must remember that the success of Landsat begins and continues with people. We owe our gratitude to the many talented and hard-working scientists, engineers and other professionals who have been involved in the Landsat program.

I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 891. As we address the implications of climate change and the pressure on our environment and resources, it is important that we ensure the continuation of the Landsat program and ensure the research, technology and educational investments that are required to expand the use of Landsat data and the benefits they provide to science and society.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my colleague in support of H.R. 891, celebrating 35 years of continuous operation of the Federal Government's Earth observing Landsat satellite program. Generations of Landsat satellites have taken and continue to take an uninterrupted record of images of Earth's oceans and lands, enabling resource managers, geologists, climate researchers and scientists to closely monitor land use changes, water consumption, forestry, agricultural and the effects of climate change through the regular acquisition and cataloging of these photographs. This detailed and continuous record of observations offers an unambiguous insight into the changes that are occurring on a global, regional and local scale.

Landsat data and the research findings they enable would not be possible without the excellent cooperation and joint management between NASA, who designs, builds and launches the satellites, and the United States Geological Survey and the Department of Interior, who manage the archives of Landsat data at the National Satellite Land Remote Sensing Data Archives, what a title, located in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Their data records extend back 33 years.

The early history of Landsat offers a remarkable insight into the events, culture, personalities and institutional jealousies of the 1960s and 1970s. When our earliest astronauts returned from the Mercury and Gemini missions with photographs of the Earth taken from their spacecraft, scientists and engineers quickly began to envision the value of using robotic spacecraft as a means of monitoring land use changes.

However, the Department of Defense initially objected to a space-based civilian reconnaissance satellite out of concern that it would compromise their own spy satellite programs. The Office of Management and Budget also objected, arguing that land use data could be more cheaply acquired by high-flying aircraft.

According to NASA historians, then Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, being convinced of the value of space-based civil reconnaissance satellites, announced in 1966 that his department was initiating its own Earth observing satellite program. His pronouncement apparently spurred NASA to take the initiative to proceed in an ambitious manner to build Landsat.

Today, Landsat 5 and Landsat 7 continue to operate in Earth orbit, although both are nearing the end of their operational lives and may not last long enough to overlap the launch of their successor in 2011, called the Landsat Data Continuity Mission. If they both fail, the 35 year record of continuous Landsat coverage will be interrupted, and though it will be disappointing, I am optimistic that other methods of data collection will be able to fill in most of the gaps during that interim.

The Landsat program's data records are an invaluable national resource. The tenacity and the brilliance of the men and women at NASA, at USGS, and the contractors who helped design, build and launch the satellites, as well as manage the huge volume of data generated by the family of Landsat satellites, have created a legacy that will continue to serve our Nation's needs for many, many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 891.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BAIRD. I want to thank the gentleman from Oklahoma. It is an astonishing history, isn't it? The fact that we have now got a continuous record of changes at all sorts of levels, changes in ground cover, changes in agriculture, changes in the water resources, et cetera, is an extraordinary resource for a host of uses. Our agriculture community benefits from this, our national parks benefit from this, flood control managers benefit from this.

This Landsat satellite system, which was, as the gentleman from Oklahoma pointed out, once rather controversial, is now seen as something that would be very difficult to plan without. It has produced enormous economic benefits and economic savings.

Who would have thought many decades ago before the space program that one day we would be able to send up remote instruments to look back down on Earth, not from the 40,000 foot level, but much higher, to give us the broad sweep; but not only the temporary snapshot, but the vast look over time, so you can see changes, both constructive changes and the losses. Absolutely incredible and important.

I want to share the gentleman's concern. We need that continuity to continue. Let us hope that the good engineers of NASA have produced an instrument which can last much longer, as they have in many cases, as we see in the Mars rover system, for example. But we need that continuity in the data records so scientists can see what changes have occurred over time without interruption. We need to continue that not only with the proximate, the next Landsat satellite, but future generations as well.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the scientists and engineers, and thank the gentleman from Oklahoma for his support of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BAIRD. Again, I want to commend my colleagues for introducing this legislation. I think this is absolutely appropriate, particularly on Earth Day. But it is helpful for us to remember down here on Earth that our lives on Earth are made better by the space program and the observing network that we have up in space that help us anticipate all kinds of potential disasters and avoid those, and also guide us in doing proactive things to improve the health of our great planet.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time and urge a ''yes'' vote on this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 891, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1545

JOHN ARCHIBALD WHEELER

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1118) honoring the life and achievements of John Archibald Wheeler and expressing condolences on his passing.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1118

Whereas John Archibald Wheeler was born July 9, 1911, in Jacksonville, Florida;

Whereas John Wheeler graduated from high school at age 15 and earned a Ph.D. in physics from Johns Hopkins University at age 21;

Whereas Dr. Wheeler then moved to Copenhagen to work in the field of nuclear physics with pioneering physicist Niels Bohr;

Whereas, while still in his 20s, Dr. Wheeler, then a Professor of Physics at Princeton, along with Dr. Bohr in 1939 worked out the first explanation of how the newly discovered nuclear fission actually worked;

Whereas Dr. Wheeler spent the war years at Hanford, Washington working on the theoretical understanding of nuclear reactions that led to production of plutonium for the bomb dropped on Nagasaki and later worked on the development of the American hydrogen bomb under Project Matterhorn B;

Whereas Dr. Wheeler then returned to Princeton where, after discussion with Albert Einstein, he switched from the study of

nuclear physics to working on extending the theory of general relativity, including in 1957 creating the concept of wormholes to describe tunnels in space-time and in 1967 coining the term black hole as part of the theory of gravitational collapse;

Whereas Dr. Wheeler was a visionary who could see farther on the horizon than most people by way of his physical intuition;

Whereas Dr. Wheeler was a beloved academic who trained some of the best minds in the next generation of physicists, a gifted communicator sometimes called a physics poet, and an active researcher for over 70 years; and

Whereas Dr. Wheeler was, in the words of Dr. Max Texmark, the last Titan, the only physics superhero still standing until the time of his death on April 13, 2008: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) honors the life and accomplishments of Professor John Archibald Wheeler and expresses condolences on his passing; and

(2) recognizes the profound importance of Dr. Wheeler's record as a pioneer in nuclear and theoretical physics and a long-time contributor to advancing mankind's understanding of the nature and workings of the universe.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H. Res. 1118, the resolution now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today to pay tribute to a great American scientist, Dr. John Archibald Wheeler. Dr. Wheeler passed away recently at the age of 96. He was a pioneer in the fields of nuclear and theoretical physics. Along with Niels Bohr, Dr. Wheeler worked out the first explanation of how nuclear fission actually worked. During the war years, Dr. Wheeler went to work on the Manhattan Project, helping to understand the theoretical basis for plutonium production. After the war, Dr. Wheeler continued his work for the country by helping to develop the American hydrogen bomb.

After returning to academia, Dr. Wheeler continued his contributions to the field of physics. In 1957, Dr. Wheeler created the concept of wormholes to describe tunnels in space-time, and in 1967 he coined the term ''black hole,'' not to describe Congress, but as part of the theory of gravitational collapse.

John Wheeler also contributed greatly to the scientific community with his devotion to teaching and training the next generation of scientists. He was a devoted teacher and textbook author, and served as a professor for over 70 years. Some of his graduate students included Richard Feynman, Kip Thorne, and Hugh Everett, all renowned physicists in their own right.

Mr. Speaker, last week we lost one of the truly great scientific minds of the 20th century. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution honoring John Wheeler's achievements and expressing our profound condolences on his passing.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 1118, honoring the life and achievements of John Archibald Wheeler and expressing condolences on his passing. Dr. John Archibald Wheeler, who was one of America's greatest physicists, passed away this last week at the age of 96. Dr. Wheeler's wife of over 70 years passed away in 2007; and he is survived by three children, eight grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren, six step grandchildren, and 11 step great-grandchildren. What a fruitful life.

Dr. Wheeler was a man who was decades ahead of his time. He not only played a key role in the development of the theory of nuclear fission with Niels Bohr, but also became the first scientist to give black holes and wormholes a name.

Dr. Wheeler is described as a visionary physicist and teacher. His work on the Manhattan Project in 1941 helped build the atomic bomb. Always seeking answers to the larger questions of the universe, he would spend his time debating the meaning of the quantum theory and the nature of reality with Albert Einstein and Niels Bohr.

John Archibald Wheeler was born on July 9, 1911, in Jacksonville, Florida. Dr. Wheeler earned his Ph.D. in physics from Johns Hopkins University at the old age of 21 years.

Dr. Wheeler accomplished many things during his lifetime. Perhaps his greatest accomplishment was his ability to inspire generations of physicists and scientists through his teachings at Princeton and at the University of Texas, and his constant ambition to answer the greatest questions of the universe.

In 1981, Dr. Wheeler wrote: ''We are no longer satisfied with insights only into particles, or fields of force, or geometry, or even space and time; today we demand of physics some understanding of existence itself.'' Think about that. It is for this constant quest for knowledge that inspired his life and will continue to inspire the American scientific community. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 1118.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, at this moment it is a real pleasure to yield time to one of our distinguished new Members. We sometimes say in this body that it doesn't take a rocket scientist to do something. In this case, we actually do have a physicist, Dr. FOSTER, the gentleman from Illinois, and the author of this outstanding legislation. I yield to him such time as he may consume.

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month the United States lost a colossus within the science community, a visionary who advanced our understanding of the universe while inspiring generations of younger scientists. John Archibald Wheeler is perhaps best known to the public for coining the term ''black hole,'' but throughout his career he also worked alongside the likes of Albert Einstein and Niels Bohr on theoretical physics' most puzzling questions, helped develop the hydrogen bomb, and, upon his death on April 13, was appropriately called: The last Titan, the only physics superhero still standing.

For 22 years, I was a particle physicist at Fermi National Laboratory, working with my colleagues on giant experiments to move beyond the horizons of current scientific understanding. As a graduate student at Harvard and as an undergraduate before that, I could not escape the mention of John Wheeler's name engraved on the promontories or floating on the delicate backwaters of what is now called modern physics.

As a member of the tribe of experimental physicists, that is, people like me who did real experiments in the real world, we were always surrounded by a wondrous shimmering cloud of theoretical physicists. These are men and women who spend their days bobbing and weaving through the world of what might be mathematically possible, of what might show up in experiments that have yet to be invented, or what might have shown up if we had just done the last experiment just a little more carefully. John Wheeler was one of the most luminous droplets in that shimmering cloud.

As young scientists, we studied the legacy of those great minds, physicists like Einstein, Bohr, Enrico Fermi, and John Archibald Wheeler. To a fellow physicist, the breadth of John Wheeler's achievements are staggering. Born in Jacksonville, Florida on July 9, 1911, he graduated from high school at 15, and earned his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University at the age of 21. He sailed to Copenhagen a year later to begin work with the eminent physicist Niels Bohr, and in 1939 the pair produced the first description of how nuclear fission works. During the Second World War, Dr. Wheeler joined with scientists working on the Manhattan Project to build the atomic bomb. He continued to work with the U.S. government well after the war, and was awarded the Enrico Fermi Award by President Johnson in 1968.

By the time he returned to academic life, Dr. Wheeler had become fascinated with Einstein's General Theory of Relativity. Studying gravitational collapse, he introduced not only the term black hole, but also the concept of the

wormhole, a hypothetical tunnel in space-time. Dr. Wheeler was willing to passionately consider seemingly incomprehensible phenomena. In 1999, he wrote that the black hole ''teaches us that space can be crumpled like a piece of paper into an infinitesimal dot, that time can be extinguished like a blown-out flame, and that the laws of physics that we regard as sacred, as immutable, are anything but.'' His work in the 1960s revived and transformed this field.

In the last years of his career, Dr. Wheeler considered the mysterious and sometimes bizarre world of quantum mechanics, seeking connections between science and philosophy to explain fundamental questions of existence.

Despite these high achievements, Dr. Wheeler remained committed to the nurturing of the next generation of scientists. He continued to teach introductory classes to undergraduates throughout his career, and he mentored some of the century's most noted theoretical physicists. Any physicist with the amount and color of the hair that I possess will also have indelible memories of ''MTW,'' the big black book called Gravitation authored by Misner, Thorne, and John Archibald Wheeler that describes in intuitive terms what is really going on in Einstein's general theory of relativity.

So at a time when the primacy of our Nation's science programs are in peril, John Wheeler's example should remind us of our own commitment to the next generation of American scientists and innovators.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to introduce this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring the life and achievements of John Wheeler. The power of his intellectual accomplishments and the memorable color of his phrases will grace physics textbooks forever.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Dr. FOSTER for introducing this resolution, and for his eloquent description of an individual to whom we owe such a great debt in this country.

A recent survey asked citizens of the United States if they could name a single living United States scientist, and, sadly, many, many weren't. In this body it is not at all uncommon for us to bring up suspension bills honoring sports teams who may have won an NCAA championship or the Super Bowl or something like that. It is thoroughly appropriate that we do more to recognize outstanding scientists who did not just win a single sporting event, but changed the face of the Earth through their intellect, through their diligence, and through their discoveries. And I very much commend Dr. Foster for raising this, and I thank him. And, I hope it is not the last that he will enlighten us with his knowledge as a physicist. I know it won't be. But I would urge this body to see what we could do more through our actions here on the House Floor and in our districts to do more to honor and elevate the status of U.S. scientists so that we could provide role models for young people and rise above the gathering storm.

Our science committee, chaired by BART GORDON, has helped lead the effort in that. We are proud to have passed The America COMPETES Act. The America COMPETES Act is designed to produce many, many more John Wheelers. I want to express our thanks on behalf of the Congress to his family and our condolences for their loss.

I yield back the balance of my time and urge a ''yes'' vote on this outstanding resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1118.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1600

RECOGNIZING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE MODERN STATE OF ISRAEL

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 322) recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 322

Whereas on November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly voted to partition the British Mandate of Palestine and create a Jewish state;

Whereas on May 14, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel, and the United States Government established full diplomatic relations with Israel;

Whereas the desire of the Jewish people to establish an independent modern State of Israel is an outgrowth of the existence of the historic kingdom of Israel established in the Land of Israel 3,000 years ago, with the city of Jerusalem as its capital;

Whereas for over 2,000 years, there has been continuous Jewish presence and residence in the land comprising the modern State of Israel;

Whereas the establishment of the modern State of Israel as a homeland for the Jewish people followed the slaughter of more than 6,000,000 European Jews during the Holocaust;

Whereas since its establishment 60 years ago, the modern State of Israel has rebuilt a nation, forged a new and dynamic democratic society, and created a thriving economic, political, cultural, and intellectual life despite the heavy costs of war, terrorism, and unjustified diplomatic and economic boycotts against the people of Israel;

Whereas the people of Israel have established a vibrant, pluralistic, democratic political system, including freedom of speech, association, and religion; a vigorously free press; free, fair and open elections; the rule of law; a fully independent judiciary; and other democratic principles and practices;

Whereas Israel has developed some of the leading universities in the world, and 8 Israeli citizens have been awarded the Nobel Prize;

Whereas Israel has developed an advanced, entrepreneurial economy, is among the world's leaders in the high-tech industry, and is at the forefront of research and development in the field of renewable energy sources;

Whereas Israel regularly sends humanitarian aid, search-and-rescue teams, mobile hospitals, and other emergency supplies, to help victims of disasters around the world, including the 1994 Rwandan civil war, the 1998 bombing of the United States Embassy in Kenya, the 1999 earthquakes in Turkey, the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the 2005 hurricanes along the southern coast of the United States, and the 2007 fires in Greece;

Whereas Israel has absorbed millions of Jews from countries throughout the world and fully integrated them into Israeli society;

Whereas Israel has bravely defended itself from repeated terrorist and military attacks since its independence;

Whereas successive leaders of Israel have sought to achieve peace with Israel's Arab neighbors;

Whereas Israel has established peaceful bilateral relations with neighboring Egypt and Jordan and has made its desire to establish peaceful relations with all Arab states abundantly clear;

Whereas for 6 decades, the United States and Israel have maintained a special relationship based on mutually shared democratic values, common strategic interests, and moral bonds of friendship and mutual respect;

Whereas the American people feel a strong affinity for the Israeli people based on common values and shared cultural heritage; and

Whereas the United States continues to regard Israel as a strong and trusted ally and an important strategic partner: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) recognizes the historic significance of the 60th anniversary of the reestablishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel as a homeland for the Jewish people;

(2) reaffirms its enduring support for Israel as Israel pursues peace with its neighbors;

(3) reaffirms its support for Israel's right to defend itself against threats to its security and existence;

(4) commends the people of Israel for their remarkable achievements in building a new state and a pluralistic, democratic society in the face of terrorism, as well as hostility, ostracism, and belligerence from many of their neighbors;

(5) reaffirms the bonds of friendship and cooperation which have existed between the United States and Israel for the past 60 years, and commits to strengthening those bonds; and

(6) extends the warmest congratulations and best wishes to the State of Israel and the Israeli people for a peaceful, prosperous, and successful future.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 15 seconds. I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 322 which recognizes the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and reaffirms the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to join with this House today in commemorating a milestone that few would have once thought possible, and in celebrating one of America's most special bilateral relationships.

When the State of Israel was declared on May 14, 1948, some worried whether it would survive for even 6 months in the face of ruthless and relentless war from much of the Arab world. Naysayers worldwide fought against the establishment of a state for the Jewish people, and urged the United States not to recognize any such Jewish state. To our Nation's credit, the United States recognized Israel 11 minutes after it declared independence, leading the way for other responsible nations to follow.

And despite predictions of gloom and doom, and the strongest efforts of its enemies, Israel did not perish. Indeed, Israel has flourished. Israel won three wars of self-defense on multiple fronts. It has survived not merely for 6 months but for 60 extraordinary years. Through it all, Israel has endured. And as the only democracy in the region, Israel continues to be a beacon of hope and a model for her neighbors.

It has been said that the strength of a nation is determined by the caliber of its people. There is perhaps no better example of this truth than the State of Israel and the Israeli people, vivid examples of conviction, of courage, of faith. Indeed, through the blood and the toil and the creativity of its citizens, Israel has grown accustomed to dispelling established wisdom and exceeding expectations.

Israel has proven that democracy, liberty, prosperity and innovation can indeed thrive in the Middle East. Today, Israel is a vibrant democracy where unfettered free speech fills the airwaves, and where Arabs serve in government, and have excelled in business and science.

Israel has demonstrated that desolate areas of the Holy Land can be redeemed, and that the ''land of milk and honey'' can once again bloom and bear fruit.

Israel has given the world a first-rate high-tech industry that pioneered wi-fi and instant messaging, and a medical industry that pioneered microscopic cameras that can be swallowed in a pill. And Israel has shown that a 2,000-year-old dream, the creation of a state for the Jewish people in their historic homeland, can indeed come true.

Time and time again, Mr. Speaker, Israel has made the impossible a reality. Yet today, Israel once again finds itself besieged in every direction by dangerous regimes like Iran and Syria and by the rapidly arming and violent Islamic groups that those regimes sponsor like Hamas and Hezbollah.

Today, Israelis live in fear, fear of the threat of their very existence represented by the pariah states of Iran and Syria. Innocent blood in Tel Aviv, in Jerusalem, and in other communities is shed regularly as a result of the jihadists from Hezbollah, from Hamas, and other such militant organizations.

Palestinian suicide bombers have struck at crowded bus stops, at hotels and cafes and other civilian targets. And in a little town called Sderot, children play indoors because of Palestinian rockets, and ordinary people face the draining pressure that at any moment a rocket could be launched at them, killing or maiming them or their loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, Israel's existence is indispensable to advancing America's most basic interests and values. For decades, our two nations have successfully collaborated on everything from science and business to defense and homeland security. As America goes forward, fighting for a free and prosperous world and against violent extremist groups who seek our ruin, Israel once again stands with us. And America will and must continue to stand with Israel for the next 60 years and beyond.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in the 60 years since the founding of our ally Israel, the United States has had no greater friend in the Middle East. U.S.-Israeli friendship is based first and foremost on shared democratic values and our mutual pursuit of peace and stability in the Middle East, and it is buttressed by our Nation's unshakable commitment to Israel's security.

The remarkable story to Israel's foundation and survival is inspiring. Shortly after the decision by the United Nations to partition the British Mandate of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, Israel declared its independence on May 14, 1948, in Tel Aviv. In response, Israel's Arab neighbors invaded the new and tiny Jewish state. And to the surprise of the so-called experts and pundits everywhere, the nascent Israel Defense Forces prevailed, defending the people of Israel and soundly defeating the Arab coalition.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy called the emergence of the State of Israel ''a miracle of the 20th century.'' However, Golda Meier once remarked that there had been ''too much self-sacrifice and too many lives lost for Israel's emergence to be considered a miracle.''

But the establishment and the evolution of the State of Israel can be considered, without doubt, one of the dazzling human achievements of our times.

Hundreds of thousands of Jews and their descendants escaped oppression, or worse, because Israel exists. Spurning the authoritarian model that dominates its region, and persevering in a sea of enmity, Israel has built a world-class civilization, a vibrant democracy, a thriving economy, and a culturally and academically rich society.

The American people, and particularly the United States Congress, have contributed mightily to Israel's sustenance and security over the years. Of that we are justifiably proud.

But Israel's triumphant story is also tinged with tragedy. Each year just before its independence day, Israel honors soldiers who have fallen in its defense. A siren sounds all over the nation, and Israelis everywhere stop to remember. This minute of silence is a poignant memory for all who have witnessed it. But it is also, unfortunately, symbolic of Israel's wider regional reality for Israel has lived under the Damoclesian threat since its birth.

For years the Arab world sought to drive Israel into the sea. But eventually, after much death and destruction, the visionary Egyptian president, Anwar Sadat, and the wise Jordanian, King Hussein, recognized the value of peace and coexistence with Israel. And although much of the Arab world's economic, cultural and political boycott of Israel remains intact and terrorism has never ceased, the prospect of a collective military attack on Israel fortunately has faded in recent years.

Nevertheless, Israel today lives under potentially greater threats to its well-being and existence than ever before. The daily rocket assaults from Gaza, controlled by fundamentalist Hamas, have reaped vast physical and psychological damage on the people of Sderot, not to mention the fact that they have killed more than a dozen Israelis. And increasingly, sophisticated rockets are being used. They are more deadly accurate by the day, and they have greater range. In Israel's north, Hezbollah's replenished missile supply poses an even greater threat.

On the other end of the military spectrum, a theologically based state, the Islamic Republic of Iran whose president says Israel should be wiped off the map, is developing nuclear

weapons and long-range missiles. Now is not the time to go into details about these threats. This body has spoken specifically to each of these dangers in the relatively recent past, and will do so again.

Now it is time to reaffirm our Nation's pledge to Israel that we will stand in solidarity with Israel against all violent assaults on its security and well-being. And most of all, it is time to say to our friend and ally, Israel, congratulations on your incredible social, political, economic, and technological achievements in the face of the most stupefying odds. We in the United States could not be prouder of our special relationship with you.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time and would be glad to allow Mr. BERMAN to recognize the Speaker.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to recognize the chief sponsor of this resolution, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, a stalwart supporter of the State of Israel for all of her political life that I have known her, for 1 minute.

Ms. PELOSI. I thank the gentleman for his kind words. I am pleased to join Mr. BOEHNER and other cosponsors of this legislation, and thank Chairman BERMAN and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN for their leadership in bringing this resolution to the floor, and for leading us in our strong friendship with the State of Israel.

I thank Mr. BERMAN for following so ably in the footsteps of Mr. Lantos as he follows the tradition of Chairman Lantos whose loss we feel every day.

Mr. Speaker, this weekend, families around the world, including my own grandchildren, gathered around the Seder table to retell the Biblical story of freedom and hope that is Passover.

The closing words of the Passover haggadah evoke the age-old yearning of the Jewish people to return to Zion. Today, in Congress, we mark the fulfillment of those aspirations in observing the founding of the modern State of Israel. By recognizing the 60th anniversary of Israel, we reaffirm the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

Again I thank Chairman BERMAN and Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN for their leadership in giving us this opportunity today. I am pleased to join Republican Leader BOEHNER as lead cosponsors of this legislation, as I am pleased to join him in leading a delegation to Israel in a few weeks to be part of the 60th anniversary observance.

Mr. Speaker, the creation of the State of Israel, as Mr. BERMAN said so eloquently, stands out as one of the greatest achievements of the 20th century and as a beacon of hope to the world. President Truman's role in recognizing the new state just 11 minutes after its proclamation is a source of pride for all Americans. It is also a symbol of the strength of the friendship between our two countries.

I note that this congressional recognition is a little earlier than a month before Israel's independence day, but this allows us to get ready and to have a few weeks of festivities to bring in the May celebration.

In this body we sometimes have political differences, but today and every day we speak with one voice united with Israel. As we support Israel, we recognize that the national security of Israel is in our national interest.

□ 1615

A week ago, Noam Shalit, father of Gilad Shalit, came to my office. Gilad was captured from his army base in Israel near the Gaza border on June 25, 2006. For almost 2 years, Gilad has been held in captivity. Our thoughts are with him and his family, as well as with all of the other missing Israeli soldiers, such as Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev. We will continue to work for their release from captivity.

Mr. Speaker, every leader from the region who comes into my office, or just other people that I find worthy of knowing about this, I show the dog tags of Eldad, Ehud and Gilad as a constant reminder in the Speaker's Office of our commitment to them and to their freedom.

In America's partnership with Israel, we have both given support and we have drawn strength. We share a common history, nations founded to be beacons of democracy, forged by pioneers, and fulfilled by immigrants in search of a better tomorrow. We also share a common cause, a safe and secure Israel, living in peace with her neighbors.

Mr. Speaker, I urge our colleagues to speak with one voice and support this resolution recognizing the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel. In doing so, we not only commend Israel, we also bring luster to this House by associating ourselves with that great State of Israel.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady from Florida for her generosity in allowing me, the Speaker, to speak out of turn.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, at this point I would like to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), an esteemed member of our Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the Nation of Israel has fought for 60 years for the right to exist, and I'm proud to be a cosponsor of H. Con. Res. 322, a measure before the House today. It recognizes the 60th anniversary of Israel's statehood, and reaffirms United States support for Israel as Israel continues to pursue peace with its neighbors and defend itself against constant threats to its security and its existence.

Sixty years ago, on May 14, in the aftermath of World War II, the people of Israel declared independence and claimed sovereignty of about 8,000 square miles of land that was between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, the area about the size of New Jersey. That day was just the beginning of another chapter in Israel's long history of defending its right to exist.

Almost immediately after Israel announced independence in 1948, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Saudi Arabia all declared war on Israel, launching Israel's long fight for the mere right to exist. In that war, the newly created State of Israel defeated the Arab armies that invaded it, and even expanded some of its territory.

Then again, in 1967, Israel acted once more to defend itself against hostile invasion by its neighbors during the Six Day War. Once again, in 1972, Israel was targeted by Arab armies during the Yom Kippur war.

And recently Israel has been attacked in the north by terrorist hate groups Hezbollah, and in the south by Hamas terrorist group.

Also, Israel has been forced to defend itself against Palestinian aggression. And since January 1 of this year, Palestinians have fired more than 450 mortar shells into Israel. This rocket fire has intentionally targeted civilian communities in Israel, and made life for these people a nightmare. But Israel is resilient and continues to fly the flag of freedom.

I proudly join my colleagues in commending the people of Israel for building this democratic state in the face of terrorism, hostility, hate and war from their neighbors.

Israel and the United States are like family. Sometimes we disagree on things, but when someone attacks part of the family, it's an attack on the whole family. Let there be no mistake about it. The United States stand side by side with its friend, Israel, and with the concept of freedom.

And that's just the way it is.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I'm privileged to recognize for 1 minute a gentleman who has probably done as much as anyone in this House to promote the U.S.-Israeli relationship, including his own personal missions that he leads there, the majority leader, Mr. HOYER of Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. I thank my friend of some 45 years for his observations. There are a lot of my very dear friends for a long time in this chamber.

Israel is America's friend for a very long time.

Mr. Speaker, it is fitting today that Members of both sides of the aisle, almost in unanimity, join to recognize the founding of our Nation's steadfast friend and ally, the State of Israel, to reconfirm the special bond that exists between our two Nations, and to reiterate that the support for Israel in this Congress is bipartisan, overwhelming, stronger than ever, and continuing to grow.

On May 14, 1948, the day on which the British mandate for Palestine expired, the people of Israel proclaimed the sovereign and independent State of Israel. And 11 minutes later the United States, at the direction of President Harry S. Truman, recognized the establishment of this new state.

President Truman observed, at that time, and I quote, ''I had faith in Israel before it was established, I have faith in it now. I believe that it has a glorious future before it, not just another sovereign nation, but an embodiment of the great ideals of our civilization.''

So said President Harry Truman, May 14, 1948, 11 minutes after the declaration of sovereignty of the State of Israel. An embodiment of the great ideals of our civilization. I believe that to be the fact, and because I believe that to be the fact, I believe it is absolutely essential that those who uphold those ideals pledge their support and defense of Israel against those who would undermine, not only the nation, but the idea of the civilization that Truman said it represents.

Mr. Speaker, over the ensuing 6 decades, it has become increasingly clear that Israel's success is not only a strategic imperative for the United States, but a moral imperative as well. Ours is a relationship of principle and conscience, of shared values and common aspirations, of peace and opportunity and a mutual commitment to freedom and democracy.

The United States and Israel are nations of immigrants. We are safe havens for the oppressed. The Statue of Liberty lifts her lamp beside the golden door, ''Send these, the poor, the homeless, tempest tossed to me,'' it says. That is what Israel has said to millions of Jews, and others as well, black and white.

We are partners with Israel for peace, and we are united in fighting against terrorism. Few people on Earth have been subjected to more bigotry, violence and discrimination than have the Jewish people, and no people are more in need, in my view, of a sovereign, secure homeland to provide safe haven and to protect identity.

That is why the Balfour Resolution was passed in 1918. That is why, in 1948, the world looked on the creation of Israel as an imperative.

David Ben-Gurion once remarked: ''The security of Israel is,'' he said, and I quote, ''a question of the survival, not only of the people of Israel, but of the Jewish people the world over.''

History has taught us that is true. Throughout the last 60 years, Israel has been an island of freedom in a sea of despair and an absence of democracy. It has been vilified, threatened and attacked. My colleagues have set forth those facts.

And yet, it has prevailed, indeed, prospered, just as it will prevail and prosper today and tomorrow and every day thereafter.

When we talk of Israel, we inevitably acknowledge her courage in the face of those who seek her destruction. But let us also acknowledge that over the last 60 years, the Israeli people have established a vibrant, pluralistic, democratic political system that includes freedom of speech, association, religion, a vigorous free press, free, fair and open elections, the rule of law, and an independent judiciary.

Furthermore, Israel has developed an advanced entrepreneurial economy, and is among the world's leaders in the high tech industry.

Mr. Speaker, as Mr. BERMAN observed, over the last 5 years I've had the opportunity to take a tenth of the Congress, actually more than a tenth of the Congress to Israel, congressional delegations, which have gone to see where we invest our money and where we have committed our security pledge. And what the Members saw was a reflection, really, in many respects, of America and themselves, people who love their country, people who want to live in peace and freedom, and people who want their children to have even greater opportunities and safety.

As our allies in Israel celebrate their 60th anniversary in just a few weeks, let us honor their determination to fulfill the vision of Zionism's founding father, Theodore Herzl. Through courage and will, Israel was born and the dream of generations was made real, and it will endure. It will endure with our support, with our encouragement, and with our commitment.

I want to congratulate the citizens of Israel and the entire Jewish community, not only in the United States, but throughout the world, who have enabled Israel to survive. Congratulations. Happy birthday.

We remain a loyal, steadfast and unswerving ally in your quest for a better life, not just for your people, but, as Truman observed, for civilization as well.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE).

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I'm so pleased to rise today to congratulate the State of Israel on its 60th anniversary as an independent and sovereign Nation. Our friends have realized this historic milestone in the face of innumerable challenges to their very existence.

Constant threats of terrorism and attacks have not defeated the hopes and dreams of the Israeli people. And with remarkable restraint, and despite great odds, the State of Israel proudly stands and has secured the creation of a new and enduring Jewish society in their ancestral homeland.

As a vibrant and strong democracy in the Middle East, Israel is a model for the region. A lack of natural resources has not prevented Israel from becoming home to one of the world's most dynamic economies. Its achievements in agriculture, solar energy, medical electronics and telecommunications have gained worldwide recognition. Each of these accomplishments can be directly attributed to Israel's greatest asset, her people.

Mr. Speaker, as we continue to promote peace and stability for the people of Israel and all in the region, let us congratulate Israel on the occasion of her 60th anniversary and reaffirm our steadfast support for one of America's greatest allies.

□ 1630

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 2 minutes to the majority whip for the House of Representatives, Representative CLYBURN of South Carolina.

Mr. CLYBURN. I thank my friend, Mr. BERMAN, for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 322, recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. On May 14, 1948, when the world was still struggling with the aftermath of the Holocaust, Israel declared itself a Nation. Eleven minutes later, President Harry Truman made the bold decision to make the United States of America the first country in the world to recognize Israel as a sovereign state. That was the start of a strong allegiance between the United States and Israel, a close friendship that has grown and strengthened over the years, one that will never be broken.

As the only true democracy in the Middle East, we recognize Israel's struggle to protect its people, maintain peace with its neighbors, and defend the freedoms of a democratic society. As we join our friend and partner in celebration of this important milestone, we reaffirm the bonds of close friendship and cooperation that have been forged between our nations over these six decades.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) who is the ranking member of our Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia.

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, 60 years ago next month, the State of Israel, under the leadership of a small band of courageous Zionists declared independence in its ancient homeland. It was promptly recognized by the United States, as the majority leader just eloquently described, and it was promptly attacked by its Arab neighbors. The more things change, the more they seem to stay the same.

Well, Israel has prevailed against long odds, and we celebrate 60 years of that on the floor today and around the United States and around the world next month. It was against those extraordinarily long odds. It was forced again in 1967, 1973, and on countless other times since.

It is important that we note through these trials and travails, Israel remains the only fully functioning democracy in the Middle East. It was founded by Holocaust survivors resolved to overcome the horrors of the mid-20th century Europe's atrocities.

Today, Israel's boasts a vibrant economy with a well-educated populace. Israel's GDP exceeded most major economies in 2007 and it's reached Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development candidate status.

Israel's 60 years on from that historic day next month is an extraordinary

success. But Israel is still in the neighborhood of sworn enemies. In its 60th year of history, all of two Arab countries have seen fit to recognize Israel. And today's leader of Iran threatens with regularity to wipe Israel off the map.

That's why I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to say two things: Number one, I join my colleagues in both parties who rise to congratulate this historic accomplishment of 60 years hence. But I also say that as we commend Israel, we in this body in both parties should look for opportunities to recommit ourselves to her defense. We cannot stand idly by while a gathering menace grows in the region. We cannot stand quiet while some Americans travel overseas and associate themselves with the blood-soaked enemies of Israel.

So today we celebrate, and we celebrate in a spirit of bipartisanship. But I hope as this historic 60th anniversary approaches, we in this body in both parties will look for those opportunities upon which we can come together to rededicate ourselves to the preservation and the protection of Israel as a Jewish state and to Jerusalem as her eternal capital.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN).

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I thank the gentleman and the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee and congratulate him on his leadership along with the ranking member.

Mr. Speaker, this year on May 14 we will mark the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. We will also celebrate the strong bonds of friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel. Our country, under the leadership of President Harry Truman, was the first country to recognize the State of Israel. And he later said, ''I had faith in Israel before it was established. I have faith in it now. I believe it has a glorious future before it, not just as another sovereign nation but as the embodiment of the great ideals of our civilization.'' We need to maintain the special relationship we have with Israel based on shared values, common strategic interests, and moral bonds of friendship. Today, we honor not only that country's independence but the significance of what Israel stands for.

It represents the centuries-long yearnings of the Jewish people for a homeland of their own in the land of their forebears. The pogroms in tsarist Russia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the Holocaust under the Nazi regime in the 1930s and 1940s made the idea of a Jewish people having a State of their own where they could feel secure and never again be subjected to such horrors and brutality even more compelling and necessary.

After many years of struggle, Israel emerged as an independent state. It gave refuge to tens of thousands of Holocaust survivors, many of whom had been languishing in temporary resettlement camps in Europe. The new State of Israel also became the home for Jews from scores of countries around the world. In a very short period of time, Israel developed a strong economy, became one of the leading countries within the world in terms of development, of scientific technology, and academic learning.

Since its creation, Israel has continually confronted hostile forces that threaten its existence, and the United States must remain steadfast in ensuring the security of Israel.

With the assistance of the United States, Israel was able to achieve peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan in the 1970s and 1990s, respectively. These agreements made Israel more secure and greatly lessened the chances for another Arab-Israeli war with those two countries. However, peace negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians, and friendly relations with its other neighbors, have proved to be more difficult.

It is my sincere wish that such negotiations will succeed, and that the Israeli people and all peoples of that troubled region will be able to live in a lasting peace.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that all Americans will join me in congratulating the citizens of Israel and the entire Jewish community on the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey, a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Mr. SIRES.

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 322, to recognize the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel and the bond of friendship between the United States and Israel. Like the United States, the State of Israel has stood as a beacon of democracy and hope for Jewish immigrants all over the world. As an immigrant myself, I understand the importance of the democratic freedoms and values that our Nation holds dear. The United States and Israel share and embrace those values as the cornerstones of a vibrant, democratic society.

Last August, I was fortunate enough to visit Israel for the first time, and I witnessed the importance of friendship that the United States and Israel share. We share the common goals of peace, freedom, security, and prosperity for our citizens and for the region.

I am pleased to help honor the State of Israel on its 60th birthday, and I would urge all of my colleagues to vote in favor of this resolution.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am now pleased to yield 2 minutes to the vice chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KLEIN).

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the State of Israel on its 60th birthday. Since its inception in 1948, Israel has shared with the United States and the people of the United States an unbreakable bond of democratic freedom and a hope for security and stability in the Middle East. Sixty years later, in a region where fostering democracy and human rights is a top priority, Israel has continued to be a strategic partner to the United States and a beacon of light throughout the world.

The United States and Israel are natural allies who share democratic governments' belief in the rule of law and a commitment to protect the human rights of all people. My home State of Florida has a particular special relationship with Israel, and I have made bolstering Florida's economic ties with Israel one of my top priorities when I was in the Florida legislature. I worked with others on legislation that opened the State of Florida's Trade Office in Israel, and in my last visit to Israel, I visited our sister city in Israel, Kiryat Bialik, in order to reinforce that bond.

It is with great pleasure that we celebrate today, and coming up, Israel's 60th anniversary, and I join the American people in congratulating Israel on its myriad of accomplishments and achievements. I hope that the next 60 years will bring peace, prosperity, and security to the State of Israel.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the chairwoman of the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Intelligence Information Sharing and Terrorism Risk Assessment, the gentlelady from California (Ms. HARMAN).

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you Mr. Chairman for yielding.

The State of Israel and I are about the same age. And the connection has been deep and constant throughout my life. My late father, a refugee from Nazi Germany, spoke fluent Hebrew and fondly remembered his early visit to Israel, then under British mandate. He returned to Israel many times, though never to his childhood home in Germany.

I, too, make frequent visits to Israel, two in the past year, and am proud of many friendships and recognition as a passionate advocate for the U.S.-Israel security relationship. Many of our joint security programs with Israel, like the Arrow Missile Defense System, continue to be among my highest priorities in Congress. Just a week ago, Mr. Speaker, Congressman MARK KIRK and I urged full sharing of the U.S.-Israel early warning system to protect Israel from the possibility of incoming Iranian missiles.

Sixty years ago, as has been said, President Harry Truman was first to recognize the State of Israel. The United States and Israel have been democratic allies ever since in times of war and fragile peace.

Israel has become a technology and economic powerhouse, a beacon for the Jewish diaspora, a protector of the rights of women and its minority Arab population. And yet, according to an excellent State Department report, anti-Semitism and anti-Israel sentiment are growing. Most of Israel's neighbors do not recognize her right to exist, and Iran's leader actively threatens to destroy her.

Some of Israel's actions are provocative, to be sure. Halting new settlement construction and easing checkpoints could go a long way to ease tensions. Yet as a recent MiamiHerald.com article points out, a key piece of the Israeli dream remains a mirage. For all their successes, Israelis remain unsure that their country's presence is truly permanent. No other nation on earth faces that fear, and the fear is not unfounded. Israel distributes gas masks and practices bomb shelters drills. This is hardly birthday fare. But 60 years is a milestone and perhaps a miracle.

During Passover week, we retell and celebrate the story of the Jews' exile from Egypt and quest to return to Israel.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARNAHAN). The gentlewoman's time has expired.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield the gentlelady 2 additional minutes.

Ms. HARMAN. That quest continues. Dayenu. Peace remains illusive, but that for sure is what my father would wish and so do I.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, at this time I am proud to yield 1 minute to the leader on our side of the aisle, Mr. BOEHNER of Ohio.

Mr. BOEHNER. Let me thank my colleague from Florida for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, it's my honor to join Speaker PELOSI in celebrating the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel. This is just the first opportunity for us to honor the foundation of the Jewish State leading up to its anniversary on May 14.

After 60 years, Israel may not be our oldest ally, but there is no doubt that it's among our most treasured. Since its establishment 6 decades ago, Israel has been a pillar of strength, integrity, freedom and, above all else, friendship.

□ 1645

They're not simply allies by chance. Our friendship has flourished over the last 60 years because we share the same values. First and foremost, we recognize that we would not exist if not for the grace and power of God.

Faith forms our Nation's very foundation and is reflected in everything we do. We value liberty, and recognize how precious it is in a world where it's not only rare, but often under attack. And we recognize the responsibility we have to defend our freedom. That's why we have stood beside our Israeli allies for the past six decades and why we are taking the fight to those committed to destroying the Jewish state and, for that matter, destroying us.

Mr. Speaker, the bonds of trust between Israel and America have never been stronger or more important than they are right now. Our Nation will stand firmly beside our Israeli friends over the next 60 years just as we've done over the last 60. And with a shared faith in God, a respect for liberty, and a commitment to its defense, our friendship will only grow deeper.

May God bless the Jewish State of Israel on this anniversary and all of those that will follow.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time and yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from New York, the chairman of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee and a very knowledgeable and supportive advocate for the U.S.-Israel relationship, Mrs. LOWEY.

Mrs. LOWEY. I thank the gentleman, the very distinguished, extraordinary Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res 322, which recognizes the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel.

For all of us who gathered around the Passover table this weekend to pledge ourselves, ''next year in Jerusalem,'' the Jewish State of Israel is a commitment of both mind and heart. It is a homeland for the Jewish people persecuted, slaughtered and driven from their land for centuries, and it continues to be a safe haven for refugees from around the world.

One of the most compelling experiences of my life was greeting the Ethiopian Jews as they arrived in Ben Gurion Airport after their dramatic rescue as a part of Operation Solomon in the 1980s. I also will never forget visiting with the children of Yemin Orde in northern Israel. This youth village is home to orphaned, disadvantaged and at-risk children from over 20 countries, and it exemplifies Israel's humanitarian commitment. Israel has offered its technical expertise in search and rescue, medicine, and humanitarian aid in the aftermath of nearly every modern disaster, from Katrina to the tsunami.

Israel is also an intellectual and cultural hub: Eight Israeli citizens have received the Nobel Prize, and Israeli technology has helped countless farmers in dry-weather areas and provided low-cost, life-saving drugs to millions.

Moreover, Israel is a source of stability and a voice of reason in a neighborhood plagued by extremism and violent uprising. Its commitment to democracy and freedom of expression is unshakeable, and it is our most reliable partner in our efforts to combat terrorism, enhance human rights and basic freedoms, and encourage free institutions.

It is simply incredible that all of this has occurred while Israel is under constant threat. That is why I rise today to commend the State of Israel and the Israeli people on their commitment to democracy, peace and advancement. May the next 60 years bring continued prosperity and the realization of permanent peace for this great nation.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield myself the balance of my time.

As Speaker PELOSI indicated in her own comments, the person that I think all of us in this Chamber miss very much in not being able to manage this resolution because of his own background and his own deep love and commitment for the State of Israel was our late chairman, Tom Lantos. This would have been something that he would have been personally very gratified with, and certainly wanted to join in the trip that the Speaker will be leading to the State of Israel in the next couple of weeks to help celebrate this anniversary. And so I think it's fair to say that everyone in the Chamber wishes that things might have been different, that he might have been here himself to manage this resolution. And we are looking forward to a group that the Speaker will be taking to Israel to actually personally participate in that celebration.

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 322, which celebrates the 60th anniversary of the Jewish State of Israel's independence and reaffirms the friendship between the U.S. and Israel. I want to thank the Speaker and the Minority Leader for sponsoring this legislation, as well as the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee for bringing it to the Floor so quickly.

On May 14, 2008, Israel will celebrate the 60th anniversary of Yom Ha'atzmaut, or the declaration of the State of Israel by David Ben-Gurion in Tel Aviv on May 14, 1948. While this date traditionally celebrates Israel's birth as a pluralistic democracy—the only one in the Middle East—this date also marks 60 years of strong and vibrant U.S.-Israel relations, 60 years of Israel's success as one of the most technologically advanced countries in the world, and 60 years of Israel struggling to find a peaceful solution to the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The U.S.-Israel relationship that we celebrate today is grounded in centuries-old American regard for Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people. This was so brilliantly discussed in Michael Oren's latest book ''Power, Faith, and Fantasy,'' which describes American support for Israel as the homeland for the Jewish people starting before the American Revolution and being a strong element in U.S. foreign policy ever since.

But while this historic connection is true, Israel's value to the U.S. as a military and economic partner is also incredibly important. For the last 60 years, Israel has been America's number one ally in an extraordinarily strategic region for the United States—she is, in many ways, our ''forward battleship of democracy'' in a sea of totalitarians, terrorists, and murderous thugs. Just appreciate the fact that the United States spends $150 billion a year in Iraq in order to have 165,000 U.S. combat troops stationed there. Without Israel—God forbid—the United States might

well need to have 100,000 or more troops stationed permanently in that part of the world to protect U.S. strategic interests.

There are literally hundreds more examples of how Israel has helped the United States since its founding in 1948 in matters of intelligence, improving American military equipment, capturing Soviet and Russian equipment, destroying the Iraqi nuclear reactor, obliterating the Syrian nuclear facility, and a thousand more classified instances where Israel provided literally invaluable assistance to the United States in ways that no other country on the planet could do or has done.

For myriad reasons, the United States could not ask for a better friend and ally in the region than the State of Israel. The Israeli people know they will always be able to count on the U.S. and the American people. Whether or not the Palestinians ever become a true partner for peace to the Israelis—and I certainly hope that they do—the United States will continue to stand by the Jewish State of Israel and make sure it has the qualitative military edge and superior force to defend itself against all enemies.

Once again, I extend my best wishes and congratulations to the people of the State of Israel on their 60th Independence Day and urge my colleagues to join with me in strong support of H. Con. Res. 322.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be able to speak in support of House Resolution 322, to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the state of Israel.

For the past six decades, Israel has persevered in its quest to establish a free, open and democratic society—a society that reveres the same values that we do here in the United States. It is for that reason that we have been a stalwart ally of Israel. And it also for that reason that we will be allies for the next 60 years to come.

For as long as it has existed, Israel has been a beacon for the Jewish Diaspora and a lone democracy in the Middle East. It has given refuge to those in search of a homeland and provided a safe haven for people around the world who have fled from persecution.

While it has struggled with its neighbors to find a workable peace, Israel and its people have never ended its pursuit for a permanent solution. Over the years we have witnessed too much bloodshed and considerable sorrow, but we have also seen the enduring faith that peace will reign.

Israel has proven itself capable of monumental achievement and I see no reason to despair that peace with its neighbors will not be yet another of Israel's achievement.

I commend Israel on its 60th anniversary and believe its future is bright. And I continue to hope that its future will be free of the violence of much of its past.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud cosponsor of H. Con. Res. 322, recognizing the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel. Israel established itself as a sovereign nation on May 14, 1948. Since that time, it has been a close friend and ally to the United States.

Throughout the beginning of the 20th Century and in the aftermath of the Nazi Holocaust, millions of Jews from around the world found a home in Israel. Serving as the representative for Michigan's 15th Congressional District, my father, John D. Dingell, Sr., was an outspoken proponent for the establishment of a Jewish homeland and subsequent U.S. recognition of Israel's sovereignty. In my tenure in the House. I proudly followed his lead, encouraging close diplomatic, economic, and strategic ties with our fellow democratic nation.

Since its independence, Israel, the ''keystone in the arch of peace'' in the Middle East, as my father put it, has dealt with its share of crisis and wars. The United States stood by as its partner and friend and has served over the years as the chief broker in negotiations between Israel and its neighbors. It is imperative the United States continue in these efforts and continue to foster a close friendship with Israel, as a nation that shares our ideals and values. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution today, and honor the 60th anniversary of Israel's independence.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 322, honoring the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the modern State of Israel's independence.

After the horrible actions of the Holocaust, Israel was established as an independent nation. She has since blossomed into a successful, democratic, and booming nation.

In times of uncertainty over the last 60 years, Israel has been a friend and a strong ally to the United States. I stand here with my colleagues and reaffirm this bond of friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

We support Israel and commend the progress made as she continues to work towards peace with her Arab neighbors.

I also commend all our Jewish friends in the United States whose tireless efforts contribute to Israel's success.

I urge my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 322, reaffirm our friendship, and congratulate Israel on this memorable occasion.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 322, recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

Israel sets the example for the nations of the Middle East, as the only true democracy in that region. For the past 60 years, Israel has been a sanctuary of democracy and pluralism in a region dominated by authoritarian regimes. Israel is the only country in the Middle East with free elections, a free press, freedom of religion, protection for minority rights and other safeguards typical of a free society.

Like the United States, Israel is a country founded by immigrants. Since its founding, the tiny state has absorbed more than three million immigrants from more than 100 countries, including Jews from the former Soviet Union and those forced to flee from Arab countries. A haven for Jewish refugees from around the world, Israel has also reached out to assist Jews wherever they suffer from persecution and has made the successful absorption of new immigrants in society a top priority.

The United States and Israel have formed a unique strategic partnership to meet the growing dangers in one of the world's most volatile regions. To support the U.S. war on tenor since September 11, 2001, the U.S. and Israel share vital intelligence on terrorism, weapons proliferation and other threats, at a level of sensitivity almost unparalleled among American allies. Thousands of U.S. armed forces personnel have utilized Israeli training facilities, and Israeli officials have shared ''lessons learned'' from their extensive combat experience with their counter-parts at the Department of Defense.

With U.S. help, Israel is able to maintain its qualitative military edge for deterring aggression by its potential enemies. By collaborating with Israel, the U.S. has a reliable, democratic and technologically advanced partner in securing American strategic interests. This partnership includes: bilateral strategic agreements on military planning; ballistic missile defense and counter-terrorism; joint development of weapons and technologies; intelligence sharing; and combined military exercises. The U.S. and Israel have established a cost-effective partnership in the research and development of military technologies and know-how, and in identifying solutions to some of the most challenging technical problems facing both countries' military planners.

Despite its small size, Israel is recognized as a world leader in the quality of its indigenously developed military technology. As such, the U.S. has incorporated Israeli equipment and technology into its armed forces.

It is also important to note that the ties between Israel and the Jewish Community in the Sixteenth Congressional District of Texas remain strong. Through many community based programs, the Jewish Federation of El Paso strives to strengthen this connection through education, through scholarships for trips to Israel, and through financial and spiritual support for their Israeli family. The Federation's upcoming celebration of Israel's independence (Yom Ha'atzmaut) will be a unifying experience that will also help teach our younger generation about the incredible story of Israel.

With my support of House Concurrent Resolution 322, I recognize the historic significance of the 60th anniversary of the reestablishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel as a homeland for the Jewish people, and I extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes to the State of Israel and the Israeli people for a peaceful, prosperous, and successful future.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. On May 14th, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel.

Over the last 60 years, Israel has built a nation, forged a new and democratic society, and created thriving economic, political, cultural and intellectual life. For six decades now, the United States and Israel have maintained a special relationship and the U.S. continues to regard Israel as a strong and trusted ally and an important strategic partner.

On the House floor today, H. Res. 322, reaffirms Congress's support for Israel and reaffirms the bonds of friendship and cooperation which have existed between the United States and Israel and commits to strengthening those bonds. I too support Israel, its continued stability, democratic principles and its important role in the Middle East by extending the warmest congratulations and best wishes to the State of Israel and the Israeli people for a peaceful, prosperous, and successful future.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel.

Mr. Speaker, just 60 years after its establishment as a modem state, Israel has flourished as a democracy and has proven to be

a close and trusted friend of the United States. I want to associate myself with the remarks of many of my colleagues, especially those of the Honorable Speaker of the House NANCY PELOSI and the Honorable Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs HOWARD BERMAN.

The founding of Israel is a very emotional issue, Mr. Speaker, not just for those who are Jewish by religion and heritage, but for everyone who loves democracy, and who can empathize with the pain of exile, the horror of unfathomable hatred, repression and discrimination, and the yearning for home.

In preparing for this anniversary, I came across a copy of the letter signed by President Harry Truman on May 14, 1948 recognizing the new state of Israel. Its simple words reverberate even today: ''This Government has been informed that a Jewish state has been proclaimed in Palestine, and recognition has been requested by the provisional government thereof. The United States recognizes the provisional government as the de facto authority of the new''—and here it scratches out Jewish state and written in by hand are the words—''State of Israel.'' Signed Harry Truman, Approved, May 14, 1948.

For the past 60 years, Israel has represented democracy in a region dominated by mainly authoritarian regimes. Despite a constant struggle for survival, Israel has flourished as a center of innovation in the fields of agriculture, medicine, technology and alternative energy.

Like the United States, Israel is a nation of immigrants. Since its inception in 1948, Israel's population has grown five-fold. Despite its small size, it has absorbed millions of immigrants from more than 100 countries. A haven for Jewish refugees from around the world, Israel has helped Jews wherever they suffer from persecution and welcomed them into Israeli society. In the 1990s, when the Soviet Union collapsed, Israel absorbed a massive wave of new immigrants. More than one million Jews from the former Soviet Union immigrated to Israel, changing the face of Israeli society.

Currently, Israel's 7.1 million residents represent a mosaic of people with varied ethnic backgrounds, lifestyles, religions, cultures and traditions. As we celebrate Israel's 60th anniversary, Jews now comprise 76 percent of the country's population, while the remainder, mostly Arabs, number about 24 percent. Over 90 percent of the population lives in the urban centers, many of which surround ancient historical sites. Only about 5 percent are members of Israel's unique rural cooperatives—the kibbutz and the moshav.

Mr. Speaker, in 2005, I had the privilege of traveling to Israel with then Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi. It's a visit I will never forget. We were there at Easter. We visited Bethlehem and the holy sites of Jews, Christians, and Muslims. We touched the same stones that had once been touched by David and Solomon. We walked on streets known to Joshua. We were able to walk freely, to talk to people of all stations and professions. We read a free press and heard a range of views, freely spoken, without fear of reprisal.

Mr. Speaker, I have been and always will be a friend of Israel. I celebrate this 60th anniversary of her founding. And I pledge to work with my colleagues to bring peace and security to this very special and unique nation.

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 322, a resolution recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel.

Mr. Speaker, beyond just being an influential world leader, the State of Israel has been a staunch and ardently loyal ally of the United States over the last several decades. This great nation's commitment to protecting it citizens and securing its homeland are simply unmatched.

Since the founding of the modern State of Israel in 1948, the bond between the United States and our Middle East partner has grown and remained strong. It is incumbent that we as Members of Congress do all we can to make sure that this relationship continue to flourish.

Mr. Speaker, the United States must make every effort possible to safeguard our relationship with the Middle East's only democracy, Israel. Now more than ever, we must diligently advance our shared interests and goals as it pertains to promoting peace and combating terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I would like to congratulate the State of Israel, the Israeli citizens, and the Jewish community on reaching this milestone. This great nation has much to celebrate and be proud of on its 60th birthday.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, today I join my colleagues in Congress in celebrating Israel's accomplishments over the past 60 years. I am happy to be co-sponsor of this congratulatory resolution. However, like many Israelis and Palestinians, I have concerns about Israel's future, its stability, its security and the prospect for peaceful coexistence for both Palestinians and Israelis. One of those concerns relates to the ongoing lack of resolution on the dispossession of Palestinian property and the dislocation of Palestinians after Independence. It must be remembered that about 700,000 Palestinians became exiled. Much Arab property was appropriated. And about 500 Arab villages were destroyed. On December 11, 1948, the United Nations passed Resolution 194, affording Palestinian refugees the right to return to their homes in Israel, or to compensation for their property should they choose not to return. To this day, the mandate of U.N. Resolution 194 has not been fulfilled. Unfortunately, this failure remains as one of the most significant barriers to the realization of a two-state negotiated solution.

I am also concerned for those Palestinians who did not flee and who became Israeli citizens after Independence. According to the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, today there exist 20 Israeli laws which explicitly discriminate against the Palestinian minority in Israel, who constitute 20 percent of its population. In its 2005 Annual Report, the U.S. State Department said that ''[There is] institutionalized legal and societal discrimination against Israel's [Arab] Christian, Muslim and Druze citizens. The government does not provide Israeli Arabs with the same quality of education, housing, employment and social services as Jews.''

Finally, Israel has a right to security and a right to defend itself. Accordingly, I am concerned that the 40 year military occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem has been and continues to be brutal and unjust and undermines the security of Israel. It is a fact that the government of Israel continues to support the construction of settlements on Palestinian land, perpetuating the consequences of dispossession and exile. Additionally, I am concerned that the government of Israel has increased the number of checkpoints which destroy a viable Palestinian economy and a vibrant civil society. I am concerned that the Israeli government has erected a wall, often on Palestinian land, that divides Palestinians from Palestinians, rather than divide Israel from the West Bank. As stated by Judge Elaraby of the International Court of Justice in his 2004 Advisory Opinion on the legality of Israel's separation barrier, ''The fact that occupation is met by armed resistance cannot be used as a pretext to disregard fundamental human rights in the occupied territory.'' This conundrum of a dialectic of conflict further separates Israelis and Palestinians alike from hopes for peace.

H. Con. Res. 322 eloquently states the many reasons why I celebrate Israel's accomplishments and I sincerely wish it a bright future. I only wish to add that, in my opinion, and in the opinion of many Israelis and Palestinians as well, Israel's future will be bright only if it includes an open dialogue with Palestinians, a respect for human rights and international law, and a society built on coexistence and tolerance. Israelis and Palestinians deserve to live in peace with justice and I encourage the United States government to help Israel achieve that so the joy of future anniversaries will be unalloyed.

I support the resolution in the spirit of reconciliation to which we must all inevitably turn, to achieve peace and justice with our brothers and sisters from whom we may be estranged.

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the bipartisan House Concurrent Resolution 322, celebrating Israel's 60th anniversary. In the winter of 1982–83, I traveled to Israel with my husband Paul when he served on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I had heard the passionate concern about Israel's tenuous geographic position from many in the Jewish community who were close to Paul and me—from my two brothers-in-law as well as from Paul's closest confidantes in his Senate office, his Chief of Staff and Legislative Director, among others. But hearing and empathizing are very different from seeing and experiencing. On the trip to Israel, I saw and experienced.

When one stands on the Golan Heights and looks out as I did at the slender strip of land that Israel occupies between her adversaries and the Mediterranean, the primacy of security as the overriding factor in Israel's relations with its neighbors is brought vividly home. The other impression I came away with from that trip was how diverse and democratic Israel is and how important it is for the United States to support this vital democracy, both for Israel's sake and our own. Israel is a model of the values we seek to promote around the world, including her recognition of her female citizens as full participants in all aspects of society. Beyond that, she is a critical ally and strategic partner. We must continue our commitment to the unique relationship we have with Israel in the years ahead.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity to share my strong support for Israel upon its 60th anniversary and to remind the House of Missouri's unique connection to the creation of Israel—a critical democratic ally of the United States.

President Harry S. Truman, Missouri's favorite son and the 33rd President of the United

States, was a long-time supporter of establishing a Jewish homeland and worked as President to ensure Israel's creation.

A supporter of the Balfour Declaration, a British statement issued in 1917 that endorsed the establishment of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine, when Harry S. Truman became President of the United States in 1945, he made clear his sympathy for the Jewish people and his concern for the sufferings they had endured during the Nazi Holocaust.

In 1946, President Truman urged British Prime Minister Clement Attlee to allow a reasonable number of European Jews to immigrate to British-controlled Palestine. The governments of the United States and Great Britain created the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry to study the situation. The Committee recommended that the United Nations establish a trusteeship over Palestine, with the goal of reconciling Jewish and Arab interests in the region. The Committee also agreed that 100,000 Jewish displaced persons should be admitted to Palestine. On the eve of Yom Kippur in 1946, President Truman issued a statement supporting these recommendations.

In response to a British request, the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine was created in May 1947. This Committee recommended that the British mandate over Palestine be terminated and that the area be partitioned into separate Jewish and Arab states. President Truman forced a reluctant U.S. State Department to support this plan. On November 29, 1947, the partition plan was approved by the U.N. General Assembly, thanks in large measure to vigorous American support. Palestinian Arabs and Arab governments remained strongly opposed to partition, and efforts to find a peaceful settlement disintegrated.

In February 1948, President Truman's close friend and former business partner, Eddie Jacobson, himself a Jewish person, sent Truman a telegram asking him to meet with Chaim Weizmann, the president of the Jewish Agency for Palestine and the World Zionist Organization. Angered by criticism from some American Jewish leaders, President Truman refused to meet with Mr. Weizmann. In March 1948, Mr. Jacobson walked into the White House without an appointment and pleaded with his old friend to meet with Weizmann. The President relented, and when Weizmann came to the White House a few days later, Truman assured him that the United States would continue to support the partition of Palestine and the creation of a Jewish state.

At midnight on May 14, 1948, the British mandate over Palestine expired and the new State of Israel was proclaimed. Eleven minutes later, by order of President Harry S. Truman, the United States granted diplomatic recognition to the new Provisional Government of Israel. Following Israel's declaration of independence, Arab armies invaded the new nation, and a long and continuing struggle for security began for Israel.

Mr Speaker, throughout the time I have been privileged to serve in Congress, I have worked to foster a strong alliance between the United States and Israel. I am proud that Missouri's favorite son, Harry S. Truman, was first to recognize Israel and that our Nation has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with that country for these 60 years.

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes to the State of Israel and to her people on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel.

Last August, I had the honor of going on an enlightening and humbling visit to Israel.

As a child, I had heard the stories of Israel from my mother. I pictured busy markets and crowded streets, and men with yarmulkes in synagogues. Visiting the Holy Land was the experience of a lifetime, and I was entranced by the sheer beauty of the living history that surrounded me.

However, as I made my way through the striking juxtaposition of modern and ancient architecture, I worried that I might find a grim reminder of what this cherished place might become after years of fighting.

One mother with whom I spoke told me a sobering story. While driving in Israel with her family, as we do here everyday, a rocket exploded next to her family's car. Without thinking, she jumped over the front seat to cover her children from the shrapnel and smoke that filled the air around them. Protecting her children was all she could think to do—in Israel this is a conditioned response, a learned reflex.

Israelis want to live in peace. Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni told me that Israel is willing to make changes in the West Bank, release prisoners, or give up land if that means peace. Many Israeli leaders share Livni's optimism, as do I, that peace will come to the region.

We must begin to find ways to look beyond comfort zones to stem the tides that divide and find ties that bind. If we can take substantive steps to stop the violence and move towards peace and justice we will have moved mountains.

On May 14, 1948, Israel rose from the ashes of the Holocaust. Over these last 60 years, the American people have formed a profound and unshakable friendship with our democratic ally.

The United States must continue its commitment to Israeli sovereignty, security, and democracy. We face common threats, share common values and we must continue to work together to achieve our common goals.

I praise the miracle of Israel. The history of Israel and of her people is a story of freedom and rebirth that gives hope to oppressed peoples across the world and that will for millennia to come.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, next month the State of Israel will celebrate its 60th anniversary. Indeed there are many reasons to be proud.

Despite a backdrop of conflicts, boycotts, and constant regional turmoil, Israel has managed to generate a vigorous economy, a vibrant democracy, and a robust military. It has emerged as the closest and strongest ally the United States has in the Middle East and perhaps in the entire world.

Some say Israel's success is a miracle. Maybe that comes as an easy explanation for a land steeped in Biblical history. The reality of course is that the Israeli people don't sit around waiting for miracles—they create them.

From the battlefield of hard-fought wars to the produce fields of flowering kibbutzim, Israelis have accomplished feats many deemed impossible. They built up strong democratic institutions in a region hostile to their values. They turned a chaotic influx of Jews from Europe, Africa, the Americas and the Middle East into a prospering Jewish homeland that reflects the most varied traditions and trajectories of Jewish history. Time and time again, with the support of the United States, Israelis have taken great risks to seek peaceful coexistence with their Arab neighbors.

One of the issues closest to my heart is Israeli ingenuity in environmental conservation. While Israel's commitment to the environment has moral and economic dimensions, it has also been a security imperative.

For much of its existence, Israel has been subjected to Arab oil embargoes. Today, soaring oil prices are enriching adversaries like Iran that are bent on its destruction. With the price of oil now reaching $100 a barrel, Iran is reaping more than $90 billion in revenue a year. Those profits are being passed on to a dangerous nuclear program and terrorist cells in Lebanon, Syria, Gaza and beyond.

The United States and Israel have built strong security ties to address these threats. But we need to explore energy-oriented solutions to help us overcome an addiction to oil that is driving prices even higher. I think Americans can learn a lot from Israel about water and energy conservation, and the use of solar power and other energy alternatives. Working together we can do even more to reduce carbon emissions and reverse climate changes that threaten our national interests.

For many, including my own parents and relatives, the idea of a Jewish state was a dream. Its creation was indeed a miracle. Since then, the U.S.-Israel alliance has only grown stronger. Today, we can look forward to many more decades of peaceful and prosperous partnership.

Congratulations to the Israeli government and the Israeli people on the 60th anniversary.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the people of the State of Israel and the greater Jewish community on the 60th anniversary of their independence.

The United States supported the establishment of the Jewish State in 1948, and our two countries have been the closest of friends and strong allies ever since.

Our friendship is rooted in some deeply shared beliefs. We believe in freedom of religion, in freedom of the press, and in freedom of speech. We believe in free and fair elections. And we believe that extremism and terrorism have no place in the global community.

Since its Independence, Israel has endured unstable and troubling conditions in the Middle East. They have been subject to violence and unwarranted attacks. They have been asked to compromise their borders. They have had missile strikes threatening the lives of innocent citizens on an almost daily basis. Yet, the Israeli people remain united and strong—continuing to stand up for their beliefs and for their country.

Israel is a modern success story. It is the only Democracy in the Middle East. It is the only Middle Eastern country where Arabs have the right to vote for their elected officials and their political leaders. And, it is one of the only Middle Eastern nations without oil wealth that has transformed itself from an agrarian based economy to a high tech economic powerhouse.

Israel's detractors, and those who hide their anti-Semitism behind anti-Zionism, must not and will not denigrate the success of Israel. That is why I stand here today.

I believe the survival of the Jewish state is paramount. I believe her existence, while

small in geographic size, is the one of largest symbols of humankind's continued faith in God, enduring spirit to survive, and belief in freedom and democracy.

And, I believe the United States must continue to stand with Israel and support her efforts to defend her citizens. I am proud to be one of Israel's strongest friends in Congress. And today, I want to join my colleagues in Congress in wishing Israel a hearty Mazel Tov on 60 years of Independence.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 322, a resolution to recognize the 60th anniversary of one of our most steadfast and vital allies: Israel.

Although it was created at a time of great international uncertainty, from its inception Israel has been a determined ally of the United States. Its history is a prime example of the strength that a commitment to political liberalism and equality of opportunity can afford even the smallest and most vulnerable state.

Israel is a nation that has weathered constant threats from outside its borders, indeed, that was born out of war and conflict. But despite its harsh beginnings, this inspirational country along the River Jordan has, for over half a century, fended off threats to its sovereignty and to its survival. And it has done so even as it has built a pluralistic society grounded in the highest ideals of equality, representative government, and democratic principles.

Mr. Speaker, a nation as threatened as Israel could certainly be excused for turning inward on itself, focusing on defending its territory and citizens against terrorism, and withdrawing from an international community that has increasingly targeted it with unfair sanctions and biased political statements. It is a testament to the character and inner strength of the Israeli people that they have not allowed their country to do so.

Instead, Israel has repeatedly volunteered its resources, manpower, and experience to help victims of disasters around the world. It has sent humanitarian aid and emergency medical supplies to war zones in Rwanda; disaster areas in Turkey, the Indian Ocean, and along the Gulf Coast; and, to fire-scorched areas in Greece. Israel's national mission is a higher calling than mere survival or self-perpetuation. It is an example to the world of the power of a determined national spirit, a citizenry dedicated to justice, and a set of founding principles that cannot be corrupted even by the constant threat of terrorism.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, terrorism is a serious and ever-present threat to Israel's sovereignty and menaces innocent Israeli citizens on a daily basis. As the number of rockets aimed at Israel by Hamas and other terrorist organizations has increased in recent days, the world has been reminded of the ugly intentions of those who refuse to discuss peace with the only democracy in the Middle East.

By contrast, Israel has demonstrated time and again that it is willing to make concessions to other countries in the name of peace. As a result, it now lives beside its Jordanian and Egyptian neighbors in relative calm.

However, organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah, along with countries like Syria and Iran, have refused to take meaningful steps to forge similar agreements that could begin to heal the regional divisions that restrict the Middle East from reaching its full potential. For the past six decades, Israel has been strengthening its ties to the land upon which the Jewish people have lived for over 2,000 years. It is the security and identity of this land which Israel has the inalienable right to defend against existential and tactical threats.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that H. Con. Res. 322 recognizes the many similarities between Israeli and American values, ideals, and interests. Our two peoples maintain an equal respect for the rule of law, democratic principles, and progressive ideals that have provided the foundations of our two societies for decades.

I join with many of my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives in highlighting my admiration for all that the nation of Israel has accomplished in the last 60 years. May this resolution before us today serve as the impetus for many more years of Israeli and American friendship, cooperation, and prosperity.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to join my colleagues in marking Israel's 60th anniversary. I want to express my strong support for House Concurrent Resolution 322, which recognizes the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel, and reaffirms the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

On this historic day for Israelis and Jewish communities around the globe, it is imperative that Congress recognizes this important event and once again reaffirms America's ironclad commitment to and friendship with the State of Israel. Given the difficulties facing Israelis in their efforts to secure lasting peace and security, it is essential that the United States and the American people stand shoulder to shoulder with Israel.

Since 1948, Israelis have created a thriving Jewish homeland, overcoming numerous obstacles and challenges. They have also displayed enormous courage and fortitude in the face of unconscionable terrorism, violence and threats to their very existence. In six decades, a democratic and free state, Israel, has risen from the ashes of the Holocaust and developed into one of the most technologically advanced and innovative nations on Earth.

Through all of the hardships, Israel has persevered and joined the United States and our democratic allies by creating a nation based on freedom, justice and human rights. To that end, I join my colleagues in praising the Israeli people, whose nation has become a shinning bastion of democracy in a region rife with dictators, extremists and hate.

While Israelis celebrate 60 years of independence, their freedom and security continues to be challenged by terrorist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah as well as by the leading state sponsors of terrorism Syria and Iran. Unfortunately, Israelis know intimately the challenges that come with protecting their people, understanding that terrorism knows no borders and cannot be justified, qualified or ignored.

As a Member of Congress deeply concerned about the threats posed to Israelis by terrorist attacks, I believe it is critical that the United States support Israel's right to self defense. In that vein, I cosponsored House Resolution 951, declaring America's solidarity with Israelis as they face continuous rocket attacks from Hamas in Gaza. These rocket attacks are a daily reminder to Israelis and their friends in America of the struggles Israel continues to face.

Mr. Speaker, there is no greater threat to the well-being of Israel and the United States than a nuclear Iran, and America must use every tool at its disposal to prevent Tehran from developing and acquiring these weapons. To that end, I will continue to be a staunch advocate for Congressional initiatives that enhance American-Israeli cooperation and strengthen Israel's defensive capabilities.

In the post-9/11 world, Americans and Israelis are forever linked by the common threats we face from terrorism and in our effort to confront extremists. More importantly, our two nations share a deep commitment to human rights, civil society, freedom and democracy.

These shared values have created an unbreakable bond of friendship, and I urge my colleagues to join me in pledging their commitment to further enhance American-Israeli relations for generations to come.

It is my most sincere wish that the vision of hope embodied in Israel's national anthem, Hatikva, may come to fruition and that Israel may soon find a genuine peace that will last l'dor v'dor, from one generation to the next. To that end, I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the 60th anniversary of Israel.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the bipartisan House Leadership Resolution, H. Con. Res. 322, of which I am a cosponsor, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel.

In 1947, the year I was born, the area now known as Israel was about to go through a birth of its own. In 1948, with the founding of the only Jewish state to ever exist in history, Jews found that their new homeland was filled with sand and little water, but it was also filled with great hope and resolve. Following the murder of 6 million Jews in the Holocaust, this small country would soon become a homeland for another 6 million Jews, free to practice Judaism, but still targeted for their faith.

While Israel was formed, Jews all over the Middle East were facing a crisis of their own; Jewish refugees in Arab lands were expelled systematically, under an official regime policy which included anti-Jewish decrees, pogroms, murders and hangings, anti-Semitic incitement and ethnic cleansing. The Arab League's 1947 decree provided a formula for state-sanctioned discriminatory measures, replicated in many Arab countries, in a deliberate campaign to expel the Jewish refugees from their home countries. Unlike the Palestinians, the Jewish refugees were absorbed into their new host countries, mostly by Israel. About 600,000 stayed in Israel and the remaining 300,000 fled to other countries, such as France, Canada, Italy, and the United States. In Israel today, the Jewish refugees from Arab countries and their children comprise the majority of the Jewish population.

This House recently adopted my resolution, H. Res. 185, urging that the rights of Jewish refugees be recognized in any future comprehensive Middle East settlement. We are continually working to ensure that any Middle East peace agreement is just, fully just to all parties.

This is a continual process. From its first day, Israel has fought for its right to exist when it was attacked by its Arab neighbors. Since then, continuous wars have been waged, all aiming to destroy the Jewish state

and its people. At times, mothers and fathers have had to buy gas masks for their children; young children have had to celebrate their birthdays in bomb shelters. Despite this, families have shared laughter on the beaches of the Mediterranean; young couples have danced on the rooftops of Jerusalem. That all of these times have been simultaneous is a testament to the strength and determination for not only the State of Israel, but for humanity.

Following their independence, Israel's people, driven to immigrate for fear of persecution and for their ideological dreams, struggled with basic life, rationing food and living in makeshift shelters. The early immigrants began building the land, irrigating, planting, and educating their children. Working in the sun, Israel's wrinkles began to show the stress, but the outcome can be seen today; flowers and olive trees on the hillsides and universities at full capacity. In cooperation with the United States and other countries, innovations by Israelis in science, energy, agriculture, technology, and medicine have been felt around the world.

Today, the country is flowing with milk and honey, as a nation of immigrants and a home for the persecuted. But it is also facing much hardship. Like the United States, Israel was founded by immigrants escaping persecution and wanting to live in peace. But while Israel remains a sanctuary for Judaism, it remains a dangerous place to be a Jew.

In its 60th year, Israel faces some of its greatest challenges and needs its allies and friends more than ever. The Middle East is still a very dangerous place, and scapegoating Israel is still a very convenient means of holding power for some very dangerous autocrats. Such tactics are deplorable, and we must do everything we can to stop them.

While some Arab states have been working with us to respond to Iran's vicious lies and rhetoric, we must also continue to demand that Israel, our democratic ally, be recognized by these very states. And we must call for the immediate and unconditional release of Israeli soldiers kidnapped and held captive by Hamas and Hezbollah, which is called for by H. Res. 107, a bill I cosponsored.

Indeed, Israel is now at a critical crossroads. We hope for the best, but we remain mindful that peace cannot be achieved unless sincere and substantive acts are forthcoming from the Palestinians. Terror must come to an end, as must incitement. At middle age, and I speak of personal experience, as I am also marking my 60th year, one must take stock of their past and look forward to the future. The Israeli State and its people continue to work to preserve its foundation as a Jewish state with Jewish values, while they live in a region where the very idea of the existence of a Jewish state continues to be challenged. As Israel looks toward the future, integrating its immigrants, expanding its economy, preserving its heritage, and providing foreign assistance and refuge to Jews throughout the world, the United States will stand alongside her in her quest for peace and prosperity.

We hope to learn from each other; Israel continues to fight terror alongside the United States and stands as an example of how to balance civil liberties and security, religious freedom and the expression of religious values in its economic and political structure. Like the United States, the Jewish democratic State has a robust freedom of press that serves to teach the public and government how to better itself, and an independent judiciary which seeks to preserve the liberties for which it has fought.

The relationship the United States has with Israel is special; we have more in common than we do apart, and we continue to work in cooperation to achieve the broader goals of a peaceful future for our children and grandchildren. As we grow together as democratic nations facing challenging times, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution acknowledging the special bonds of friendship the United States shares with our only democratic ally in the Middle East, Israel. I thank our leadership for sponsoring this resolution and I strongly urge its passage.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in very strong support of H. Con. Res. 322 and to offer my warmest congratulations on the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel.

On May 14, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel. Since this proud and historic day, Israel has proven itself to be a vibrant democracy and a true friend of freedom. Throughout, the United States and Israel have had a special friendship; an unbreakable bond between nations whose relationship is much deeper than mere allies of convenience.

During its six decades of existence, the Israeli people have faced the most grave threats from hostile neighbors and have bravely defended themselves against repeated terrorist and military attacks. Yet, despite the years of war, terrorism, and diplomatic and economic isolation by enemies far and near, the Israeli people have never turned away from their vibrant, pluralistic democracy that guarantees freedom of speech, association and religion.

Indeed, the modern State of Israel has built a new and dynamic democratic society and created a thriving economic, political, cultural and intellectual life. It is a nation of immigrants, as is the United States, which has benefited from the diversity of its population.

Throughout my career in Congress, I have consistently made a strong and close relationship between the United States and Israel among my highest priorities. As the only true democracy in the Middle East and our closest ally in the region, I firmly believe that we must support Israel as it faces the many serious threats to its very existence. We must stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Israel when it is under attack and support its right of self-defense even when the rest of the world turns away.

As we approach the 60th anniversary of Israel's founding, I am reminded not only of the close strategic ties between our countries, but of how much our two nations have in common. Through Democratic and Republican Administrations, alike, the bonds between us have only grown stronger. As Israel enters its seventh decade, let us resolve ourselves to make security and prosperity of the State of Israel a key priority here in the House of Representatives while we continue to promote a warm and unshakable friendship between the U.S. and Israel.

Once again, I urge my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 322 and offer my warmest congratulations to the Israeli people on the 60th anniversary of their independence.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, today the House of Representatives voted on H. Con. Res. 322, recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modem State of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the people of the United States and the people of Israel. I am proud to be a cosponsor and strong supporter of this legislation because it pays appropriate honor and respect to our truest partner and defender of freedom and democracy in the Middle East, Israel.

Since its establishment 60 years ago, the people of Israel have turned a desert into a new nation, forged a new and dynamic society, and created a unique and vital economic, political, cultural, and intellectual life despite the heavy costs of seven wars, unrelenting terrorism, frequent international ostracism, and economic boycotts. Through it all, the people of Israel and the people of the United States have shared a special bond. Forged originally in Israel's fight for survival, for freedom and for democracy in a region dominated by authoritarian and military regimes; today that relationship encompasses broad, social, cultural and economic ties as well.

For 60 years, the United States and Israel have maintained a special relationship based on mutually shared democratic values, common strategic interests, and moral bonds of friendship and mutual respect; most importantly, the people of the United States have a special affinity for the people of Israel, and regard Israel as a strong and trusted ally and an important strategic partner. To our ally, our partner, and our friend, I offer my prayers for peace and my congratulations on your 60th birthday.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Nation of Israel on its 60th anniversary and add my support for H. Con. Res. 322.

The Nation of Israel holds a unique position in the history of Western Civilization, and is supported the world over by millions of Christians, Jews and people of other faiths.

I have had the pleasure to serve as the co-chair of the Israel Allies Caucus in the House and it has been my pleasure to work with members of the Knesset on important issues of concern to both United States and Israel.

During my years in Congress I have come to know and befriend numerous Israelis, and I am always moved by their sincere desire for peace. The vast majority of people in Israel hope for a day when their hostile neighbors recognize and embrace their presence in the Middle East. I am proud that America was by Israel's side in 1948, and I am proud today to highlight this relationship between our countries that is now 60 years strong.

Only two short years ago, the Jewish population in Israel surpassed the Jewish population in the United States, and soon there will be more Jewish people in Israel than perished in the Holocaust. While we will always remember the atrocities of the 20th century against the Jewish people, today we recognize and affirm this moment in history as a triumphant realization of the dream for a Jewish homeland.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 322, recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. And I would like to commend Speaker PELOSI for introducing this resolution and for bringing it to the floor.

This is a truly bipartisan resolution, introduced with the support of the leadership of

both parties in the House. This bipartisanship is entirely appropriate, because Americans agree that the State of Israel is a great friend of the United States, and we all celebrate the anniversary of its founding today.

A century ago, Theodore Herzl dreamed of a Jewish homeland, and envisioned Israel as a ''light unto the nations.'' Since 1948, Israel has been that light. I am pleased to join with my colleagues in supporting Israel as it continues to shine brilliantly as a force for progress and hope, not only in the Middle East, but throughout the entire world.

Prime Minister Golda Meir believed that one day there would be peace in Israel, because there are mothers and grandmothers—and let me add fathers and grandfathers—in Egypt, in Jordan, in Syria and the Palestinian territories who also want their children and grandchildren to live in peace. Today is an opportunity to be hopeful about the future of Israel and the prospects for peace—hopeful that we will soon reach the day when children will have to turn to the history books to learn that there ever was conflict in the Middle East.

Today, as we celebrate the founding of the State of Israel, our great ally and friend, we also know that independence is not enough without security. The Jewish homeland must be secure and must be surrounded by neighbors who respect its right to exist in peace and security. Through struggle and sacrifice, ingenuity and innovation, Israel has managed 60 years in a dangerous and unstable region of the world. Let us hope that the conflicts that have marked Israel's first 60 years will subside in the years to come.

Sixty years ago, Israel's pioneers began to revitalize an ancient land. Today, Israelis remain pioneers at heart—pioneers for peace, prosperity and progress. They are once again facing challenges in their homeland with determination and a vision for a better future for their children and for their country.

I congratulate the State of Israel on its 60th anniversary, and I urge adoption of this resolution.

Mr. MAHONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and reaffirm the friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

Since its establishment 60 years ago, the State of Israel has rebuilt a nation and developed a new and dynamic democratic society. The Israeli government and its people have created a thriving economic, political, cultural and intellectual life despite the heavy costs of war, terrorism, and unjustified diplomatic and economic boycotts against the country.

The Israeli people have established a nation of diverse cultures with a deep connection to their historical past while at the same time forging their place in today's global economy. Israel has proven its commitment to creating a better global community by becoming a world leader in technology.

On Israel's 60th anniversary it is important to recognize the achievements of the Israeli people and of the Jewish community whose faith and commitment to democracy is a beacon of hope for peace and stability. America's commitment to Israel reflects our support for those nations that share our values of liberty and equality.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 322, recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

First and foremost, I want to commend Chairman HOWARD BERMAN of the Foreign Affairs Committee for his support and commitment to this important resolution. I also want to acknowledge the leadership of my good friend, Ranking Member ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN for her spirit of cooperation on this bipartisan legislation. I especially want to thank Speaker PELOSI and the original cosponsors of this historical resolution.

I also want to congratulate the government and the people of Israel who will be celebrating the 60th anniversary of their great country. We must acknowledge the importance of the actions made by the United Nations during the 1940s to create the Jewish state soon after the horrific atrocities committed by the Nazis during World War II. During the Holocaust, the Nazis murdered some 6 million Jews and imprisoned many more in concentration camps.

Mr. Speaker, Israel has continued to thrive despite constant military attacks, threats of terrorism, and international boycotts that have been placed on such a young government. Being the only democracy in the Middle East, we must applaud their efforts in sustaining a democratic political system. Israel has continued to emphasize the importance of inalienable rights that are much like the U.S. Their protection of individual rights, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, fair and open elections and rule of law are examples of their unwavering commitment to democracy and they remain a model for neighboring countries in the region.

Israel is at the forefront of modern technology and they have taken the lead in research and development from everyday electronics to renewable energy resources. This is important given the global dependence on oil and the perpetual rise in the cost of fuel. Earlier this year, I visited Israel with Ambassadors of the Pacific Islands to the United Nations and we personally witnessed Israel's devotion to research and development for improving the lives of all. Their technological advancements in wind, water, and solar energy as well desalination and diabetes research are the tip of the iceberg for what Israel has contributed to the global community.

This resolution reaffirms the U.S. support for Israel as an ally and a strong partner in the region. Israel has a unique role to play in the Middle East and has a historical importance to Christians and Muslims throughout the world. We must continue to strengthen U.S.-Israel relations and support their efforts for peace in the Middle East.

Again, I want to take this opportunity to extend my personal congratulations to the people of Israel and their government for their 60th anniversary celebration. May they continue to succeed, and may their future be prosperous. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H. Con. Res. 322.

As Israel celebrates the 60th anniversary of the founding of its modern state, I rise to recognize the bonds of close friendship and cooperation forged over the years between the United States and Israel.

Since declaring its independence on May 14, 1948, Israel has been the shining symbol of freedom and democracy in an area historically rampant with violence and oppression. In just 60 short years, Israel has become the economic leader of the Middle East by proving to its people the rewards of capitalism, while also leading the region in other facets of a free society, including human rights and freedom of the press.

Israel has worked hard to develop friendly working relationships with its neighbors, Egypt and Jordan, setting an example of leadership and peace while other countries around them spread hatred and terror. As the Middle East comes to embrace the liberties and freedoms of democratic societies, the United States will stand steadfast in its commitment to a free Israel.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize and congratulate the success of Israel on its 60th anniversary. It is vital the United States continue to develop its strong relationship with Israel so that many other countries around the world still oppressed and ruled by terror can see the true value of a free and democratic society.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 322 and join my colleagues in congratulating the people of the State of Israel on the 60th anniversary of their independence.

In its short 60 years as an independent nation, Israel has made remarkable achievements in all sectors of society.

Despite its tumultuous experiences, Israel is a vibrant democracy that embraces a free press and political dissent.

Israel has also contributed remarkably through miraculous breakthroughs in medicine, revolutionary technological advancements, cultural icons and an agricultural system that is a model for the entire world.

But the one thing Israel has yet been unable to achieve is a lasting peace with its neighbors.

Wouldn't the best way to celebrate Israel's 60th anniversary be a renewed commitment to peace?

We know that peace will only be achieved through a two-state solution.

The Palestinian people's legitimate political aspirations must be realized in order for the people of Israel to live safely and securely.

I have spent time with Israelis and Palestinians and the message they convey is universal.

They just want to live in peace knowing that the future for their children is brighter than the past they have experienced.

It is time for us to focus on our common goals rather than our differences.

It is time to foster the people-to-people programs that connect Israelis and Palestinians on more human levels.

Peace for Palestinians and Israelis is in the best interest of everyone in the region and also the United States.

The U.S. must be active participants in the peace process and direct more resources towards this goal.

Again, the best way to celebrate Israel's anniversary is to secure a safer future for her citizens.

I remain committed to this goal and urge my colleagues to do the same.

I wish Israel and all Israelis a ''Yom Huledet Sameach'' and look forward to the continued friendship enjoyed by the people of Israel and the United States.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modem State of Israel.

Israel has been a constant friend of the American people and a strong proponent for the spread of democracy.

In my travels, I saw the future for Israel and for the region: The children. It is our moral obligation to current and future generations to support a true path to peace and reconciliation. We must work towards a time free from conflict. The children of Israel and the region deserve the right to hope and dream of a world that is secure and stable.

Today, I join my colleagues in recognition of this important anniversary and look forward to a peaceful role for the U.S. throughout the region.

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 322, celebrating the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel.

Last summer, I was fortunate enough to visit Israel for the first time. For me as a practicing Catholic, it was a humbling experience to walk the same streets that Jesus walked over 2,000 years ago. Israel is a Jewish state, but Jerusalem is at the center of three world religions and when I was there, I felt like I was among friends.

I know first hand how badly America needs allies and friends in the Middle East. Having served in Iraq, I understand how important the Israeli-American relationship is. They are our most important ally and one of our great friends. They are our partners in peace and in war. And while we do not shrink from the fight against terrorism, we also recognize that this global battle is one that cannot be won without diplomacy.

The 60th anniversary of Israel's founding is a landmark moment. In her brief history, great soldiers, noble statesmen and women and inspiring leaders have made history by refusing to back down in the face of great adversity.

As we celebrate this historic day, we must also take time to remember those that have fallen in her defense. Brave men like my fellow paratrooper and fellow Pennsylvanian Michael Levin. Michael's story serves as an inspiration to me as he embodied and personified the values that America and Israel hold in common: Loyalty, honor and sacrifice. He left the comforts of America to serve in the Israeli Defense Force—and he died protecting the country and the people he loved. Americans and Israelis alike will always remember his courage and keep his memory in our hearts.

Today is also a day where we must pray for those Israeli soldiers being held captive by Israel's enemies. As a former soldier myself, my thoughts and prayers are with Gilad Shalit, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev and their families. We pray for their safety and hope for their swift return.

Mr. Speaker, this significant moment is a time where we should also pray for peace and understanding around the world—but especially in the Middle East. We pray that in the near future, Israel and her neighbors will live side-by-side in peace and that no more lives will be lost in this needless cycle of violence and hate.

I am proud to stand with my colleagues in Congress and all of the families in my district as we pledge to always support efforts to maintain Israel's identity as a Jewish state with secure borders. We also commit ourselves to work diligently towards the creation of a viable and independent Palestinian state, living in peace alongside of Israel.

Mr. Speaker, Israel is truly one of our greatest allies and most trusted friends. She stands as a beacon of democratic values in a region of the world where those values are largely absent. Today, we celebrate the friendship that exists between our two Nations and look forward to strengthening and expanding our bond in the future.

Mr. MCNULTY. Mr. Speaker, I join today with many of my colleagues in supporting this Resolution celebrating the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel.

On May 14, 1948, the Jewish people proudly stood up and, for the first time in 2000 years, renewed for themselves a Jewish homeland. Today, Israel is the only real and stable democracy in the Middle East, and a true friend to the United States.

In the past 60 years, Israel has built a vibrant and pluralistic society, become a leader in the high tech and renewable energy sectors, produced 8 Nobel Prize laureates, freed and welcomed oppressed Jews from across the globe, and has continued to be a champion of humanitarian causes throughout the world.

Despite war and terrorism, Israel remains dedicated to a lasting peace with its neighbors. I pray for hatikva, the hope of the Jewish people, to continue to flourish in Israel, and I am honored to congratulate our friend, the State of Israel, on reaching this occasion. I join you in wishing for many more years of continued prosperity, friendship, and success.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 322, recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

Since its founding, Israel has been one of America's staunchest allies. As the only democracy in the Middle East, a close relationship between the United States and Israel helps ensure stability in that region.

The ongoing Palestinian/Israeli conflict is of great concern to me. The loss of innocent lives on both sides is troubling and tragic. The ultimate solution must come in the form of a true peace between these neighbors so they may live side-by-side. I support policies that promote a peaceful solution to the conflict. I have visited the region a half dozen times and met with leaders in several of the key countries. I am convinced that a path to peace is the only way to provide true security and prosperity for every nation.

Since Israel is our strongest ally in the Middle East, peace in this troubled area is of direct interest to our Nation. Our Nations' strong alliance will help create a lasting peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis and will diminish much of the tension and violence throughout the Middle East.

Born out of the tragedy of World War II and the Holocaust, Israel provides a safe and secure homeland for Jewish people from the entire world. I thank Israel for its friendship with the United States, and look forward to another 60 years of close cooperation between our Nations.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel and to reaffirm the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel. The birth of the State of Israel gave the Jewish people a land to call their own and serves as a symbol of hope and freedom for all groups who have been oppressed.

The creation of the State of Israel followed the attempted extermination of the Jewish people in the Holocaust. Neighborhoods and Jewish communities were divided and families were shattered, but the identity of the Jewish people as a whole remained strong. The faith, hope, and belief in each other and their heritage kept the eternal flame of the Jewish people burning, even in those grave times of despair.

Following World War II, the Jewish people, having lost six million of their own, had nowhere to go—no land to call their own. On November 29, 1947, the United Nations general assembly voted to partition the British Mandate of Palestine and create a Jewish State. On May 14, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel, and the United States Government established full diplomatic relations with Israel.

Not only has Israel provided so much to the Jewish people, absorbing millions of Jews from countries throughout the world and integrating them into Israeli society, it has also done much to assist other nations facing natural and manmade crises around the world. Israel regularly sends humanitarian aid, search-and-rescue teams, mobile hospitals, and other emergency supplies, to help victims of disasters around the world.

Just as our brave men and women fight to protect democratic values, Israel, too, fights for its right to exist and to protect its citizens. Every day, Israel bravely defends itself from repeated terrorist and military attacks. In addition, it has established peaceful bilateral relations with neighboring Egypt and Jordan and has made its desire to establish peaceful relations with all Arab states abundantly clear.

The American people feel a strong affinity for the Israeli people based on common values and shared cultural heritage and the United States continues to regard Israel as a strong and trusted ally and an important strategic partner. For 6 decades, the United States and Israel have maintained a special relationship based on mutually shared democratic values, common strategic interests, and the bonds of friendship and mutual respect.

At this time, I wish to congratulate the State of Israel on its 60th anniversary and reaffirm my commitment to maintaining the close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 322.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 54 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1722

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CARNAHAN) at 5 o'clock and 22 minutes p.m.

EARTH DAY

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1117) declaring the support of the House of Representatives for the goals and ideals of Earth Day and for developing the scientific and technological capabilities to achieve those goals.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1117

Whereas the need to educate Americans on the importance of stewardship of the environment led to the first Earth Day in 1970, the passage of a variety of environmental laws, and substantial environmental improvements over the intervening years;

Whereas substantial air quality and other environmental problems persist in many areas of our country;

Whereas today increasing numbers of Americans are concerned with the relatively rapid changes in our environment and decreasing biodiversity;

Whereas the need to improve our interaction with the environment has led to the need for more sophisticated environmental research and development of solutions to environmental problems;

Whereas today the importance of scientific evidence in making correct decisions about environmental problems has never been more important;

Whereas Earth Day activities increase our understanding of the environment and its relationship to our personal decisions regarding energy conservation, use of renewable energy, use of natural resources, and recycling; and

Whereas Earth Day has become the preeminent day of environmental celebrations, clean-ups, and educational events across the country: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of Earth Day and thanks the many organizers and participants across the country for their tireless efforts in support of the environment;

(2) encourages the Department of Energy to step up its efforts in research, development, and demonstration of renewable energy technology and energy conservation techniques; and

(3) encourages all segments of American society to work together in ensuring that the research and development necessary to uncover solutions to our major environmental problems occurs in a timely manner.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. MCNERNEY) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT) will each control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous materials on H.R. 1117, the resolution now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today, all over the world, concerned citizens are coming together to celebrate the 38th annual anniversary of Earth Day. Since its inception in 1970, Earth Day has become an international call to action on behalf of the environment, and I am proud to offer this resolution in support of the goals and ideals of Earth Day.

We are constantly reminded of the serious environmental challenges that our country and our world are facing. The greatest challenge, global warming, continues to grab headlines, as it should. We are already feeling the effects of a heating planet, and it is long past time for our country to get serious about climate change.

Global warming is a serious threat, but also presents an opportunity and strong motivation to develop the clean energy economy of the future. I spent much of my career before entering Congress as a renewable energy engineer, and I have seen firsthand the development and evolution of the clean technologies that combat climate change. We have much of the scientific knowledge and technical capability to attack climate change head on, but there is still more progress to be made.

Today, Earth Day is an important opportunity to rededicate ourselves, both as individuals and as a Nation, to making the best use of the resources available to us. I want to commend the scientists, engineers, businesspeople, and educators who are working to develop the clean economy of the future, as well as the millions of Americans who are taking action to live greener lifestyles. I believe today is an important opportunity to honor the contributions toward a healthy planet.

Earth Day is also an important opportunity to look forward to a greener tomorrow. We should renew our efforts to push ahead with research and development of the cutting edge, environmentally friendly technologies of the future, as well as the many smart policies that will preserve our environment. Confronting great environmental challenges will require technological innovation, as well as a forward-thinking public policy. I believe we are up to the task.

As important as combating climate change is, Earth Day also reminds us of the other crucial environmental issues of our time. We need to preserve our precious natural resources, and to do that, we have to maintain our national lands, protect biodiversity, ensure clean air for everybody, and make smart investments in environmental cleanup efforts. These are important legislative opportunities before us, and I hope that we will embrace the chance to preserve our treasured landscapes. I am optimistic about our environmental future. Looking forward, I see an America that runs on clean sources of energy and supports a wide spectrum of family wage green energy jobs. I see an America where environmentally sustainable building practices are the norm, not the exception. And I see an America where our most beautiful landscapes are protected for our children and grandchildren.

I commend the organizers of Earth Day and the millions of people around the globe who are participating in Earth Day events today. Your dedication is admirable, and I am confident that environmental awareness and activism will continue to flourish. I am also inspired by the grassroots commitment to environmental protection that Earth Day embodies, and I look forward to celebrating many more Earth Days in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in supporting the goals and ideals of Earth Day.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. I rise in support of this resolution commemorating Earth Day and its goals and ideals. The first Earth Day was celebrated in 1970 by 20 million people. That same year, President Nixon created the Environmental Protection Agency to protect public health and the environment and Congress amended the Clean Air Act with the goals of improving the national air quality, reduce auto emissions, and create anti-pollution standards.

We have come a long way as a Nation since that first Earth Day. In 1972, when Congress passed the Clean Air Act, only 26 percent of the Nation's streams were safe for swimming and fishing. Today, about 60 percent of our streams are safe for such purposes. This day has a very special meaning for me because of my childhood experiences with streams. In the early thirties, I grew up in the coal mining country of western Pennsylvania, and every one of the streams that I could get to was called a sulfur creek because it contained waters that had leached the sulfur out of the mines. There was only one thing that lived in those creeks, and that was a little red wiggly worm. It must have been tough because nothing else lived there. The rocks were all covered by a slimy, orangish kind of a film. I am sure those streams weren't safe to swim in, but we swam in them anyway because we were too poor to go to the pool. I didn't know where a pool existed. So Earth Day has a very special meaning for me. Those streams

now, I think, are all clear thanks to our attention to that.

A few years later, when Congress passed the Safe Drinking Water Act, ensuring EPA regulate the quality of our drinking water, today many Americans receive annual reports on the quality of their drinking water. In 1987, the United States joined other nations in signing the Montreal Protocol to phase out the production of chlorofluorocarbons, CFCs. As a result, the use of CFCs has been reduced drastically.

As a Nation, we also focused efforts on educating the public on the benefits of recycling and the clean up of hazardous materials from our lands and our waterways. In the 1990s, under President George Bush, we passed the Pollution Prevention Act and the National Environmental Education Act to emphasize the importance of preventing pollution, while educating the public on the potential effects their actions might have on the environment.

□ 1730

During the same period, the EPA established the Energy Star program to provide consumers with information on the availability of energy efficient appliances.

I would like to note, Mr. Speaker, that our efforts on efficiency have really been dramatic, and if it were not for the greatly increased efficiencies we have, we would be in even more trouble environmentally and with oil today than we are.

In 1993, President Clinton launched a program encouraging Federal Government agencies to buy recycled and environmentally friendly products. In recent years, President George W. Bush signed the Brownfields Revitalization Act to reclaim and restore thousands of abandoned properties and the Healthy Forest Restoration Act to prevent forest fires and preserve the Nation's forests.

Throughout the last three decades, efforts have been made to educate the public about the importance of conserving resources, preserving the environment and protecting the air we breathe and the water we drink. Americans have a better quality of life due to our own efforts to clean up the environment for ourselves and our children.

I support this resolution recognizing Earth Day and urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I have been all around this great Nation and I have seen the environment change from the 1970s until the present day. When Earth Day was first declared, we had lakes that were catching on fire and we had pollution running in our rivers. We have seen tremendous progress. Our lakes and rivers are much cleaner now and our air is breathable, although it still needs progress, we still need work.

The great thing about looking forward with the environment is that we can create jobs, we can make America prosperous. When we trash the environment, everyone gets poorer. We want an America that is prosperous. We want an America that we are proud to pass on to our next generation.

Earth Day has been a big part of this. It deserves to be commended and recognized. It is bipartisan. Everybody drinks the same water and breathes the same air. So it is an issue that I think we have broad support on both sides of the aisle. I certainly have support back home in California, and I know that as I go around the country, I see the same level of interest, both in the environment and creating clean jobs and ending our dependence on foreign oil. These are all national security issues. They are issues that are great for our Nation. They are issues that we want to work for, and part of the reason I am here in Congress.

So, again, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I think that a tipping moment occurred for most Americans when in that spacecraft hurdling toward the Moon they looked back and took a picture of our Earth, how small it was from that vantage point, and we suddenly recognized that the more than 6 billion of us who occupy this Earth ride a rather, in the grand scheme of things, tiny spacecraft. It is our only home.

I am very appreciative of the emphasis today on Earth Day, because I think that it is more than appropriate that we focus on this tiny orb that we are privileged to occupy as we hurdle through space. I remember staying up until 2 o'clock in the morning for that first walk on the Moon, and I remember those early pictures, and, gee, this is our Earth, and it really isn't all that big, is it?

So I thank those who got this legislation together. I am in strong support of recognizing Earth Day and encourage all Americans to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the words of the gentleman from Maryland. His concern is noted and appreciated.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, today our Nation joins with countries from around the world to celebrate Earth Day. Today, communities large and small, collectively come together to recognize past progress and develop new strategies to improve future environmental health. On this day of global environmental reflection, I rise to recognize two outstanding schools in my district, Woodstock and Brooklyn Middle Schools, which have worked to make eastern Connecticut a cleaner and more environmentally conscious community.

Between March 20 and April 10, 2008, Woodstock and Brooklyn Middle Schools embarked on a project, the "Bad Bag Competition", which explored the prevalence of plastic bag use in our country as well as its environmental implications. Plastic bags are everywhere, from grocery to department stores, and every year Americans consume an average of 100 billion. In order to produce our annual demand for plastic bags, 12 million barrels of oil are used. Reducing national demand for plastic bags has clear environmental benefits.

Throughout the "Bad Bag Competition", students from Woodstock and Brooklyn Middle Schools collected and recycled used plastic bags and educated our neighbors on the importance of using reusable bags. At the end of the competition, when all the bags were counted, Woodstock and Brooklyn Middle Schools collected 43,836 and 66,100 bags respectively. The petroleum that was used to produce these bags, which collectively totaled 109,936, could have fueled a vehicle for 7,853 miles.

Mr. Speaker, these students have exemplified the spirit of Earth Day. These students not only modified their own choices to be more environmentally responsible, but encouraged our neighbors to do the same. The impact of this project on our eastern Connecticut community has been great, and the multiplier effects are even greater. I ask my colleagues to join with me and my constituents in recognizing these students' achievements and to choose reusable bags instead of the proverbial "paper or plastic."

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 1117 to celebrate the 28'' Anniversary of Earth Day, take stock of the progress that has already been made, and recommit ourselves with a sense of focus and urgency to the work that remains to be done.

We have come a long way since Senator Gaylord Nelson and Dennis Hayes organized their nationwide grassroots demonstration on behalf of the environment in the Spring of 1970. In the years that followed, Congress established the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; enacted the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act; and strengthened the Clean Water and Clean Air Acts, among other critical initiatives.

To a large extent, these steps—and other like them—continue to form the foundation of our environmental laws in the United States. Unfortunately, recent years have witnessed an erosion to this foundation as regulatory agencies shirked their responsibility to enforce the law and existing statutes failed to keep pace with the magnitude of the environmental challenges we are confronting in the 25th century.

The New Direction Congress has now begun the necessary process of reversing that erosion and establishing a new baseline of federal commitment to stewardship from which the next chapter in American environmental leadership will be written. For the first time in over 30 years, the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 increased the corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) standard for automobiles to 35 mpg by 2020. In combination with the economy-wide energy efficiency standards in the legislation, this step will reduce oil consumption by 2.4 million barrels a day—for a more than 25 percent reduction over today's usage—and save 5.3 billion metric tons in energy-related CO_2 emissions by 2030. It's important. But it's just a start.

We must move decisively to enact an economy-wide cap-and-trade program that achieves dramatic reductions in our greenhouse gas emissions by the middle of the century—and work with other nations around the

world to do the same. We must transition our economy away from its reliance on fossil fuels and towards the clean, green energy sources of the future, while making far more efficient use of the energy we currently use. We must update, strengthen and enforce bedrock laws like the Clean Water and Clean Air Acts. And we must act locally and individually in all of our communities to restore, protect and cherish ecosystems like the Chesapeake Bay on which all of life ultimately depends.

Mr. Speaker, the key decisions we make over the next several years will have a profound impact on the kind of America we leave to our children. I believe the vast majority of our constituents understand this and stand ready to do their part as we come together to build a more prosperous, healthier and greener nation.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, in honor of the 38th celebration of Earth Day, I would like to take this time to reflect on the progress we are making for the health of our planet—and to challenge all Americans—each and every one of us—to re-dedicate ourselves to living in a sustainable manner.

Looking back, we can be proud that the New Direction Congress has made real progress toward a future of cleaner energy and healthier living.

Last year, Congress passed the historic Energy Independence and Security Act.

This legislation takes important steps to increase fuel efficiency, help promote alternative energy sources, and is set to dramatically reduce CO_2 emissions over the years to come. However, we can do more. We must do more. The time is now. We cannot wait any longer to address the countless environmental challenges we must confront.

Together, we can leave our planet a little greener and a little more peaceful. It is our duty to help spur the next generation of energy technology—solar, hydrogen, wind, and other sources of energy that create a sustainable environment.

The U.S. has the technology and know-how to lead the world in environmental solutions. I believe we can strengthen America's economy through environmentally sound policy and, in the process, create jobs here at home.

As we commemorate this Earth Day ask yourself, am I doing enough? Can I do more? What kind of planet will we leave for the next generation?

We all must share this planet. We all rely on its resources to survive. We must all do our part to pass along a healthy and sustainable living environment to our children and grandchildren.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 1117, as it supports the goals and ideals of Earth Day.

Greenhouse gas emissions in Texas are the highest in the Nation. In fact, if Texas were its own separate country, it would rank seventh in the world in carbon dioxide emissions. Unless Texas significantly alters its fuel mix towards lower emitting fuels or renewable energy, greenhouse gas emissions are expected to continue to rise rapidly.

I am unhappy that the overall energy use in Texas is projected to increase by 36 percent over the next 20 years. We must act now to stop this trend. This pattern is bad for our environment. It is bad for the health of our children and grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, let us not leave a legacy of waste and pollution for tomorrow's citizens. Let us act now to pass policies to protect our environment and be good stewards of the Earth.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. MCNERNEY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1117.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 35 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DONNELLY) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H. Res. 981, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 5151, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 831, by the yeas and nays.

Proceedings on H.R. 5613 and H. Con. Res. 322 will resume on Wednesday.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

WORLD GLAUCOMA DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 981, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS) to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 981, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 387, nays 0, not voting 44, as follows:

[Roll No. 205]

YEAS—387

Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Allen
Altmire
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Cannon
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Carter
Castle
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Fallin
Farr
Ferguson
Filner
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foster
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Hall (NY)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hunter
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Radanovich

Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Reyes
Reynolds
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Speier
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tierney
Towns
Tsongas
Turner
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Westmoreland
Wexler
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman (VA)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—44

Abercrombie
Alexander
Andrews
Brady (PA)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Campbell (CA)
Cantor
Carney
Castor
Cooper
Doggett
Engel
English (PA)
Fattah
Feeney
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (TX)
Hulshof
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jones (OH)
Kingston
Maloney (NY)
Mollohan
Murphy, Patrick
Nadler
Peterson (PA)
Putnam
Renzi
Rohrabacher
Rush
Saxton
Schwartz
Sestak
Tiberi
Udall (CO)
Wasserman Schultz
Weiner
Weller
Whitfield (KY)
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

□ 1903

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WILD MONONGAHELA ACT: A NATIONAL LEGACY FOR WEST VIRGINIA'S SPECIAL PLACES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5151, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5151, as amended.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 368, nays 17, not voting 46, as follows:

[Roll No. 206]

YEAS—368

Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Allen
Altmire
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blumenauer
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Brown (SC)
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Cannon
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Carter
Castle
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Fallin
Farr
Ferguson
Filner
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foster
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Gordon
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Hall (NY)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hunter
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (NY)
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mitchell
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Reyes
Reynolds
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sessions
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Speier
Spratt
Stark
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tierney
Towns
Tsongas
Turner
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Westmoreland
Wexler
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman (VA)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth

NAYS—17

Blackburn
Blunt
Broun (GA)
Coble
Duncan
Flake
Franks (AZ)
Goode
Goodlatte
King (IA)
Miller, Gary
Paul
Sensenbrenner
Shadegg
Shimkus
Stearns
Tancredo

NOT VOTING—46

Abercrombie
Alexander
Andrews
Brady (PA)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Campbell (CA)
Cantor
Carney
Castor
Cooper
Doggett
Engel
English (PA)
Fattah
Feeney
Granger
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (TX)
Hulshof
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jones (OH)
Kingston
Maloney (NY)
Mollohan
Murphy, Patrick
Nadler
Peterson (PA)
Putnam
Renzi
Rohrabacher
Rush
Saxton
Schwartz
Sestak
Space
Tiberi
Udall (CO)
Wasserman Schultz
Weiner
Weller
Whitfield (KY)
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1910

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COFFMAN COVE ADMINISTRATIVE SITE CONVEYANCE ACT OF 2008

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 831, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 831, as amended.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 382, nays 0, not voting 49, as follows:

[Roll No. 207]

YEAS—382

Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Allen
Altmire
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley

Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Cannon
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Carter
Castle
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Conaway
Conyers
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Fallin
Farr
Ferguson
Filner
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foster
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Hall (NY)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hunter
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Tim
Musgrave
Myrick
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Reyes
Reynolds
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Speier
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sutton
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tierney
Towns
Tsongas
Turner
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Westmoreland
Wexler
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman (VA)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—49

Abercrombie
Alexander
Andrews
Brady (PA)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Campbell (CA)
Cantor
Carney
Castor
Cole (OK)
Cooper
Doggett
Engel
English (PA)
Fattah
Feeney
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (TX)
Hulshof
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jones (OH)
Kingston
Maloney (NY)
Mollohan
Murphy, Patrick
Murtha
Nadler
Napolitano
Peterson (PA)
Price (GA)
Putnam
Renzi
Rohrabacher
Rush
Saxton
Schwartz
Sestak
Sullivan
Tiberi
Udall (CO)
Wasserman Schultz
Weiner
Weller
Whitfield (KY)
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are advised there is less than 1 minute remaining in this vote.

□ 1917

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent from this chamber today. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 205, 206, and 207.

IN MEMORY OF KIM HOA VERMEIRE LANG

(Mr. HARE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and remember one of my finest constituents, Kim Hoa Vermeire Lang. A native of South Vietnam, Kim arrived in the United States at just 6 months of age. She was adopted by loving parents and grew up to be one of her community's greatest volunteers, devoting limitless energy to Prairieview Elementary School, the Vietnamese Culture Camp, and numerous local charities.

I had the pleasure of working with Kim when she was an intern for my predecessor, Congressman Lane Evans. She was an outstanding source of support for our entire staff, and her dedication to the people of the 17th Congressional District was invaluable.

Sadly, Kim was diagnosed with melanoma in 1993. Throughout her ordeal, she never complained, and enthusiastically carried out her work. On March 28, Kim lost her battle to cancer, surrounded by loved ones at her parents' home. Kim's courage and determination to live life to the fullest is a model for all of us. My condolences and best wishes go out to her husband Joshua Lang, her parents, Ann and Joseph, and all of her family and friends.

THE PRICE OF A BARREL OF OIL

(Mr. SHIMKUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, from Congress Daily AM on Monday, 21 April, the heading was: Florida delight as talks intensify behind closed doors on several issues. Members negotiate behind the scenes to finish a farm bill conference and plan their maneuvers for moving a war supplemental bill and more possible tradeoffs to move a Colombia Free Trade Agreement. Funny. No talk about gasoline, no talk about the high energy prices. The number one issue affecting consumers today and the pocketbooks of mom and dad and driving kids to events is the high cost of gasoline.

When this majority took over, the price of a barrel of crude oil was $58.31. Today—actually, this is wrong—it was updated at $117. It did get to $118 a barrel. When you don't have a plan, you plan to fail. I would hope that the Democrat majority would, in their negotiations, talk about how they are going to address the high cost of energy in this country.

ADMINISTRATION DRIVING UP OIL PRICES

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. I'd like to follow up on the comments of my good friend from Illinois. The high cost of gasoline is troubling all Americans. $3.50 a gallon, approaching $120 a barrel. Now I just would respectfully suggest that the administration has a lot to do with this. This administration, which has a great familiarity with the oil industry, has pursued policies, including the war in Iraq, that has led to the price of oil being driven up. Even the threats on attacking Iran have at one time or another helped to increase the cost of the price of a barrel of oil.

There is one thing that this Congress can do immediately to start to gain the American public some relief, and that is to bring a windfall profits tax forward. Enforce some discipline in the marketplace. Bring these oil companies to heel by using the power of Congress to tax the excess profits and take

that money and put it into a fund that would enable Americans to get tax breaks for the purchase of energy efficient vehicles. This is the approach we ought to be taking.

CONGRESS MUST ACT ON ENERGY PRICES

(Mr. MCHENRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, my constituents are concerned about high gas prices. We are a commuter district in western North Carolina, and so when we move to go to the marketplace, if we go to take our kids to school, we have to get an automobile and pay for gasoline. My constituents are struggling under these high gas prices.

It's about time that this Congress acted so we have more refineries, that we have new exploration here at home so we don't have to be dependent on foreign oil. And we must invest in alternatives long term so we don't have to rely on foreign oil at all.

Mr. Speaker, it's about time this Congress acted, and tax increases are not the way to do it. It is to increase production. That will help get down these high gas prices.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, reforming health care in America is not nearly as hard as the special interests would like the American people to believe. The special interests want to protect their profits, but Congress should concern itself with protecting the health and well-being of the American people.

There are two major news stories today that should be viewed side-by-side. On their own, each story is powerful. Taken together, however, the stories offer compelling evidence of what happens when special initiates lobby against meaningful reform in the United States; while in France, people receive universal health care that is ranked number one in the world by the World Health Organization.

A new study conducted jointly by Harvard University and the University of Washington in my district has yielded a startling conclusion. Reporter Tom Paulson has the story in today's Seattle-Post Intelligencer. Let me read an excerpt, ''One of every five American women and one of every 25 men are either dying at a younger age or seeing no improvement in life span. The lead authors told the PI, ''It is what you would expect to see in a developing Nation, not here in the United States,'' according to Dr. Ezzati, a Harvard professor. Dr. Chris Murray from UW called it a complete surprise, and said, ''It's remarkable in the history of the U.S.''

We pay more for health care than any nation on Earth, yet life expectancy is declining for millions of Americans.

□ 1930

At the same time, for about half the cost, every French citizen has access to universal health care, rated the best in the world.

ABC News Online carried the story of the French system. It includes data that shows that universal health care coverage works. In France, there is one doctor for every 430 people. In the United States, there is one doctor for every 1,230 people. The average life expectancy in France is 2 years longer than in the U.S. And the French system is one of the most expensive in the world at $3,500 per person, but it is nothing compared to the $6,100 we spend in the United States for every individual. And we have 47 million without any health care coverage, and millions more with less than adequate coverage because it is too expensive.

When the American people face soaring costs for health care, it is time to create an American universal health care system. When millions of Americans face a declining life expectancy, it is time to create an American universal health care system. When the U.S. health care system is ranked 37th in the world by the World Health Organization, it is time to do something.

We don't have one today, because special interests have used their influence to put profits ahead of people by perpetuating a broken-down system, and whenever someone tries to change it, they spend millions of dollars to try and scare people. They are not spending all that money to provide better health care; they are spending it to protect their profit margins. And they will try to scare us into thinking that the Americans can't develop a plan. That is not true.

An American universal system is not only possible, it is imperative. These two stories, which I will enter into the RECORD, are stark reminders of a crisis that is growing because it is not being treated.

In medicine, it would be as if all the tests showed that a tumor was growing inside a patient and we did nothing about it. It would be malpractice and it would needlessly endanger a patient. Without an American universal health care plan, that is exactly what we are doing to the American people. Ignoring the truth has never worked in medicine, and it won't work for health care in this country. We need an American universal health care system, and we need it now.

[From the Seattle Post-Intelligencer]

LIFESPAN SHORTER IN PARTS OF U.S.—OBESITY, SMOKING CITED; STATE NOT IMMUNE TO TREND

(By Tom Paulson)

For the first time since the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic, life expectancy for a significant proportion of the United States is on the decline largely because of an increase in chronic diseases related to obesity, smoking and high blood pressure.

Although life expectancy for all other Western nations and for most of the U.S. has continued to improve over the past several decades, researchers at Harvard University and the University of Washington say many of the worst-off here are getting much worse.

One of every five American women, and one of every 25 men, are either dying at a younger age or seeing no improvement in life span. Although this deadly trend is mostly centered in the southern parts of the nation, several largely rural counties in Washington—Cowlitz, Lewis, Benton and Grays Harbor—are also on the verge of seeing a decline in overall life span.

''It is what you would expect to see in a developing country, not here,'' said Dr. Majid Ezzati, a Harvard professor and lead author of a study published in the open-access journal Public Library of Science Medicine.

''This was a complete surprise,'' said Dr. Chris Murray, co-author of the study and director of the UW's new Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation in the Department of Global Health. ''It's remarkable in the history of the U.S.''

Between 1961 and 1999, life expectancy in the U.S. increased overall for men from 67 to 74 years and from 74 to 80 years for women.

Most of this improvement is attributed to a decline in deaths from heart disease and strokes.

Beginning in the early 1980s, however, life expectancy in some of the nation's ''worst-off' counties (based on overall health indicators) either stayed the same or declined by 1.3 years for both sexes. For those living in those counties, men on average die about 11 years earlier and women die 7.5 years earlier than people in better-off counties.

Nothing like this trend has been observed in this country since the massive deaths caused by the 1918 flu pandemic, Murray said, and nothing like it appears to be happening in any of the other industrialized nations around the world.

''And I don't think you can take any comfort if you happen to be living in an area today without an overall decline,'' he said. ''It appears to be a problem that is spreading.''

Ezzati, Murray and their colleagues initially performed an exhaustive analysis of county mortality data between 1961 and 1999 (the latest year for which the data were available) looking for health disparities. They did not anticipate discovering that so many Americans, especially women, were dying at an earlier age.

''We started noticing this period, starting in the early 1980s, where the gaps between the best-off and worst-off were getting wider,'' Murray said. Not only were the disparities getting worse, he said, but those with the worst health indicators were dying earlier.

''It was pretty shocking to us,'' Ezzati said. And contrary to what might be expected, he said the observed declines in life expectancy did not seem to correlate with race or income. Ezzati emphasized this wasn't just a trend affecting poor minorities.

''This appears to be something beyond race and income,'' he said. Most of the worst-off counties were lower-income in comparison with other counties, Ezzati said, but the decline in life expectancies did not simply correlate with income. ''For example, the data for low-income whites in northern Minnesota looked quite different than low-income whites in Appalachia,'' Ezzati said. ''The geographical differences here are capturing something significant.''

The researchers found that the diseases most closely associated with the observed declines in life spans appeared to be related to smoking, obesity and high blood pressure. Women probably have suffered more significant declines, Murray said, because of increased rates of smoking and obesity, compared with men.

''But that's still just speculation,'' he said. ''We really don't know all the reasons for this.''

Both Ezzati and Murray said it would be wrong to simply conclude these declines in life expectancy in certain regions are attributable to poor lifestyle choices—smoking, poor diet or lack of exercise.

''If this was just a matter of bad individual choices, you would expect to see these declines in life expectancy evenly distributed around the country,'' Ezzati said.

''I don't think it's as simple as lifestyle,'' Murray said. Having high blood pressure or diabetes isn't really a matter of choice or lifestyle decisions, he said.

In the 1960s, when traffic deaths were increasing, Murray said the nation launched a safe-driving campaign that failed to reduce deaths or accidents. When policymakers instead began treating that as an engineering and regulatory problem—requiring cars to have seat belts, later air bags and improving the safety of the roads themselves—''that's when the deaths started to go down,'' Murray said.

Likewise, he and Ezzati said they hoped their findings will spur policymakers to both improve chronic disease surveillance and explore methods aimed at curbing this disturbing, deadly trend.

IN WASHINGTON

Over the past four decades, life expectancy in the U.S. has increased overall for men from 67 to 74 years and from 74 to 80 years for women. But in certain locations, starting in the early 1980s, researchers say life expectancy began to stall or decline—especially for women. In Washington State, four counties (Lewis, Cowlitz, Benton and Grays Harbor) are among those places where life expectancy has not declined, but also has not improved much since the early 1980s.

THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM I WANT IS IN FRANCE

(By Mary Cline)

PARIS, April 15, 2008.—Shortly after we moved to Paris, my son, Luke, cut his lip in a fall at school. I rushed him to the emergency room of a suburban Paris hospital, where a nurse asked my name and address and a doctor quickly stitched up his cut. When I tried to pay, the cashier asked me to call the following week because the ''computer is slow.'' A bill eventually arrived in the mail for the equivalent of $60.

The same week I took Luke to have his stitches removed at a clinic where a doctor spent nearly an hour with him first softening a scab on the cut. This time, the clerk was apologetic as she handed me the bill, explaining she was sure my American health insurance would reimburse some of the cost. The total bill: $7.50.

As presidential candidates hammer out proposals to deal with the increasing millions of uninsured Americans, I know which health plan I'll choose: the French one.

The World Health Organization has named the French health care system the best in the world. (The U.S. ranked 37th). It's physician-rich, boasting one doctor for approximately every 430 people, compared with a doctor for every 1,230 residents in the U.S. (and French docs tend to charge significantly less). The average life expectancy is two years longer than the U.S. And while the system is one of the most expensive in the world, costing $3,500 per person, it's far less than the $6,100 spent per capita in the U.S.

I've had a unique opportunity to see both systems up close and personal: I had breast cancer in California nine years ago and a recurrence in Paris this year. I received excellent care in both places, though looking back now my California oncologist's office was a bit of a meat market—always packed with patients, from the seemingly not-so-sick to some a step from the grave—a time-consuming disadvantage of living in a much larger country with a lower doctor-to-patient ratio.

My French doctors and nurses have been sensitive, skillful, caring—and not so harried. But the biggest difference has been money.

My top-level health insurance paid for most of my U.S. care, but it was often a struggle to shake loose the money. I was frequently stuck in the middle of disputes between the company and my hospital and doctors over ''agreed to fees.''

Continually dunned by the hospital for fees and facing multiple complaining phone calls to my insurance company, I sometimes simply caved in and wrote checks to cover bills that I knew were the insurance company's responsibility—part of a wearing-down strategy I was convinced was deliberate.

Here in France I have a green carte vitale—literally a ''life card'' or social security card that provides entree to the system. It's funded by worker contributions and other taxes. My husband (and our family) is covered through his work with a French subsidiary of a U.S. company, and so is everyone else; coverage is universal. The French are responsible for co-pays, but some 80% of them have supplemental private insurance to cover the co-pay. People least able to pay and those with chronic or serious illnesses often have the best coverage. Because I'm being treated for cancer, I'm cent pour cent—100%—covered.

The effect of a system where hospitals and doctors don't worry about getting stiffed by a patient or an insurance company seems to be a far more relaxed, generous system. When my surgeon discussed breast surgery here, he suggested that I stay in the hospital five days. ''Of course I can do it the American way, kind of an outpatient situation,'' he told me, apparently not wanting to sound unsophisticated. ''But I don't like pain.''

Maternity stays for a normal delivery are a minimum of five days, not the 48 hours mandated by U.S. federal legislation in 1998 after many insurance companies insisted stays be even shorter.

I've always had health insurance in the U.S. And yet the few times I'd had to walk into an American emergency room I've always felt a thief who seems to be expected to sign over all worldly goods before any medical care can begin, regardless of the state of agony someone might be in. French doctors address problems immediately and aren't constrained by approvals from some medical decision maker in a distant insurance office.

Years ago, my husband had to wait several hours in a Manhattan emergency room as administrators tracked down someone in our out-of-state insurance company who would approve (and therefore agree to cover the bill for) antibiotic treatment for a horrifying infection in his face that doctors were concerned could have been flesh-eating strep.

There's no question you'll be treated in France. Everyone is. The nation pays the bills and the hospitals don't get stiffed. It's an all-encompassing cradle-to-grave system. My fear now is that I won't be able to even get insurance when and if I return to the states, much less be able to afford it.

''The French health care system has a lot of lessons for the U.S.,'' said Northern Arizona University Professor Paul V. Dutton, who has studied both extensively for his book ''Differential Diagnoses: A Comparative History of Health Care Problems and Solutions in the U.S. and France.''

''There seems to be a feeling that Britain's socialized health system is the only one we can look at because it's English, it's the mother country. But in fact, the French share many of the same values that American consumers seek, like choice of physician and freedom from insurance company authorization of medical decisions. The French system is already far more similar to the American ideal,'' Dutton said.

Except it works.

COLOMBIAN DRUG CARTELS USING SUBMARINES TO BRING COCAINE INTO THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to the House's attention a new innovative idea to import drugs into the United States. The drug cartels in South America, specifically in Colombia, continue to figure out ways to import cocaine at a profit into our country. Now they are doing it by sea, and they are using submarines that they make in the jungles where they make the cocaine that they bring into the United States.

I have here, Mr. Speaker, a photograph of a submarine. This photograph was taken by the United States Coast Guard as they were on patrol off the coast of Colombia with the United States Navy. This submarine is made out of fiberglass. It is about 100 feet long and it carries approximately $300 million worth of cocaine. It has a crew of five.

It is made in such a way that when intercepted by the United States Navy or the United States Coast Guard, they are able to pull certain levers and valves on this submarine and it is junked in the Gulf of Mexico or off the coast of Colombia. They scuttle these ships, because what happens is when they scuttle them, the five man crew jumps off the boat into a lifeboat, and then our United States Navy has to rescue them and save them, but they can't prosecute them for importation of drugs into the United States.

These submarines cost the drug cartels about $1 million apiece to manufacture. Intelligence sources tell us

that the drug cartels will bring in approximately 90 more loads of drugs into the United States from Colombia using these submarines the rest of this calendar year.

They are made in such a way that they are highly mobile. They go about 14 knots apiece, and they are able to go all the way from Colombia into the United States without refueling. It is a constant problem for our Navy and our United States Coast Guard to track these individuals and to catch them with the cocaine.

Only one situation where we, I say we, the United States Navy and the Coast Guard, were able to capture one of these vessels before it was scuttled and prosecute the crew was when they tried to sink it off the coast of Colombia after seeing the United States Navy. But what happened was after they scuttled the submarine, a load of cocaine, a bundle of cocaine, if you will, came to the surface. Once it came to the surface it was confiscated by our Navy. The five member crew was captured and they have been taken to Tampa, Florida, and they are on trial for importation of narcotics into the United States.

I bring this to the House's attention, Mr. Speaker, because of the fact that Congress needs to deal with this issue. These submarines carry no flag. They are not registered to any nation or foreign government. The crew members come from all over the world, mostly from Colombia. They claim no citizenship from any nation. And they don't claim, of course, possession of the vessel.

So Congress can deal with this issue by making it a Federal offense to use a submarine within international waters that carries no flag, carries no registration of another nation, and if a person is caught operating one of these vessels, they could be prosecuted as if they had drugs. The drug cartels are smart. They know if they can destroy the evidence they can't be prosecuted. We need to make a law that being in possession of this submarine is enough to prosecute them for crimes on the high seas.

Mr. Speaker, I might add that these vessels are so manufactured that they are not just able to carry cocaine into the United States worth $300 million, or 12 tons, that is how much cocaine, but that same vessel can go into any of our ports in the United States as a submarine carrying weapons, explosives, weapons of mass destruction, and used as some type of suicide submarine, similar to what was used against the USS Cole some years ago in the Middle East.

So the United States Coast Guard and Navy is to be complimented for tracking these vessels and doing everything they can to interdict the individuals that bring that cancer into the United States, and Congress needs to deal with the issue, to have these submarines that are basically at war with the United States bringing in these narcotics, have it be a crime to be in possession as a crew member of one of these vessels. It is things like this where we have to keep constant diligence in fighting the war on drugs.

Just to be clear, Mr. Speaker, intelligence tells us that these submarines are made by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC. That is the military wing of the Colombian communist party. Of course, that is how they finance their revolution and the revolutionary ideas in South America.

And that's just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PRESIDENT'S COMPASSIONATE CONSERVATISM A FAILURE IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, last week when Pope Benedict XVI visited our Nation's Capital and then the United Nations, he inspired America and the world by invoking the moral imperatives of peace, justice and human rights. In greeting the Pope to America, President Bush dusted off his message of ''compassionate conservatism,'' which has lain dormant for 8 years since the Bush-Cheney campaigns of 2000.

President Bush said as the Pope sat there, ''Here in America, you will find a Nation of compassion. Americans believe that the measure of a free society is how we treat the weakest and most vulnerable among us.'' The President said, ''So each day citizens across America answer the universal call to feed the hungry and comfort the sick and care for the infirm.''

The President might be correct that American citizens try to fulfill these moral obligations of feeding the hungry and comforting the sick, but they are doing it with no help from his administration. Surely his administration has been conservative, but not compassionate.

The United States Government under George W. Bush has turned its back on the hungry. Ask any person who handles a food bank in this Nation. They took one program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and totally eliminated it, a program that feeds our Nation's hungriest. And while food pantries across our Nation are short and donations way down, the President turns a blind eye and utters those false words before the Pope.

The United States Government under George W. Bush has turned its back on the sick and the infirm. It was he who vetoed the children's health program and has since failed to provide health care for so many millions of our Nation's children whose families are working but still have no health insurance.

If the measure of a President is how his administration has treated the weakest and most vulnerable among us, then George W. Bush has failed the test of that leadership.

Here at home we have people converging on food pantries that are not able to cope with the demand. We have young people unable to find summer jobs, find it difficult to get student loans, and even more difficult to get a job to pay them off. We have families that lack health insurance. We have 10 seniors waiting for every one available affordable housing unit. And we have veterans in dilapidated facilities without the proper health care and support they need to rebuild their lives when they return home. This in a land where President Bush says, ''Each of us is willed and each of us is loved.''

Mortgage foreclosures have a death grip on our economy, yet Washington continues to drag its feet on a solution with real bite. An estimated 1.6 million foreclosures occurred in 2007, and as of December, 2.9 million loans were past due, signaling that the worst is in front of us. This means that more than 40 million homeowners are at risk of seeing their property values decline as a result. And by early 2009 as many as 12.5 million homeowners will have no equity in their homes or will owe more than their homes are worth. In fact, America today is experiencing something it never has before, negative net equity in home mortgages. The value of the home is less than what people owe.

Where is the Bush administration? I invite the President to Ohio. Help us get these mortgage servicers to a table so we can do workouts. Where is HUD? Where is the Federal Reserve? Where are all these regulatory agencies? Where are they? Where is the President?

States and localities are struggling because of the Federal Government's absence in this area of workouts, and municipalities' tax bases may drop as much as $356 billion over the next 2 years, further undermining their ability to provide vital services for strapped residents because their tax bases are going down as a result of declining property values.

We have had the largest home equity washout in U.S. history. And what is the Bush response? To transfer $29 billion to bail out Bear Stearns, a Wall Street fast buck operation which is a Federal Reserve favorite and a primary dealer of U.S. Government securities. Yet nothing is done to help the States where these foreclosure crises are going on every day, to help America's families reposition so that they don't lose their major asset.

Yes, the Bush administration is conservative, but it is not compassionate.

In the Middle East, the Bush invasion of Iraq has yielded over 5 million refugees. The President has done nothing to help those displaced refugees have some semblance of a decent life. A million and a half Iraqis have fled to Syria alone.

Mr. Speaker, justice demands more than individual charity. It demands justice of us as a rich and powerful Nation.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5819, SBIR/STTR REAUTHORIZATION ACT

Ms. SLAUGHTER, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110–603) on the resolution (H. Res. 1125) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5819) to amend the Small Business Act to improve the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program and the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) program, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2830, COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2008

Ms. SLAUGHTER, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110–604) on the resolution (H. Res. 1126) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2830) to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal year 2008, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

□ 1945

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

MEMPHIS MUSIC

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Memphis Music. This summer, my district will play host to a tradition that has evolved with the city for more than 70 years, Carnival Memphis. Every year, Carnival Memphis lifts up the best of our city and asks it to help those Memphians who are most in need. Leaders of an honored industry roll up their sleeves to help special Memphis charities, charities that are often otherwise ignored. This year, the honored industry, Memphis Music, is at the very foundations of our beloved city.

Mr. Speaker, so much of the music that is identified as iconic American music came from Memphis. It rose up from the heat of the Mississippi Delta and drifted into the city where it was stamped on vinyl in studios like Stax and Sun. From there, the sounds of Elvis, Mavis Staples, Al Green, Booker T. and the MGs, and Isaac Hayes became part of the fabric of American culture.

This summer, Memphis Music and Carnival Memphis will turn their hands and their hearts to the Emanuel Episcopal Center Neighborhood School, and United Cerebral Palsy of the Mid South. They will be joined by the King and Queen of Carnival, the Royal Court and all of the mystic societies. The economic, cultural, and spiritual engine that is the entertainment of industry in Memphis will turn their efforts to lift the spirits and circumstances of those in need in Memphis.

I am proud to represent a city that has left such an indelible mark on American culture. I congratulate Carnival Memphis on their 77th year and all their hard work to enrich Memphis. And I encourage all of my colleagues, the next time they hear Sitting on the Dock of the Bay, Green Onions, or Heartbreak Hotel, to join me and do what I do, and think of Memphis.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SUNSET MEMORIAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I stand before this body tonight with what I have started to call a sunset memorial. It is April 22, 2008 in the land of the free and the home of the brave, and before the sun set today in America, almost 4,000 more defenseless unborn children were killed by abortion on demand. That is just today. That is more than the number of innocent American lives that were lost on September 11, Mr. Speaker, only it happens every day.

It has now been exactly 12,874 days since the travesty called Roe versus Wade was handed down. Since then, the very foundation of this Nation has been stained by the blood of more than 50 million of its own children. Some of them, Mr. Speaker, cried and screamed as they died, but because it was amniotic fluid passing over the vocal cords instead of air, we couldn't hear them.

And all of them had at least four things in common: First, they were each just little babies who had done nothing wrong to anyone. And, each one of them had a nameless and lonely death. And, each of their mothers, whether she realizes it immediately or not, will never be the same. And all of the gifts that these children might have brought to humanity, Mr. Speaker, are now lost forever.

And yet even in the full glare of such tragedy, this generation still clings to a blind invincible ignorance while history repeats itself and our own silent genocide mercilessly annihilates the most helpless of all victims to date, those yet unborn.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps it is important for those of us in this chamber to remind ourselves again of why we are really all here. Thomas Jefferson said, ''The care of human life and its happiness, and not its destruction, is the chief and only object of good government.''

The phrase in the 14th amendment capsulizes our entire Constitution. It says, ''No State shall deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law.''

Mr. Speaker, protecting the lives of our innocent citizens and their constitutional rights is why we are all here. It is our sworn oath, Mr. Speaker.

The bedrock foundation of this Republic is that clarion declaration of the self-evident truth that all human beings are created equal and endowed by their creator with the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And every conflict and battle our Nation has ever faced can be traced to our commitment to this core self-evident truth. It has made us the beacon of hope for the entire world. It is who we are.

And, yet, Mr. Speaker, another day has passed, and we in this body have failed again to honor that foundational commitment. We failed our sworn oath and our God-given responsibility as we broke faith with nearly 4,000 more innocent American babies who died today without the protection that we should given them.

So, Mr. Speaker, let me just conclude in the hope that perhaps someone new who has heard this sunset memorial tonight will finally embrace the truth that abortion really does kill little babies, that it hurts mothers in ways that we can never express, and that 12,874 days spent killing nearly 50 million unborn children in America is enough. And, that the America that rejected human slavery, and marched into Europe to arrest Nazi Holocaust, is still courageous and compassionate enough as a Nation to find a better way for mothers and their unborn babies than abortion on demand.

So tonight, Mr. Speaker, may we each remind ourselves that our own days in this sunshine of life are also numbered, and that all too soon each of us will walk from these chambers for the very last time. And if it should be

that this Congress is allowed to convene on yet another day to come, may that be the day when we finally hear the cries of the innocent unborn children, and may that be the day when we find the humanity, the courage, and the will to embrace together our human and our constitutional duty to protect the least of these, our tiny American brothers and sisters, from this murderous scourge upon our Nation called abortion on demand.

Mr. Speaker, this is April 22, 2008, 12,874 days since Roe versus Wade first stained the very foundations of this Nation with the blood of its own children, and this in the land of the free and the home of the brave.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. SOLIS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ZIMBABWE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, there is an issue of critical concern to the human rights movement around the world and a critical concern to the continent of Africa. And it is because tonight, I just want to report, that the country of Zimbabwe is in very, very grim and dire shape. President Robert Mugabe has plundered his country, driving it to ruin. And you know a little bit about the violence that you have seen on television over the last 72 hours. A once prosperous economy has been devastated by misrule; inflation is running at 200,000 percent per year, and life expectancy there has been driven down to a mere 34 years.

This was once a major agricultural exporter to the rest of Africa, but many Zimbabweans are now facing starvation because Mugabe has kicked productive farmers off his land. His regime has used food as a weapon; he rewards backers; he starves and punishes opponents. As Karl Marx said: Those who will not obey will not eat.

Today, after 28 years of misrule, Mugabe is trying to steal the election, cracking heads to extend his reign. Defeated at the ballot box, the regime has simply refused to release official election results. And, instead, what has it done? It has stepped up its violence against the people across the countryside. It has arrested and killed its political opponents. 3,000 families have been forced from their homes. The torture chambers are full. Human rights groups report on those dead and those tortured to death. Ominously, the regime has charged the opposition presidential candidate with treason, and we know what that means, a charge that could signal the beginning of massive violence against the majority that supported the movement for democratic change.

We should remember that this is the same Robert Mugabe that engineered a massacre in Southern Zimbabwe in Matabeleland in the early 1980s, and he used North Korean troops, North Korean trained troops. Those in the countryside can show you the wells, as they showed us, where those North Korean troops of the fifth brigade directed the local villagers be thrown down alive down those wells and be killed. And that spate of killing took thousands and thousands of lives across the country. So, this is an autocrat who has stopped at nothing. And he has allies.

As we speak, a Chinese freighter is adrift somewhere off the western coast of Africa looking for a friendly port to unload a shipment destined for Zimbabwe. And in the hull of that ship is 3 million rounds of AK–47 ammo, 1,500 rounds of 40 millimeter rockets, 2,703 rounds of 60 millimeter mortar bombs. This cargo could quickly turn Zimbabwe into a killing field.

China has played a similar role elsewhere, fueling other African violence, showing contempt for African lives. It provided the machetes to the Hutu militia to carry out its 1994 genocide. Beijing is arming the government in Sudan, which is committing genocide in Darfur with those weapons. It does this for political influence and Beijing does it for economic gain, especially oil and mineral wealth. China is currently Zimbabwe's largest investor and second largest trading partner, where it secures much needed natural resources for China. But it is also its armory.

But the thing I have to reported tonight is that China is running into roadblocks, because last week South African port and truck workers refused to move this 70-ton weapons shipment to Zimbabwe. They were made aware of it by an investigative journalist. Their strike was backed by the South African union movement which said: South Africa cannot be seen to be facilitating the flow of weapons into Zimbabwe at a time when there is a political dispute and a volatile situation.

The spokesman was being diplomatic. South African labor has been one of the few to pointedly and vocally criticize Mugabe's tyranny. They despise the tyrant to their north and they called for an international boycott of this ship. And this is an inspiring event.

In the early 1970s, a labor leader at a Polish port stood up as well. Lech Walesa faced off against Soviet tyranny, demanding democracy and freedom for his native Poland.

This week, South African port workers said they weren't going to play any role in Mugabe's next slaughter. Their action hasn't brought down a tyranny, but it may have been the beginning of one's fall. For years, Mr. Speaker, neighboring countries have set back applauding Mugabe despite the many Zimbabweans he has beaten and killed. The South African government has been an offender in this. It has even given Mugabe means of cover. President Thabo Mbeki recently called the election normal, and denied the crisis in Zimbabwe. His government would have allowed the Chinese armed shipment to transit South Africa, but China decided to avoid the hassle at South African ports. This diplomatic support from South Africa and others has bolstered Mugabe at home. But, in the meantime, the neighbors have taken their lead. Their opposition has snowballed: Mozambique has said no. Namibia has said no. We hope tomorrow Angola says no, and sends this ship laden with its weapons back to China.

□ 2000

IN MEMORY OF SERGEANT WILLIAM ALLMON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, today the residents of Floyd County, Georgia are saying goodbye to a native son who died while bravely serving his Nation in Iraq. Sergeant William Elliot Allmon was killed in action on April 12, 2008 outside of Baghdad, after his vehicle encountered an IED, an improvised explosive device.

Last night, I joined Sergeant Will Allmon's family, friends, and supporters at his visitation to honor the life of this brave soldier. He was remembered as a man of the highest character whose receipt of two Army commendation medals, an Army achievement medal, a combat action badge are testament to the supreme sense of duty he felt to his country and to his brothers in arms, his comrades. Most importantly, he was remembered as a first-born son, a father, and grandson whose contagious smile brought a sense of warmth to those in his presence.

Born and raised in Floyd County, Georgia, Will joined the National Guard at age 17 before going full active duty in 2003. After serving one tour in Iraq, and even being wounded, Sergeant Allmon selflessly decided to return to the war zone for a second tour, from which his unit will return home this summer.

His whole mission in Iraq centered on keeping his fellow soldiers safe, risking his life for the sake of others. Sergeant Allmon served as a combat engineer for the Army, where he specialized in building protective structures for friendly forces and destroying protective structures for the enemy.

I think his mom put it best when she said, ''He was a leader who was looked up to by other soldiers. He was a loyal soldier who went beyond the call of duty.''

Sergeant Allmon leaves behind his wife, Jennifer; his 3-year-old son, Damien; an 11-year-old stepson, Jason Luke Johnson; his mother, Donna Fortune; his father, William Allmon; his

grandfather, Leonard Allmon; and grandparents, Billy and Joann Phillips.

Mr. Speaker, my prayers go out to his family and my deepest gratitude goes out to Sergeant Allmon for his selfless sacrifice for this Nation, and I ask all Members, and I know they will, join me in honoring the distinguished memory of Sergeant William Allmon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WALDEN of Oregon addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. TIM MURPHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 5515

Mr. GOODE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw my name as a cosponsor of H.R. 5515.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, tonight I am honored to be able to speak this evening about the issue of universal health care, one of the biggest domestic challenges that is facing our country at the present time. I am also pleased to be joined this evening and who will be speaking in just a few minutes, by the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) on the issue of universal health care.

Mr. Speaker, again I am very pleased to have this time to speak on a topic that remains of paramount concern to individuals and families across the country, and that is again the issue of health care in America.

Health care costs, Mr. Speaker, are rising in the United States at an alarming, alarming rate. Yet despite the fact that we spend more per capita on health care than any other industrialized country, we produce very disappointing outcomes by a number of important measures. One major attributable factor is the high level of uninsured in America.

Furthermore, the U.S. remains the only developed nation that does not guarantee health coverage as a right to all of its citizens. Today, there are nearly 47 million Americans who lack health insurance coverage, leaving one in six without access to proper medical care. What makes these figures more shocking is that over 80 percent of the uninsured come from working families. As the cost of health care continues to rise, it is clearly burdening our families and placing American employers at more and more of a competitive disadvantage. Therefore, I believe it is our duty as policymakers to offer a new vision and new solutions to fix our ailing health care system.

Providing quality, affordable health care to every American has been a long-time priority of mine. And it is in this spirit of furthering the national dialogue on this important issue that my colleague from Connecticut, Congressman CHRIS SHAYS and I have worked together to introduce H.R. 5348, the American Health Benefits Program Act of 2008.

This bipartisan universal health care proposal is based on a tried-and-true program that has stood the test of time, and that is the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program or FEHBP as it is called. Currently over 8 million Federal employees, retirees and their dependents receive health insurance coverage under FEHBP. This includes Members of Congress.

This program uses a system of managed competition between private insurance carriers and provides enrollees with a large menu of coverage options. Its use of bulk purchasing power helps contain costs and brings stability to the system. In 2007, this resulted in an average premium increase of just 1.8 percent compared to the private market average of 6.1 percent. And by the way, I have yet to come across an employer, at least in my home district, or anywhere in the country, for that matter, who has only realized a 6.1 percent increase in their health care costs. Generally it is in the double digits and sometimes you can be talking about 20 or 30 percent or more increases to a given health care plan in any given year. Our proposal basically would use that successful model to provide similar benefits to all Americans, establishing the first ever American health benefits program or AHBP.

Now the development of AHBP will be guided by eight fundamental principles, and they are on this chart to my right: choice, shared responsibility, affordability, portability, continuity, preventive care, and health care reinvestment. I believe these are the types of principles that we have to have in any type of system and they are certainly the core tenets of our universal health care proposal.

Now under AHBP, employers who wish to continue negotiating with private insurance carriers may do so as long as the coverage they offer meets a basic standard set by AHBP. However, employer-sponsored coverage is proving to be more and more cost-prohibitive for businesses as health care costs continue to outpace inflation and insurance options drastically fluctuate from plan to plan. That's why AHBP allows companies to choose to pay a fixed predictable payroll tax according to their size and average employee earnings.

We have a chart here which says that depending on the average number of employees that a company has, as well as according to their average salary, they would pay a certain percentage of their payroll tax. For example, on the very lower end where you have the small businesses that have the lowest average earnings, that company would only pay a maximum of 4 percent of payroll.

On the higher end, you would have the companies that at the very highest end would pay no more than 10 percent of payroll. There would be a certain cap on the average earning itself.

So my point is that there is a range of options here. There is a range of plans to choose from, but this is also an affordable way for employees to have health care coverage.

Basically we are separating out the coverage from the workplace itself. We need to get away from the issue of just employer-sponsored coverage. I think it is the best way to go, and it is a sensible proposal.

For many businesses this may cost less than they currently spend on premium contributions and health care and health plan administration. Payroll tax revenue under the system we are proposing will basically create a funding stream to allow for a fixed government contribution of 72 percent toward health care premiums of every participating American.

Individuals in AHBP will have the responsibility to pay for the remaining share of their premiums, to the extent that they can afford it, again with the lowest income earners receiving subsidies to ensure affordability.

This new program is not a single-payer system. It is not one size fits all, and it does not reinvent the wheel. Medicare, Medicaid and veteran services and other public programs that are tailored to specific populations will remain intact. Additionally, no one will be denied coverage or discriminated against based on their health status or preexisting condition. That is a very important tenet of this proposal.

AHBP will use basically an expanded system of managed competition to ensure that private insurance carriers compete for enrollees on the basis of benefits as well as efficiency, service and price. It will offer portable and continuous coverage and incentivize investment in disease preventive and

long-term preventive care which decrease the costs of care over time.

Investments in health information technology will also lower costs while increasing quality and efficiency.

Mr. Speaker, instituting meaningful systemic reforms will require a fundamental shift in how we view employer-provided coverage and health care delivery. While it is critical that businesses maintain a role, I believe it is essential that we change our perspective of health insurance as a privilege or benefit tied to employment. Instead, we must look at it as a right and a responsibility to be shared by the community. Individuals and employers, health care providers and the government, all have key roles to play in reaching a truly inclusive and efficient health care model.

The unsettling truth is that society already pays for the uninsured. Some think that there is no cost associated with the uninsured. That is completely not true. Society already pays for the uninsured, but it does so at tremendous cost and with staggering inefficiencies. Individuals without health insurance are most often forced to seek care from doctors and hospital emergency rooms only after their illnesses reach catastrophic levels, drastically increasing the risk of complications and the cost of treatment.

Our most recent estimates place total uninsured medical expenses at nearly $125 billion a year. That is staggering. Approximately $41 billion of this total comes in the form of uncompensated care which is predominantly borne by the government and financed by the taxpayer. Beyond this, the cost is also reflected in the form of higher health insurance premiums that everyone pays. This cost is only compounded by the lost income due to reduced employment and job productivity. However, Mr. Speaker, the most disturbing costs are not the monetary costs in nature, but the immeasurable price that we pay in human lives each year as a result of inequitable, inadequate care.

A recently released analysis estimated that 22,000 deaths nationwide occurred last year resulting from adults not having health insurance, averaging one death every 24 minutes. This is simply an unacceptable price to pay for delaying necessary reforms to our health care system, and we need to change it.

The challenges we face in fixing our ailing health care system are great. However, the costs of inaction are even greater.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come for policymakers at all levels and across the ideological spectrum to take action toward developing a health care system that really works for our Nation, one that offers Americans choice, calls for shared responsibility, and is affordable to all.

□ 2015

I believe our proposal introduces a practical model for universal health care while leaving room for further discussion on this very complex issue. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe this is not a Democratic or a Republican issue. It's not a conservative or a liberal issue. It's an issue that matters most to the American people.

And on that note, I am pleased to yield this evening to the gentleman from Connecticut, my partner in this bipartisan universal health care bill and this effort to finally, once and for all, solve our Nation's health care crisis, the gentleman from Connecticut, Mr. CHRIS SHAYS.

Mr. SHAYS. I thank the gentleman for yielding and I appreciate his launching this bill.

Let me say, first and foremost, that you have worked on this legislation for over 4 years, and you have done what many of us in Congress said we wanted to do. We said we wanted Americans to have the same health care that Members of Congress have. And that's what I said, the same health care that Federal employees have, because that's the program that Members of Congress are a part of. It's a program that in my State, and in most States, we have, like, 18 different choices.

And so what I'd like to do, I'd like to start out, if you wouldn't mind putting the American health benefit guiding principles back up on the chart there, because I think that's a good way to start out.

And, again, let me say, Congressman LANGEVIN, it's a privilege to work with you. You have done incredible work to bring forward a plan that Congress can consider seriously. And what you've done is what all of us said we wanted to do, and you've given me the privilege of not having to write it, but I got to edit it. And that's a lot of fun.

So this is a partnership, and what a great partnership, to be able to first argue, as you have, that chart in front of you, universal coverage. So there's 85 percent of the Americans have coverage and 15 percent don't. 90 percent have it in Connecticut. But there are about 45 million Americans that don't have health coverage.

What that does, as you've pointed out so well, it means that you have a distortion in the marketplace because those 45 million are going to get covered when they are really sick in a hospital, and it's going to be the uncompensated care.

So you've written a bill that says, universal coverage. You've written a bill that says, Americans will have choice, which is really important to me. You've written a bill that said there'll be shared responsibility, that individuals, employers, the government, hospitals, insurers, all have a responsibility. That's what you've done.

You and I are seeking to have this be affordable, so we are going to talk about a commission that we've established that would be established under this bill.

But you want it to be portable. You want it to be that if an employee moves somewhere else they're going to have that same coverage. And if the employee wants to upgrade, they can upgrade every year, or reduce it, because Federal employees pay 28 percent of the cost. The government pays the employer, in this case, 72 percent. So 28 and 72 on the part of the government.

The continuity concept, that if employers have worked out a really good program with their employees then they can keep it. But eventually I think they will ultimately want to be part of the American health benefit plan.

And I particularly like the aspect that no insurer is going to be allowed to participate unless they have a strong preventative care program. And we can get into that.

And then the health care re-investment. Insurers take 20 percent out and 80 percent goes to health care. The way you've drafted the bill, and we are promoting this bill, there's going to be, our expectation, and this is our goal, is that 90 percent be reinvested into health care.

Now, it's pretty amazing when you look at the differences in cost. And maybe you want to comment on this. You have a pretty good view of it.

But we're looking at statistics in 2004. And you can see that the Gross Domestic Product in the United States, in 2004, was 15 percent. And yet, it was 11 percent, and in 1980 it was 8.8. But the significant thing is Canada's is at 10, just slightly under 10, where ours is at 15. The United Kingdom is at 8 percent of Gross Domestic Product. Japan is at 8. And Germany slightly over 10. There's a big difference in the cost here compared to our cost. I have a sense that part of that is just the uncompensated care, and that's, you know, we've had information that says that. But I think this is one that just gets you to have to wake up.

If we do nothing, if we do nothing, we are going to be spending, by the year 2016, it's estimated, over $4 trillion a year in health care. And it still means that a good number of Americans don't get the coverage.

So we have to do something. And let me just make this last point, and then I know that you'll have things that you want to say as well.

But our bill, the bill that you wrote, and the bill that I'm now a part of, is going to give Americans choice. And there are going to be some other bills presented. There's a bill that says you have a single payer system. There's another bill that says the individual pays and not the employer in a tax to, and as you've designed the bill, pays into a tax, in which we have 300 million people in one pool. So you don't have this problem of a single employer.

But, no, I just want to make this point before yielding back. The point I want to make is that we all know we're going to get to universal coverage. And the question is not if, but when.

The other question is what is it going to look like? We have the perfect

model, a system that the employer pays, that the individual pays, a system now where the hospitals, because they won't have such uncompensated care, will be contributing a bit, and where the insurers are going to be making sure that more goes into health care.

And there's the other plan that will come out here, Mr. WYDEN's bill, that deserves to be looked at, where the individual is going to pay. There's again, the single payer plan. And then there's the other groups that say, well, let's just kind of work on the edges and keep covering more and more of the uninsured and then see what it looks like when we're done.

So maybe we could have more back and forth dialogue, but this is something I deeply believe in. And I appreciate the work that's gone in by you and your staff. And now, my staff as well.

And this is a debate that Congress needs to say, let's begin it. Let's have a hearing in the House and in the Senate on this legislation, on the other legislation. Let's understand the impact on individuals and on employers.

So this is a lot of fun for me to be out here with you.

Mr. LANGEVIN. I thank the gentleman for his words and also his passion and support on this bipartisan universal health care bill. Your input has been invaluable in crafting this bipartisan bill and bringing it to where it is today, and we hope that this, now, continues, where we begin the process of fixing our health care system, bringing it to the top of the public policy agenda. It is clearly long overdue.

The American people are asking, they're demanding that we fix our health care crisis, and that we cover the uninsured, not only cover the uninsured, but making health care affordable. This is something that's long overdue.

I think it's a national disgrace that we have 47 million people in this country without health insurance. And as we have both pointed out, that because of that, it's a major contributing factor in that we have the highest cost and the worst outcomes in comparison to other industrialized nations. Again, the high number of uninsured is a major contributing factor to that statistic.

So the fact that we have a bill now is exciting because it's based on a template, a tried and true program that's already working.

When I first came to this debate, I said, this is one of the most, the biggest challenges facing our country right now. And I said, why can't we solve it? And is there anything out there that is working now that serves as an example of what we could base a universal health care system on?

And after studying it and looking at it, I said it's really right before us, and that's the Federal employees health benefits program. Right now, we have, the Federal Government, as mentioned earlier, negotiates a variety of different health care plans for more than 8 million Federal employees, dependents and retirees. You've got everything, and the choices of options that are available, from the very basic plan with the small premium and the small copay, up to the more classic comprehensive Blue Cross-type plans and everything in between.

Mr. SHAYS. And if I could just jump in. The key that you make is that there are 8 million individuals, either actively working for the government or retired, who are part of the same pool, and so the purchasing power becomes more powerful.

Mr. LANGEVIN. That's right. Using bulk purchasing power is the thing, by getting more people into one insurance pool, we spread risk around, and it achieves cost containment and stability in the system.

Mr. SHAYS. And the exciting part, I think, or the very sensible part of what we have as Federal employees, because as Congressmen, we have that same plan that all Federal employees have, is that we can choose to upgrade our plan and spend 28 percent on the more expensive plan, or we can choose to lower it each year. But we never have a problem of there being a pre-existing condition.

And thinking how it would work in the private sector, you move to another job and you will be able to keep the same plan. Or you are unemployed. You lost your job. And you have this huge fear of buying COBRA and having to pay all of the cost, and you can't. You're not working. In this case, you would be part of the government coverage, and it would be paid for almost entirely by the government, in that instance, until you were back working.

And what's hugely important about that is to recognize though, that that individual wouldn't, then, be able to get the most expensive plan, they'd have the basic plan. But the basic plan is a good plan.

Mr. LANGEVIN. That's right. Absolutely. And it's equally important to recognize that this is not a big government-run plan. We're not creating another big government bureaucracy. It's government negotiated but it's private competition. It's managed competition. Private insurers would be able to compete for now enrollees based on benefits, efficiency service and price. So the insurance companies have an incentive now to economize, find efficiencies. They would have to deliver on what has been negotiated in the various plans, and that would be clearly spelled out, but they would now be challenged to find ways to do things like invest in preventative and early care, which there really isn't necessarily the incentive, I believe, right now for insurers to do that, because, for example, when it's tied to employment, you know, we all, people change jobs several times throughout their careers. There's no guarantee that an enrollee that starts with an insurance company today is going it would be Insurance Company B, you know, wouldn't be with the Insurance Company A years down the road. They would be with potentially another insurance company, which means, you know, why should Insurance Company A invest in all this early preventative care, when, down the road, when someone gets older and we all become greater consumers of health care, that, why would they, that company wouldn't benefit from the investment that they made, where under this system they would. You may change plans within a particular company, but you may very well be with the same insurance company or plan throughout most of your life.

□ 2030

Mr. SHAYS. I love to talk about this and just delve into the preventative care part even more.

The insurance company isn't guaranteed that that individual will be with them for life. But they are aware that the insurance company's part of the American Health Benefit Plan and that all of the other insurers, as well, have to focus on preventative care. And that's going to be hugely important how people take care of themselves; are they having physical checkups, but more importantly, how do they take care of themselves? Are they smoking? Are they overweight?

You are going to have insurance companies that are going to provide incentives for people, one, to not smoke; to provide incentives for them to lose weight; and this is going to also include a health savings account for those who want it. And the significance of that will be that it becomes a high deductible.

So they would have to put in for the first few thousand dollars, but it comes out of what they put into a savings account. And if they don't spend it, then it stays in that savings account. And then there has been no cost to the insurer and, in this case, it will be a less expensive plan to the government as well.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Right.

Mr. SHAYS. I would love to, if you wouldn't mind, just point out that what we have done in this legislation is that when the bill passes, it will take 2 years to be implemented so that as we vote out the legislation with whatever changes are in there, it may be that the amount that an employer has to put into the system may be higher or lower in certain numbers of employees and so on; and we can go back to that chart in a second. But we want to have time to write the legislation but then to examine it during the course of the 2 years.

And one of the things that we've done is that we require there to be a health benefits commission. And the significance of that is that we don't want the United States to be spending so much more than other countries. So much of our wealth and our income is going into health care, and we would like it to be less.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Right.

And I think that is an important point, if I could just interject. The high costs of health care now are putting not only a tremendous burden on our individuals and families, but it's putting our companies at a significant competitive disadvantage in terms of those companies overseas whose nations have universal health care. And so it is not particularly burdening in individual business itself in foreign countries where it is here where companies bear much of the costs of providing universal health care.

So we're helping to change the dynamic, if you would, of how health care is provided in America. And, again, we're changing it from an employer kind of run system, a sponsor system, to now a universal health care model that everybody is participating in, and it's not necessarily tied to employment. Again, businesses still have an important role to play, we all do. Businesses, government, health care providers.

Mr. SHAYS. But they won't have to negotiate a plan every year, and it won't be unique to that business. It will be a plan that will have been negotiated by the American Health Benefits Plan.

You know, I look at this trend line, and I see that we're looking that in the year 2016, we would be spending $4 trillion. But what will we be spending in the year 2020? And this is without doing what we need to do, which is to reform the system.

And so what we have done is we have established a commission, and the commission will be of nine members, the chair and vice chair, as well as two other members who will be chosen by the comptroller general. The President, the majority leader, the minority leaders of the Senate and Speaker, the minority leader of the House will choose one representative. And the commission shall examine and make recommendations regarding the major issues and cost drivers affecting the delivery of health services as it pertains to the American Health Benefit Program.

Within the legislation, we specifically are directing the commission to examine a comparison of the American Health Benefit Plan to other public health insurance programs, the proper implementation and utilization of electronic medical records and other health information technologies, including privacy and interoperability issues. We're directing them to look at the effects of medical malpractice insurance and defensive medicine on the delivery and cost of health care, and that's something that needs to be looked at.

The patterns and effects of overutilization. When do people overutilize care? Why do they overutilize it, and what steps can an overall plan do to encourage all of the insurance companies to have some of the basic same practices that would discourage overutilization?

We are having them look at the cost and implementation factor of retiree health coverage under the American Health Benefit Plan. What is the impact of retirees? And candidly, what is the impact of the last few months of someone's life when we see a huge amount of money spent?

A comparison of prescription drug prices under the American Health Benefit Plan to other public health programs, and the effects of insurance monopolies on health care costs and delivery, we need to look at that.

Now, what this commission will do, it has 18 months to file its findings, which is 6 months before the law actually goes into effect. But we're asking them to give us a preliminary finding 12 months in, a final version 18 months, but one 12 months.

So the legislation passes 2 years before it's implemented. The commission comes back in a year and says, You need to make these changes to help control costs, to help discourage overutilization, to help with preventative care. That would help save costs in the long run. We will come back 18 months later.

Now, one of the last points I would make, and I know that you have comments that you need to make as well, we are willing to amend this legislation as we get data. And, for instance, I hope that sometime again we can look at the chart that you had where you talked about employer contributions because we're asking employers to say, okay, what do you pay now and how would this legislation impact you. And even if now they would be paying a little bit more, I suspect that in the long run, because their costs are going up significantly without a plan, but if I could just point out how this chart works. It's rather small. But we look at an average wage earner of $21,000 or less, and then we say okay, there's 10 employees to 25 employees. There are 200 to 500 employees. That's on the left column. And in an average wage of $21,000 or less, even with 500 employees, they would only be paying about $1,000, slightly over $1,000 a year.

Now, when you go and look at someone who is making $83,000-plus, the amount that they would be contributing would ultimately max out, potentially, at a much higher rate, more than $10,000. But the question is, what do they pay now?

Did I get that right? Yeah.

But the point is, employers are going to say, I have 26 employees, their average salary is $42,000. They will know that they're going to be paying approximately $6,600 an employee. So that's what they would pay under this plan. What do they pay now, and are there employees having the same choices that now—do they have the same choices under their private plan as they would under this plan?

Mr. LANGEVIN. Right. And that's an important point to make.

There are some employers that, though they offer health insurance, the company may only offer one plan, and it may not fit the needs of all of the employees. It may be good for some but, again, not everyone.

Under this plan, there would be a variety of plans to choose from: again, a very basic plan with a small premium, a small copay, up to the more comprehensive-type programs, and several options in between. And it's basically bringing everyone into one insurance pool.

So you're bringing a younger, healthier population into the program; you're spreading risk, which leads to more stable costs; and we talked about the fact that the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program under last year only had a 1.8 percent increase in its health care plans on average and the private sector had about a 6.1 percent increase. And I think that's even modest.

So, again, a good model here.

I'm glad that you raised the issue of the commission because it is important to look at the reasons for the rising costs of health care and then look at what options we can employ to achieve cost containment and bring stability to the system. Things like employing health information technology, the electronic medical records that we're talking more and more about these days, the cost of prescription drugs and how that system is run, and how we pay for prescription drugs. I'm looking at performance-based outcomes that the commission would look at. Again, all important tenets of achieving cost containment.

And you rightly pointed out that employers, in determining whether they like the system or not, are going to look at the range of costs or percentage of payroll that they would contribute based on the size of their company. Employers, I suspect right now, hopefully this will encourage them to ask, what are we paying as a percentage of payroll right now, and that figure will determine, in many ways, whether this system works better or worse for them. I suspect that in many cases it will be better.

And we pointed out that the smaller companies with the lowest average salaries would pay no more than 4 percent of their payroll toward this payroll tax. And the larger companies with the highest salaries would pay no more than 10 percent of payroll and not to exceed more than $12,000 per employee.

Mr. SHAYS. Right. Because what we do is we cap the payroll at $120,000. And so it ends up being $12,000 an employer would pay.

But when I was speaking of someone with 500 employees, they would pay $21,000 salary, they pay 5.25, 5¼ percent of payroll. It gets up to, if they're making $83,000 on average, and that would be quite a company, then they would be paying the 10 percent rate. And the key is that when we drafted this legislation, we had the input of private foundations and experts. But in the end, this still is an estimate of what we

think brings in the revenue needed to provide the services.

And the challenges you just don't know until you get more into it. That's why the hearings are so necessary.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Absolutely.

Mr. SHAYS. We have to draft legislation that we think is as accurate as can be, and then we present it to those who would be impacted: Employers, government individuals, and say tell us how it impacts your life. I have committee meetings, and I had individuals say, well, for a period of time I lost my job. This plan would have meant I would have had health care.

□ 2045

I had someone else who said, you know, I had a condition. I was insured. I couldn't hold my COBRA. I couldn't keep my insurance for a while. It stopped. And then I got insurance later and they said, you had a preexisting condition, and they weren't covered.

I had business men and women who said, I only have five people in my office, and we're paying an exorbitant amount. I mean, under our legislation, someone who had less than 10 would be paying, if their salary was $21,000, 4 percent of payroll. If their salary was 83, they would be paying 6 percent of payroll, far less than what they're paying now, far less. And so, it's a debate that we need to have. Now, I'm waiting for the employer who comes to me and says, guess what? Under your plan, I'm going to have to pay more. I want him or her to tell us why and how much. So we need to make sure that people get on your web page or our web page and take a look at this legislation and give us feedback.

We're going to literally tour the country to argue that we need to begin, first, a debate on health care that our bill, the bill presented by Mr. WYDEN, the bill of the single payer, all of that should be brought forward for really a terrific debate.

Mr. LANGEVIN. I couldn't agree more. This is one of the most challenging issues facing us in our time right now. It's going to take time and effort to get the message out and hopefully encourage support for our plan.

I'm glad that you and I have made a commitment to travel the country so that we can help to bring the plan before people, hopefully to educate the American people about what we're proposing, and offering this as a viable solution to our Nation's health care crisis. It's clearly long overdue. And in my home State of Rhode Island, it's the number one domestic issue that I hear most about. It is directly tied in many ways to the health of our economy and making sure that our companies can be competitive in this global market. It's important to individuals and families.

And no person should have to worry if they're going to lose their home because they come down with a catastrophic illness or a family member comes down with a catastrophic illness, but that happens every day across this country right now because of the present health care system. And again, it's not that there is no cost associated with the uninsured. If someone is that sick and they need to be treated, they're going to go, very often, to the hospital, to the emergency room where they're going to be seen. But usually by then it's at the end stage of an illness where a person is so sick that they have to be likely hospitalized, or the cost of treating them is far more expensive than it otherwise would have been at the earlier stages when early intervention, early care would have made all the difference if it were with a prescription or some other treatment. Now we're offering a system to change that.

Mr. SHAYS. See, that's, I think, one of the key points. You could make an assumption that 15 percent are not covered and you're now going to cover them, that it means it's going to be more expensive for everyone. And there are arguments that we might have to phase the legislation in to make sure that we get more doctors and nurses and so on because we're looking at potential shortages. But the key thing is that those that don't have insurance have extreme measures taken, and by extreme, more services, more costly services. And so we have this artificially inflated cost, and that clearly will have an impact if everyone is, in fact, covered.

Before we end, I'd love to make sure we just go right through the simple parts of this legislation. If I could just start by saying you've written a bill that says all Americans should have the same health care benefits and opportunities that Federal employees have. Federal employees, Members of Congress who are Federal employees, we pay 28 percent of the cost, the government pays 72 percent of the cost. We can get a more expensive plan or we can get a less expensive plan.

What your plan does is it puts everyone in a pool, one pool, 300 million people. It spreads out the cost. It gives all Americans at least, probably—we have now 18 choices, there will probably be more, and they have choice. Your plan says that you will never lose your insurance, ever. Your plan says it doesn't matter if you're an employer with five employees or one with a thousand. Your plan recognizes whether you're one person or 500, you're going to get covered and be part of the same pool.

And ultimately it means that we're going to do something that we've talked about for 50 years, and that is, this great country of ours, the United States of America, will have a universal plan, all Americans. And when we do it, I think you're going to find that we're going to say, what took us so long?

So it's just a real pleasure and an honor to work with you and your staff. And I look forward to our having some impact on this hugely important issue.

Mr. LANGEVIN. I thank the gentleman from Connecticut again for his words and his support in helping to craft this bipartisan universal health care bill.

Like you, I believe that the American people deserve the same kind of health care coverage as Members of Congress. And this is a bill that achieves that goal. It's something that is long overdue. It's something that is vitally important to every family across America, making sure that our families are taken care of, our businesses can stay competitive, and that we're offering something that is affordable, not only for the short term, but for the long term.

In closing, for individuals, the American Health Benefits Program offers choice, affordability, and portability. You can take the coverage with you if you change jobs. And on the side of how we provide this coverage, it's managed competition whereby insurers would now have to compete for enrollees based on benefits, efficiency, service and price; again, a good model for guaranteeing coverage, but making sure that it's affordable, with an important component of cost containment, making sure that we're looking at using the most innovative technologies out there, such as health IT records, and other things that would make sure that we're providing the most efficient and affordable care possible, but comprehensive care.

I think my friend has some other comments that you would like to make as we close?

Mr. SHAYS. We just have to insert different names here, but our web page is www.house.gov/shays. If someone goes to www.house.gov/shays, they will see this plan, as we've been talking about, on our main page. And I'm assuming that your web page would be www.house.gov/langevin. So they can go on either of our web pages and see the plan.

We would love for people to respond, tell us what they like about it, how they would benefit. And then we would like their help in contacting their Member of Congress and saying we would like you to support the Langevin bill, and get on it. We need to start getting cosponsors. We need to encourage Congress to have hearings on this legislation, begin that process.

So again, that's www.house.gov/langevin or www.house.gov/shays.

Mr. LANGEVIN. I thank my colleague. And I couldn't agree more. We want people to look at this plan, tell us what part of it they like, what they don't, what works, what doesn't, so that we can improve upon it. And certainly it's important for people to get educated because this is an issue that is clearly confronting our country. It is serious, it is challenging, but the time to solve it is now.

We're beginning the process. We invite the American people to be partners with us in this effort. I look forward to traveling the country with you as we talk to groups across the country and hopefully enlisting their support,

and ultimately the support of all the Members of this House and the Senate.

I look forward to the day where we can pass this bill in both Chambers and put it on the President's desk for the President's signature, and again, truly make a difference for the people that we serve. I think it's the right thing to do.

With that, I thank my colleague from Connecticut for his friendship, his valuable input and support on this bipartisan universal health care bill. And I also want to take a minute just to thank the Speaker for giving us time to discuss this very important issue.

Mr. SHAYS. If I could thank the Speaker as well. And thank you again and your staff, and my staff as well. It's a great opportunity to work on this legislation with you. Thank you.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you. I thank my staff as well. It is something that often gets overlooked, and I want to make sure that it's not because your staff and my staff have worked so closely on this, as well as the effort that you and I have put in. A lot of great work has come from this collaborative effort. And I thank you again for your support and your input.

TAXPAYER FREEDOM DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ELLSWORTH). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity tonight to be on this floor to speak on an issue that is near and dear to a lot of our hearts, and certainly a lot of our constituents' hearts, because tomorrow, April 23, is Taxpayer Freedom Day. It's an opportunity, for the first time this year, for taxpayers to start working for themselves and not simply for their government to pay taxes.

On April 15 we paid our taxes. On April 23, days beyond that, we come to a point where it is no longer an issue of working to pay just the taxes that each taxpayer needs to pay, but now we go on to do for ourselves what we can and should do that would allow us to do things for others that we would like to do as well, to benefit them, to meet needs that cannot simply be met by government, that can be met in special ways by ourselves.

This morning I had the privilege of being at a Big Brothers, Big Sisters breakfast fundraiser and hearing an outstanding speaker who was from business and industry, a leader in her own right with a major corporation in my district, and yet appealing to the fact that in the private sector, in charities and special functions, that there is a place for finding ways to do it better, quicker, faster, more efficiently and cheaper in the process, that there needs to be ways to collaborate in such a way that organizations that sometimes are redundant and overlap come together, if not to join forces as the same group, but to join forces in providing resources to each other that they don't have to duplicate. I said to the speaker afterwards, you know, that's, indeed, what government ought to be doing as well.

The only way we will do that, though, is by forcing ourselves to do things appropriately to allow the engine of our economy, that being the private sector, individual worker, entrepreneur, risk taker, business person, industry, to do for themselves only what they can do. And to do that, they certainly need to have the resources in place that will enable them to function successfully.

□ 2100

By having to work until April 23 just to pay taxes, that's not the right approach to accomplish that.

I recently was hooked on the HBO mini-series ''John Adams,'' a mini-series on the take-off on the book written by David McCullough, a noted historian on the Framers of our way of life here in the United States, our governmental system, the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and all that makes this country great. And I was again impressed by the character of the Framers of our system of government who saw freedom and liberty as the ultimate priority and saw that freedom and liberty ultimately flowing from individual property rights, individual rights to use resources that they had, and the opportunity ultimately in the Revolution to break away from the King and be able to control more of one's own largesse, limited or great as it might be.

I was impressed by the character of these gentlemen and those behind them, the men and women who supported them. I was impressed with the fact that they believed in people, in individuals, in their ability to make good decisions, their ability to choose well, their ability to spend their resources more wisely, more efficiently, and better, certainly, than a larger body known as the government.

They were also appreciative, Mr. Speaker, of the fact that these individuals, in greatness of their own hearts, could reach out and meet the medical needs, meet the security needs, meet the housing and care needs of individuals, and go beyond just themselves because they had ability to do that, if their government allowed them the liberty and freedom of choice because they had resources to do that as well.

I believe that our Framers never ever would have envisioned what we've come to today. They would have never envisioned that we, as individual taxpayers, would work until April 23, after paying taxes on April 15, just to pay the taxes that we paid on April 15. That is what they revolted for, that lack of liberty and choice in using their own resources.

Someone far more significant than I once said, ''The ability to tax is the ability to destroy.'' I can't talk about other States, and I'm delighted to have another Member with me on the floor tonight to discuss this issue as well, my friend and colleague and the freshman class president, of which I'm part, BILL SALI from Idaho. I can't talk, Congressman, about your State, but I can talk about Michigan, a great State, a great State of natural resources, surrounded on three sides by the Great Lakes if we count our upper peninsula, and I would not forget the Upers, surrounded on three and a half sides by the Great Lakes, with natural resources in the ground, growing on top of the ground, and with natural resources known as human resources that would be second to none. A State that has a history of producing things, of manufacturing, leading in manufacturing, developing the auto industry. The district of which I represent, right in the heart of it was where Henry Ford developed the whole process that has become the assembly line approach to the auto industry.

And yet this great State at this point in time sits at, sadly, the number one worst unemployment rate in the Nation. According to CEO Magazine last week, we rank the 49th worst business climate in the United States. We have people moving out of the State to find jobs. We have our friends in Indiana recruiting jobs from Michigan and doing it far more easily because of what we have done in our State. A State that truly is being destroyed by the ability to tax.

Most recently, the State legislature and our Governor went the wrong direction and frustrated any type of turnaround by increasing income tax, by putting a tax on services for the first time, and then putting a new business tax in place. And then having the cry come up from the taxpayer about the service tax, they rescinded that and put a surcharge on top of the business tax. And then we have the chutzpah in ads and otherwise that say that we are open for business.

I love my State. I love the people of my State. And I think we are Wolverines because we're tenacious, as de Tocqueville said. But we are frustrating the engine of the economy by the excessive taxation that we have put on.

I want to talk more about it, but I know Congressman SALI has much to say on this as well because, Congressman, you are known, first and foremost, as a man of principle, but a friend of the taxpayer, a man who came to Congress because of that agenda to provide less frustration and more opportunity for taxpayers. And I know that tomorrow you will rejoice that we have reached Taxpayer Freedom Day. But I know as well, my friend, that you wish it was far sooner than April 23.

I yield to my friend from Idaho.

Mr. SALI. I would like to thank the good gentleman for yielding to share a few thoughts.

Now that the April 15 deadline for filing tax returns has passed, I would actually like to ask everyone to consider a few things.

In 1900 most Americans only had to work until January 22 to fully meet all of their tax obligations to the Federal, State, and local governments. At that time the percentage of a worker's income needed to pay their taxes was just 6 percent. Imagine how much easier life would be today if we were done working for the government by the end of January.

And today, Tax Freedom Day, for most Americans doesn't come until tomorrow, April 23, as my good friend has pointed out. The deadline to fill out your tax forms, it comes and goes, and yet you're still working for the government, not for yourself, not for your business, not for your family. A third of your income goes to pay the taxes that you owe government.

Government has demonstrated an insatiable appetite to grow. In fact, Federal spending has more than tripled since 1965. Almost every week in Congress, we are asked to vote to create new programs and expand existing ones. Unless there is some urgent need, and there usually isn't, I vote ''no.'' Americans just can't afford it anymore. Congress is not being careful enough with our hard-earned tax dollars.

The majority recently passed a budget plan that would raise taxes by $683 billion in the next 5 years. That's the largest tax increase in American history. It requires higher taxes on married couples and small businesses. Their plan also includes no permanent fix for the alternative minimum tax that threatens unsuspecting middle income Americans to the tune of $70 billion in new taxes.

And on the horizon are even more tax increases if Congress fails to act. Higher income tax rates and higher capital gains tax rates will hit virtually everyone. Higher dividend taxes will hit every investor. The death tax will be back, as will the marriage tax penalty. The tax credit for every child will be cut in half.

I think Congress needs to recognize that Americans are taxed too much, and that is why I am a proud cosponsor of my friend Congressman WALBERG's Tax Increase Prevention Act of 2007, which would prevent this unprecedented tax increase. Congress must make a priority of finding ways to lower the tax burden on Americans instead of increasing it. If we don't, Tax Freedom Day will soon be delayed until May or June and we will reminisce about the ''good old days'' when our tax debts were paid in full by April. Well, let's hope and pray that that never happens.

As a kind of a bookend here on your comments earlier about what's happening in your State, I want to let you know, Congressman WALBERG, in the State of Idaho, we're actually going the other way. This year our legislature cut the tax on personal property for businesses. We had a tax that was imposed upon the personal property that businesses owned, and that's being phased out at least at the bottom, and there will be a floor so that if you have less than $100,000, I think was the number they settled on, worth of business property, you won't pay any property tax on that. It's not just for business, though. It's for individuals as well. And I will let you know that in Idaho we have been paying tax on the food that we buy, sales tax. This year the legislature passed a plan that would increase the deduction that's allowed against your State taxes. We call it the ''Grocery Tax Credit.'' It will increase that significantly and will reduce the taxes that people pay on food.

This is an important concept because I have kind of a principle that I use as a test here, and it's this: If you had a dollar to put wherever you thought it would do the most good and you could pick your favorite government program or anywhere in the private sector, where do you think it would do the most good? What the legislature in the State of Idaho has said is we think it will do the most good if we leave it in the hands of individuals. It comports with the Founding Fathers, as you were referencing earlier. Unfortunately, I don't understand the thinking of your State legislature where they are going the other direction.

And I guess this represents the battle that exists within this country today. Many people say we live in a divided country. And I think that's true. And it's divided, I think, into two main categories, the first one being those who believe in the vision of the Founding Fathers, that want a government that is there to serve the people, that we will have a government that allows people to have the freedom to determine what's going to happen in their own lives, allows them the freedom to use their personal property, the wealth that they create because of that personal property to do as they see fit.

And that's opposed to the other vision, which is one that says government must do more for people. We hear that phrase on this floor regularly or some iteration of it: Government must do more. That's not what the Founding Fathers thought. This vision that government needs to do more, that somehow if the government takes control of a problem, that it will be solved. How many times have we looked at a program and said why won't this thing work? And the answer, I think, is because generally government doesn't work. That was the whole point that the Founding Fathers brought to light.

And I think there are two places where we can see kind of the underlying principles that get at these two very different visions for our country. The Founding Fathers relied on that vision that was set out in the Declaration of Independence; that when they said these words, ''We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal'' and ''endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights'' and then later said ''Governments are instituted among men'' to protect those rights, that's one vision that says our rights come from God and it's government job to protect and respect those rights.

When Franklin Delano Roosevelt was, I think, addressing a press club here in Washington, DC, he described it quite differently. He described government as a contract where the people give power to the government and then the government dispenses benefits to the people. We call those things entitlements today. The vision of the Founding Fathers didn't rest at all on entitlements. They rested on rights. That vision that wants to see bigger government, government's securing a solution for every problem—

Mr. WALBERG. Reclaiming my time, if I could just pose a question on that, why would you say that government should not be flexible and mobile enough in order to deal with the changing of times? The right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness was the envisionment of the Framers of this wonderful country, this wonderful system of government as well. But as time went on and problems developed with a much larger country, what would you answer to the person who says we should be mobile and we should be flexible to meet the needs of people as it develops? I pose that to you knowing, I think, what your answer will be.

I yield to the gentleman.

□ 2115

Mr. SALI. Well, again, I thank the gentleman. It begins with your vision of the principles that underlie your vision for how you want government in this country to exist. If you have a vision that says the principles can change over time, essentially that the truth can be molded over time, that there is not absolute truth, then you don't have to have that vision of the Founding Fathers. Everything can change. Up can be down if you go far enough with that.

The principles over time that change will lead you to a point where you can move from that vision of the Founding Fathers, where they said that freedom is the thing that matters the most, where liberty is the thing that matters the most. That those rights that are given by God, it is the obligation of government, and the reason that government exists is to protect those rights. If you can change those principles, you can end up with a government that will take care of you and do everything for you, and your rights don't matter at that point. It's not the government's job to protect your rights that are God-given, it's government's job to give you those rights. Again, we call those entitlements.

At the end of the day, when I talk to people who live in my State, what they want is they want a future for their kids and their grand kids, where they

will have freedom and security and prosperity. Freedom comes when you make fewer laws. Prosperity comes when you take less money out of my pocket and give it to government, when Tax Freedom Day comes earlier in the year. Security comes when we have things like a strong national defense, when we allow our government to do those things that are needed to protect the security of the people who live here, and of our country itself.

When I talk to Idahoans, that is what they tell me that they want. That can't exist under a government where the people give power to the government, and the government distributes entitlements. Whoever became free living on entitlements? Whoever became prosperous living on entitlements? Who was ever secure living on entitlements that at any moment can be changed by the 535 Members that serve in Congress.

With that, I would yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. WALBERG. I appreciate those thoughts. I think you got to the nub of the question. It's not the fact that we don't want people to have those entitlements, we don't want them to achieve, we don't want them to have the opportunity that is afforded to all of us here in the United States. But it's based upon the fact, first and foremost, that there is liberty for us to choose, there's liberty for us to be responsible, there's liberty for us to fail, even. And that is quite a liberty, when you think about it. But when we succeed, the liberty to keep and benefit from what we have, and in order to not only care for ourselves, but then voluntarily assist others, and what a liberty that is.

It was said of the Athenians, I read one place, that they desired most freedom, security, and prosperity. And in the end, they lost all of them because they weren't willing to keep liberty first and foremost.

So I appreciate your comments tonight on this eve of Taxpayer Freedom Day, where government often times says why celebrate that? It's your duty to pay the taxes, it's your privilege to pay taxes. Well, I do thank God that I have the opportunity to live in America and I have the opportunity to earn and I have the opportunity to pay a certain level of tax to support a certain level of government that is needed. But I am frustrated that we have gone way beyond that and lost liberty in the process.

I'd like to turn over now some time to another good friend and colleague from Tennessee. DAVID DAVIS has been an outspoken friend of the taxpayer, and I think evidenced by his willingness to battle for the taxpayer and to continue to support prosperity that has blessed his State of Tennessee, and continues to, and sadly, has become home to a number of my Michiganders as well, who have gone for places of employment, and have benefited there. Congressman DAVIS, we hope to bring some of those back to Michigan.

In the meantime, I appreciate you taking the opportunity to talk about the issue of taxes, Tax Freedom Day, and your concerns with it.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Thank you, Mr. WALBERG. Thank you for your friendship, thank you for leadership. You're doing a great job. Thank you for your foresight and understanding that you can't tax and regulate yourself into prosperity. Never could, can't now, and never will. It's that simple.

I do come from the Volunteer State of Tennessee, and thankfully our Tax Freedom Day is not tomorrow. It was actually about 3 weeks ago. The reason it was 3 weeks ago in the Volunteer State is because we keep our taxes low, and people in Tennessee are actually spending their money on their families now and not sending it to the government. I am happy for that. I'd like to see that move even back up in the year a little more.

There are mothers and fathers all across east Tennessee. I have the opportunity to represent the beautiful mountains of northeast Tennessee and there are mothers and fathers sitting back home in east Tennessee and all across America. They sit around their kitchen table and they have to work out a budget. It's that simple.

I can remember my wife and I when we first started our family, having to do that, knowing how much money came in and how much money went out. We had to make some decisions. You can't spend more than you bring in. If you do, you get in a credit crunch. It's amazing that we have a Congress that sometimes don't sit around that kitchen table. That is exactly what we need to be doing.

Those families back in east Tennessee, they are having to choose between buying gasoline, and it costs over $50 to fill up their pickup truck, and buying their food. They're seeing the price of milk and bread go up. They are having to worry about paying their house payments or making sure they provide health care for their children. Those are the things that moms and dads across America are having to deal with and we have got people right here in Washington that think if we can just tax them a little bit more and spend a little bit more, we can take care of them.

Now where I grew up, I never came to the conclusion if government could just take care of us, things will be okay. Actually, the way we believe back in the mountains in east Tennessee, if government will just get out of our way and keep taxes and regulations low, we have actually been able to take care of ourselves pretty well. We have done it well in America for over 200 years, and why we think we need to change now, I just don't understand it.

Especially when you look at gas prices. My goodness, we passed an energy bill, so-called energy bill back in December on this House floor. It had new taxes, new regulations. You know what it didn't have? New energy. Now how you can call a bill an energy bill with no energy, I don't get it. Sometimes we just need some common sense. The American people get it. They understand that common sense.

And then you look at the budget. The two things that are facing Americans today are their family budget, their small business budget, and then that cost of energy. Those are the two things that are on peoples' minds across America. And you look at the Democrats' budget resolution, it fails the test of fiscal responsibility miserably. Instead of exercising fiscal restraint in lowering our taxes, the Democrat budget raises taxes by $683 billion over the course of the next 5 years. You heard me correctly: $683 billion.

Now I go home to my district every weekend, talk to a lot of people about a lot of issues, and I can tell you not once do I hear somebody say, If you could just raise the budget by $683 billion and take a little bit more of my tax dollars, my family is going to be better off. I don't hear, If you can just pass an energy bill with no energy and just put a little more tax on top of the energy and regulate them just a little bit more, then my family is going to be better off. That is not what the American people are looking for.

If you look at $683 billion, that is the largest tax increase in American history. It blows away the previous largest tax increase in history, which was passed in 1993, and that was over $443 billion. These are real tax hikes on real people.

Here are some staggering statistics for families living in northeast Tennessee. According to the Heritage Foundation, because of the Democrat budget, the average taxpayer in my district will be forced to pay an increase in $1,596. This will result in almost 2,000 jobs lost and a loss of $188 million in the First District's economy.

When I go home every weekend, I don't hear people say, Please raise my taxes so we can lose 2,000 jobs. We are actually seeing jobs move to Tennessee because we keep taxes low and keep regulations low. We are a good work State. We have a good work ethic. We certainly don't need the Federal Government to come in and help us to move us in the wrong direction.

By reimposing the marriage penalty tax, roughly 23 million taxpayers will see their taxes increase by $466 a year simply because they are married. Now in east Tennessee I don't go home every weekend and hear people say, I want you to raise my taxes just because I did what is biblically correct and I did the right thing.

We have choices. We have choices between a bigger economy or a bigger government. Taxing spending is not the road we need to head down. Ronald Reagan once said we don't have a trillion-dollar debt because we haven't taxed enough, we have a trillion-dollar

debt because we spend too much. That is common sense. That is the type of logic I hear when I go home to east Tennessee every weekend.

I think we as Members of Congress need to be more concerned about the budgets of mothers and fathers that they have to put together sitting around kitchen tables every month rather than growing the Federal budget and taking money from those very mothers and fathers that have to sit around the kitchen table every month.

Mr. WALBERG. That is common sense, I would submit to my good friend, isn't it?

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. That is the common sense that the American people are looking for.

Mr. WALBERG. And not status quo government.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. I hear a lot about hope and change. Really, the hope that people are looking for is just the hope that they can fill up their gas tank, the hope they can buy a gallon of milk, the hope they can buy a loaf of bread, the hope they don't have to spend all their money to take care of government, the hope that the government will let them go out and have that life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness that you were talking about earlier with our good friend, Mr. SALI from Idaho. That is the hope that the Americans are looking for, and the change they are looking for is just to get back to some common sense principles that worked over 200 years very well.

The Founding Fathers knew exactly what America needs. I look around this beautiful room and I look behind you and it actually says: In God We Trust. That is the type of change we need in America. We need to get back to some of those bedrock principles where we allow people to go out and pursue happiness.

You know, one of my favorite quotes is from Henry Ford. Henry Ford once said: If you think you can or you think you can't, you're right. The American people think they can. But they think they can't if they see government continue to get bigger and go bigger and bigger. We talk about taxing and spending. The reality is you spend, then you tax. So it should really say spending and taxing.

So we have got to keep the spending low, regulations low, taxes low, and the American people will go out and succeed. There's no better people anywhere in the world than right here in America. We have a great work ethic, we have great values, we have great morals, and we can take care of our families if we will just allow families to take care of families.

I would like to see if you have any comments.

Mr. WALBERG. Well, I have a lot of comments on that, but you said it so well. I appreciate the commonsense approach from a place where Davy Crockett roamed. I know that for a fact.

Again, we are talking about, Congressman DAVIS, we are talking liberty. We are talking about people who say I am not asking for anything except the opportunities. I am willing to be responsible. Generally speaking, I am willing to be held accountable. If I have the resources to use, the resources to spend, if I have the resources to save, to invest, and take the risks as necessary, if I have a job that I can produce those resources and move further, all it says is that I get more liberty and I get full use of it. If I am tied to April 23 as my time when I can say I finished paying taxes for this year to the Federal Government, now I can buy for myself, but I have got to start thinking about paying taxes next year April 15 as well, it ties me back.

None of us here on the floor aren't saying there is some tax base that is necessary. But what we are saying is we have gone way overboard. When you pointed out that if the majority proposal Democrat budget goes through and it's paid for as they intend with a $683 billion tax increase, which was passed, which does away with all of those tax relief issues that we had in 2001 and 2003, and have benefited this great country since that time, and then it adds other things to it like the marriage penalty back into it, does away with the ending of the AMT, alternative minimum tax, an onerous regressive tax that's strapping down more of our taxpayers than ever were assumed to be in it. If we put all that in place, we see less liberty, less freedom, more opportunity for abuse by government that doesn't know how to say no.

□ 2130

We end up frustrating ourselves again, don't we.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. I wanted to thank you for your leadership in introducing the Tax Increase Prevention Act. That is exactly the type of leadership we need. You are a great leader in your State. You are a great leader here on the floor of Congress and in America. Thank you for the opportunity to be a sponsor of this legislation. Together we will make some changes. God bless you.

Mr. WALBERG. I thank my friend. I only have to think about the fact that to the taxpayer in my State, that if this $680 billion tax increase goes through to pay for additional spending, deficit spending, in a budget that goes way beyond what is necessary, it means that on top of the burden that my State government has given to the hard-working taxpayers of Michigan, it gives a $3,000 per taxpayer increase on January 1, 2011, automatically. And, like you, my taxpayers that I meet with each weekend back in the district and in the 140 town hall type meetings I have held since January 4th, they are not saying, Mr. Congressman, please give us more taxes. Please give us more gas tax. Please raise the cost of our fuels. They are not saying that at all. They are saying, give us some freedom. Give us some liberty. Give us some relief. Let us do for ourselves what we can and should do, if we have the resources to do it. So you hit it right on the head.

I am privileged tonight as well to have another good friend and colleague, a member of our freshman class, an outstanding spokesperson for the taxpayer, for all things that people like John Adams and Jefferson and Washington and others spoke for when they framed all that we are pleased with in the United States, the Congresswoman from Minnesota, Michele Bachmann.

I am sure you have significant things to say about this great event we have tomorrow, Tax Freedom Day. But looking on the other side of the picture, why in the world we have to have that type of a day so late in the year?

I yield to the Congresswoman from Minnesota.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Congressman WALBERG, I want to thank you for your leadership during this special hour that we are enjoying this evening, talking to the American people about Tax Freedom Day. For a lot of people, they just can't believe it when they find out what the definition is.

I can't thank you enough for your leadership, not only for this special hour to talk about this very special day that is coming tomorrow with Tax Freedom Day eve, you might say this evening, but also with your leadership on the Tax Increase Prevention Act. I can't thank you enough for the work that you are doing, not just on behalf of the great constituents that you have in Michigan, but on behalf of all Americans, because the last thing Americans need right now is a tax increase. So we all thank you, and I thank you that I have had the opportunity to sign onto your legislation as well.

I couldn't help but think when Congressman SALI, our fellow freshman, was standing here earlier, he is a gentleman who fought for years in his own State assembly in Idaho for tax cuts and for fiscal sanity in Idaho. I think that is why the people in Idaho sent him here, because they knew they could trust BILL SALI. They could trust him to come to the floor and make the case for fiscal sanity in our country.

When we see tax increases around every corner, what was it, maybe 6 weeks ago we saw that the majority passed I believe it was a $683 billion tax increase for the budget, the largest tax increase in American history. I know I was flabbergasted when I saw that. Could it be possible that the Congress, in a time of a weakened economy, would come here to this Chamber, to this floor, and make a decision like that, that they would heap burden upon burden upon burden upon our constituents? I didn't think it would be possible.

Then when I listened to our fellow colleague, Congressman DAVID DAVIS from the State of Tennessee, who has said so well so many times about the average American family, who sits

around their kitchen table wondering are they going to be able to fill up their gas tank tomorrow morning when they get up and go to work? What about buying that gallon of milk? You go to the grocery store and you see that grocery store prices have gone up 64 percent since the beginning of the year.

Mr. WALBERG. If I could break in, didn't we hear at the beginning of this year, January 4th and prior to that, that if the majority party had control we would see the prices go down on gas and other things? Didn't we hear that? Have we seen that take place?

Mrs. BACHMANN. Well, I think the gentleman already knows the answer before he is asking the question, because it has been now hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of days since the majority said to the American people that they had a commonsense plan, they had a commonsense plan for reducing the price of gasoline. And as of today, the average price of gasoline across America is now a whopping $3.51.

I went with our family this weekend, we went to visit my father-in-law. It was his 84th birthday on Sunday. So we had my daughter's car, because it had the best gas mileage of any car that we had in our family, so we took her car. On the way back, we were in Baldwin, Wisconsin. We pulled up to a gas station. We put gas in. I could not believe it. It was $45 that I put in her little gas tank. Just a few years ago, that is what we spent on our big conversion van, our high-top conversion van. We are not alone. We are here as Members of Congress, but we hear this every day from people back home.

Let me give you just one example. You remember Art Linkletter and the show that he had years ago called House Party? He had a little segment called ''Kids Say the Darndest Things.'' I loved that segment.

I thought about that, because just recently I went to speak to Minnesota Pheasants Forever. It is a wonderful outdoor heritage group. I love to do that. That is one marvelous thing about being a Member of Congress, you can go to speak to great groups about things.

So I went to go speak to them. So I laid my notes, Congressman WALBERG, on the island in our kitchen, and it said ''Minnesota Pheasants Forever.'' Our little daughter Caroline came, and she picked up the notes and she said, ''Mom, what is Minnesota peasants forever?'' And I said, ''Well, Caroline, that would be the taxpayers of the State of Minnesota.''

The reason I say that is because tomorrow will be Tax Freedom Day, and in Minnesota, we are a little bit worse off. Our Tax Freedom Day won't occur until next Sunday.

What that means for people across America that might be listening to our repartee as we go back and forth tonight, Tax Freedom Day is the first day the American people stop working for Uncle Sam and start working for themselves. When you average all your Federal, State and local taxes together, the American taxpayer spends the first 113 days of the year as a Federal employee. Basically, that is what it comes down to. We are all Federal employees because we are working for the man. We are not working for ourselves.

Mr. WALBERG. And that is not the idea that the framers of our Constitution had in mind.

Mrs. BACHMANN. That is exactly right. You talked about Adams and Jefferson. We have the wonderful privilege, you and I and Congressman DAVIS, we have the wonderful privilege of being a part of that great cloud of witnesses that went before. They laid down the freedom.

Just think, it was a stamp tax that our founders were willing to lay down their lives for, their fortune, their sacred honor. They were willing to give up everything, just to throw off a stamp tax. My goodness, we do that just in the morning before we have even gotten to lunch yet around here. I can't believe the level of tax increases we have seen, can you?

Weren't you floored coming here as a new Member of Congress? I know if there is one thing that I have learned, Congressman WALBERG, in the time I have been in Congress, what has been now maybe 15 or 16 months, it has been how easy it is to spend somebody else's money. How easy it is. I know it isn't for me. It is really hard for me to spend my own money, and it is really hard for me to spend other people's money. I am not there yet. I haven't drank that Kool-Aid. But I am floored when I see how easy it is for Members of this body to spend other people's money. What is your reaction to that?

Mr. WALBERG. Well, it is very similar, if I might add, to see how large expenditures go out with so little oversight, and so much statement that, oh, well, it has to be done. If we don't do it, who will? And there are so many needs.

Well, there are. I mentioned earlier this evening I had the opportunity to attend a breakfast fundraiser for Boys and Girls Clubs in my area. They do a great work, and they are doing it on the basis of individual contributions, corporate entities that give not only financial support, but also human support as well.

The speaker, a president of a major industry in my area, she said it so eloquently, that it has come to a point in time where we have to find ways to reduce the cost by drawing together and not having redundancies that add cost, but become more efficient and more effective doing not only the same work, but more work for less cost as a result of the effort that is shared.

In government we have to get that concept. We have to understand that there is a person called the taxpayer, and a taxpayer that is not of unlimited resources, especially if we want to keep freedom around so that our children and grandchildren and great grandchildren will enjoy the benefits we have. If we are to pass it on to them in such a way that they will have equal or better freedoms than we had, we have to get on the stick.

So, absolutely, I have been floored since coming here that it is so easy to spend money in this Chamber without thought of actually who will generate those resources, and we frustrate the engine of the economy.

Mrs. BACHMANN. If the gentleman will yield further, that has been my impression as well. It strikes me to think that the serfs in the Middle Ages paid over about 25 percent of what they earned in the year to a nobleman. We could only wish, many of us, that 25 percent was our total tax burden. We haven't seen that in this country for many, many years. It is almost unthinkable that the serfs in the Middle Ages would be better off from a tax point of view than the average American taxpayer today. We are far beyond 25 percent of our income.

As a matter of fact, don't you agree, Congressman, that it would be I think very enlightening for most Americans to learn that they spend more on their tax bill, they pay more on their tax bill, than they do for food, clothing and housing combined?

The average American works 108 days to pay for their food, their clothing and their housing. They work on average 113 days to pay their tax bill. Just think of that. Those are necessities that Americans can't do without. You have to have food, you have to have clothing, you have to have housing. But the one thing that will happen is that you will go to jail if you don't pay your tax bill.

I am a former Federal tax litigation attorney. I tried a lot of cases in Federal Tax Court. The reason why people showed up when it was time for their court date was because if they didn't show up, the judgment may be that they go to jail. Because in this country if you don't pay your tax bill, you have the potential of going to jail. So that is the first bill you have to pay, because if you don't pay it, you may end up in a place you don't want to be, so a lot of sacrifices have to be made by a lot of people.

I will tell you one thing, and I think you would agree as well, Congressman. You have probably seen a lot of waste, a lot of fraud and a lot of abuse in legislation that has gone through this body. We will be taking up legislation tomorrow that is trying to squeeze waste, fraud and abuse out of the Medicare system.

Don't you agree, Congressman, that is something that the American people have been looking for for a long time? I know you are a reformer. I know you came here because you did not want to be part of the status quo. You are an outsider, and you came here because you wanted to change the way that Washington does business. I feel the

same way. I know that Congressman SALI shares that opinion and Congressman DAVIS shares that opinion. We are not about continuing the levels of waste, fraud and abuse.

Mr. WALBERG. It can't continue. If it does, we have lost it all. Jefferson said the government that governs best governs least. And it wasn't simply govern least to allow people less opportunity, but it is to give them more freedom; to give them more of their own resources to make better decisions for themselves, making better decisions on basic needs.

That was the genius of what we had here in a capitalistic system, a system that said we will offer freedom and opportunity. You make your choices, you determine your lifestyle. And, in turn, as we also encouraged through supplementing what went on in the home, what went on in the school, what went on in the church and making it a common theme that we are our brother's keeper, but it is with our own resources, with our own choices, the opportunity that we have to expand and meet needs of others.

Ultimately in doing that ourselves, we are also blessed. We also felt the warmth of saying I lifted someone up that was falling, and I also know that there are plenty of others who would come to my aid, individuals who are family members, who are community members right from my own area that would reach out, and, at last resort, if necessary, maybe there was something in the government.

But it is reversed now, where the first place we go is the government. Of course, that causes the ramp-up of costs that now results in the largest tax increase in the history of the United States being offered and passed just recently.

□ 2145

And, if allowed to be completed and my legislation isn't put in place to make permanent those tax relief issues of 2001 and 2003, we will have a $683 billion tax increase over the next 5 years, and on January 1, 2011, the taxpayers in my State and across the country, generally speaking, will pay upwards of $3,000 more the day after December 31 than the day before. That is not the way to go. We have to stop it. The taxpayers out there, whether they be in Tennessee, Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, or Indiana, are all saying the same thing; they just want us to hear an answer.

Mrs. BACHMANN. That is right. And if the gentleman would yield, I would absolutely agree. And that is why it is important and imperative, I believe, that we shout it from the rooftops. This is not a hypothetical we are talking about, this is reality that we are talking about tonight, the fact that these tax cuts right now are on automatic pilot. They are going away. They are the engines that have propelled the growth in this economy, both with the cuts on capital gains and on dividends, that has provided the jobs, the growth, the unparalleled level of prosperity that we have enjoyed. It is all going away if we don't stop that.

That is why I thank you again, Congressman WALBERG, for being willing to sponsor this important legislation. It is why I am on it, it is why Congressman DAVIS and so many of our colleagues are on it. As a matter of fact, there is a piece of legislation that I believe you signed on recently as well as I signed on; this is one that our colleague JOHN CAMPBELL came up with, and that is putting a spending ceiling on what Congress can spend. Because I think that Congressman DAVIS said it very well earlier: We have a spending problem. That is what leads to our taxing program. And JOHN CAMPBELL came forward, the Congressman from California, and he said, let's put a ceiling on government spending, and let's make sure it is not more than one-fifth of GDP.

What is GDP? Gross domestic product. Well, what is that? That is basically everything that we produce in this country every year. Just think of that. Government eats up one-fifth, almost one-fifth, 20 percent, of everything that is produced in this country just to run the machine. Sometimes I think that government is just a big money eating machine, and we are all the people that are working to stoke that furnace to keep it going. But this legislation that we signed says that there is a limit. We are going to draw a line in the sand, and no more. And that is what your great legislation does as well, the Tax Increase Prevention Act, it draws a line in the sand and it says we are going to keep this prosperity going, and the way we do it is by cutting those taxes.

Mr. WALBERG. And I appreciate that fact. There are good pieces of legislation, whether it be setting a cap on spending or setting a moratorium on earmarks, and looking at a way to get control of that so we are not wasting dollars. These are common-sense issues that taxpayers generally look at and say, what is the problem? This ought to be just common sense, to have a line item veto, to have a balanced budget amendment. All of the above speaks to the common taxpayer, which I am one and you are one and all of us who have spoken tonight are one. It speaks common sense to the taxpayer saying, this just ought to be the way it is, because we are willing to do for ourselves if you leave us the opportunity.

So I certainly appreciate your passion on this issue and the fact of your awareness of tax issues having been a tax attorney and understanding that, while there are taxes necessary, that we have gone way beyond the limit. We have gone beyond reality.

There is little debate right now on Capitol Hill about whether the American economy is struggling. That is just there. We recognize the fact. And some of us who are in States that are struggling even more so, like my own wonderful State of Michigan that has all of the resources available, and yet we are frustrated. The real conversation in living rooms across the country is about how to get our economy moving again.

Essentially, this debate boils down to one question, the question that I was asked in conversations in town hall meetings that I have in various ways, and that question is: Should America promote economic growth and job creation, or raise taxes to destroy jobs and economic opportunity?

Right now, Republicans, our colleagues are asking all House Members to decide which side of this debate they are on by forcing votes on a bill that I introduced that we have referred to tonight, that is the Tax Increase Prevention Act, House Resolution 2734. House Members have to choose whether they support Speaker PELOSI's budget proposal that in total is the largest single tax increase ever promoted in the history of the United States, a $3,000 per taxpayer tax increase overnight.

With so much money already being wasted in Washington, I believe it is wrong for Congress to try and take more money out of the paychecks of hard-working Americans. My bill, to make more point about it, would make permanent the tax relief of 2001 and 2003, and stop tax increases on raising children, earning money, saving and investing, operating a small business, adopting a child, paying off college loans, and even dying.

Consider the implications of the Democrat's proposed $680 billion tax increase in 2011 alone. Marginal income tax rates will increase by anywhere from 9 percent to 50 percent, with the lowest tax bracket receiving the highest tax rate increase. That is not talking to the rich and wealthy, that is talking again of the lowest tax bracket. Capital gains rates for individuals will increase dramatically, punishing saving and investing. Restoration of the marriage penalty tax, that is a punitive tax that thankfully we got rid of, and now they want to put it back. The child tax credit will be slashed 50 percent, raising taxes by $500 per child. The death tax will go from 0 percent to 55 percent.

I have always held the conviction that the American citizen should keep as much as their hard-earned money as possible. With Americans facing rising health care costs, high energy prices, and economic instability, the last thing families need is to be hit with a massive job killing tax increase.

Every week in my home State, I meet with Michiganders, as I did this weekend, who are working harder than ever before and at best breaking even. Michigan families and businesses have, unfortunately, felt firsthand the powerful negative impact of tax increases. These working families' wages have been slashed by higher taxes on income and on small businesses. During our Governor Jennifer Granholm's administration, Michigan has experienced job

losses, declining personal incomes, diminishing home values, and the highest unemployment rate in the Nation, sadly. By proposing a massive $3,000 per taxpayer tax increase, Democrats in this Congress are following the same failed blueprint that has threatened to ditch our economy in Michigan and destroy Michigan jobs.

Instead of working on tax hikes that ultimately make America less competitive, I believe Congress should stop this $683 billion money grab from taxpayers. Congress could better spend time eliminating ineffective and inefficient government programs, making health care more affordable, and passing any energy legislation to move America toward energy independence and reduce energy prices.

The debate over whether to raise taxes is just the beginning of a long battle over America's economic future. By making tax relief permanent and continuing to grow our economy, Congress can go an awful long way to restore the trust of the American people, build a better and brighter future for our country, and avoid the economic suffering now felt in States like Michigan.

It doesn't have to be that way. And I certainly appreciate the fact that there are those of us who are fighting for taxpayers' interests. I know the 13 of us who came in as freshmen came in for a reason. That is the smallest freshman class in the history of the United States, probably. But we came in resolute that the taxpayer was to be served; that taxpayers were paying too much, not too little; that we were regulating too much, not too little; that we were destroying the incentives of private hard-working citizens, risk takers, entrepreneurs to do the job that they can only do. Government doesn't do that. And that is why 13 of us came while others lost and weren't sent back because of overspending and overtaxing.

And it is sure a privilege to join with the both of you here in the room tonight. I guess I would offer opportunity for any final comments before we are forced to close this interesting conversation this evening, hopefully of benefit to the taxpayers out there on this eve of tax freedom day. Hopefully it has been interesting, but more than that, it has been something that would stir them into action as well to say: Enough is enough, and we stand for freedom.

Mrs. BACHMANN. If the gentleman would yield. I want to thank you for your wonderful words and your eloquent statement and your deep passion that you have stated. And you are again to be commended for the Tax Increase Prevention Act. Thank you for doing that, and for putting this evening together to let the American taxpayer know that tomorrow is a day of freedom, but it is also a day of reality to realize, finally, that we are going to be able to take off our ball and chain and be unshackled and finally breathe again and be able to work for ourselves.

But when Americans go to the pump tomorrow, I just want to remind them, Congressman WALBERG, when they go to the pump and they put $1 worth of gasoline in their vehicle, over 60 cents of that dollar will go to taxes in one form or another. Just think about that. We hear a lot about oil companies and about profits, but when you have $1 of gasoline, over 60 cents of that dollar goes to taxes. That is something we really need to think about here in Congress. We need to consider it. It is just a microcosm, just a picture of the heavy tax burden every day that impacts the average American. I can't thank you enough for putting this together this evening.

Mr. WALBERG. I thank my friend from Minnesota, and appreciate your passion as well in fighting this good fight.

I would yield now to the Congressman from Tennessee, DAVID DAVIS.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Thank you, Mr. WALBERG. Thank you for your leadership. I would like to thank Mrs. BACHMANN for your interest in this, your hard work here in Congress.

I really appreciate your leadership in this and understanding that you can't tax and spend and regulate yourself into prosperity. The American people understand it. It is a simple principle. We need to start thinking outside the Beltway, not inside the Beltway. And if we do those things with lower taxes, lower spending, we will actually start to produce energy in America again, start to use American oil and American coal, safe nuclear, those things to bring down the energy costs. If we bring those taxes, those regulations down, then the American people will go out there and have those jobs. The best economic stimulus package in America is a good paycheck. And thank you for your leadership.

Mr. WALBERG. I thank the gentleman from Tennessee. And, again, I trust this has been helpful for taxpayers to hear at least some that will defend. And there are others in this Congress. It has been said that we are red state, blue state, totally divided in this country. When you get to the common-sense issues, the virtues that people see as common sense, we are not divided, we are not red state, blue state. We are a common based unified people that believe in common sense things.

Jonathan Witherspoon, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, said: A Republic once equally poised must either preserve its virtue or lose its liberty. Virtue of hard work, the virtue of risk taking and entrepreneurial spirit, the virtue of accountability, of responsibility, of honesty, of integrity, those are virtues. And they go all into what makes our country great and what our taxpayers generally commit themselves to on a common base. And when we break down those virtues and give those away, we destroy ourselves and our liberty in the process.

So let's fight together to stop this $683 billion tax grab that will frustrate this country and take it back as opposed to pressing it forward. I thank my colleagues for spending this time with me tonight.

I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. ABERCROMBIE (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today.

Mr. CARNEY (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of Pennsylvania primary.

Mr. DOGGETT (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today and the balance of the week on account of medical reasons.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today.

Mr. CLYBURN (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for April 23 on account of two funerals in his district.

Mr. CAMPBELL of California (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today and the balance of the week on account of personal reasons.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of personal reasons.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of attending the funeral of a soldier who died in Operation Enduring Freedom.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. KAPTUR) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCDERMOTT, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. SOLIS, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today and April 23 and 24.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, for 5 minutes, today and April 23 and 24.

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, April 29.

Mrs. BLACKBURN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah, for 5 minutes, April 29.

Mr. ROYCE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, April 29.

Mr. DENT, for 5 minutes, April 23.

Mr. GINGREY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania, for 5 minutes, today.

ENROLLED BILL AND JOINT RESOLUTION SIGNED

Ms. Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill and joint resolution of the House of the following titles, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker.

H.R. 1119. An act to amend title 36, United States Code, to revise the congressional charter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart of the United States of America, Incorporated, to authorize associate membership in the corporation for the spouse and siblings of a recipient of the Purple Heart medal.

H.J. Res. 70. Joint resolution congratulating the Army Reserve on its centennial, which will be formally celebrated on April 23, 2008, and commemorating the historic contributions of its veterans and continuing contributions of its soldiers to the vital national security interests and homeland defense missions of the United States.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House reports that on April 17, 2008 she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill.

H.R. 5813. To amend Public Law 110–196 to provide for a temporary extension of programs authorized by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 beyond April 18, 2008.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 58 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, April 23, 2008, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

6169. A letter from the Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule—Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement; Export-Controlled Information and Technology (DFARS Case 2004-D010) (RIN: 0750–AF13) received March 12, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Armed Services.

6170. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule—Suspension of Community Eligibility [Docket No. FEMA–8017] received April 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

6171. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule—Final Flood Elevation Determinations—received April 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

6172. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule—Final Flood Elevation Determinations—received April 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

6173. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule—Suspension of Community Eligibility [Docket No. FEMA–8019] received April 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

6174. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule—Determination of Nonattainment and Reclassification of the Imperial County, 8-hour Ozone Nonattainment Area [EPA–R09–2007–OAR–1109; FRL–8528–4] received February 11, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

6175. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule—Approval of Louisiana's Petition to Relax the Summer Gasoline Volatility Standard for the Grant Parish Area [EPA–HQ–OAR–2007–0002; FRL–8529–2] received February 11, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

6176. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Department's final rule—Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans for Air Quality Planning Purposes; Georgia: Early Progress Plan for the Atlanta 8-Hour Ozone Nonattainment Area [EPA–R04–OAR–2007–0150–200711(a); FRL–8528–8] received February 11, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

6177. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule—Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Massachusetts; Certification of Tunnel Ventilation Systems in the Metropolitan Boston Air Pollution Control District. [EPA-R01-OAR-2006-0641; A-1-FRL-8527-5] received February 11, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

6178. A letter from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting copies of international agreements, other than treaties, entered into by the United States, pursuant to 1 U.S.C. 112b; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

6179. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Energy, transmitting a copy of proposed legislation to authorize the Secretary of Energy to accept funds, contributed pursuant to agreements entered into with foreign governments, international organizations, or others, for use in Russia's plutonium disposition program; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

6180. A letter from the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, Department of State, transmitting a report on the Oversight Information Pertaining to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, pursuant to Public Law 110-97; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

6181. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Department of State, transmitting the Department's report on Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance for Fiscal Year 2009; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

6182. A letter from the Acting Chairman, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting the Commission's Federal Employee Antidiscrimination Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act) Report for FY 2007; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

6183. A letter from the Chairman, Federal Housing Finance Board, transmitting the Board's FY 2007 Annual Report required by Section 203 of the Notification and Federal Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002, Pub. L. 107-174; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

6184. A letter from the Administrator, General Services Administration, transmitting the Administration's Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 Report for fiscal year 2007; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

6185. A letter from the President, Inter-American Foundation, transmitting the Foundation's FY 2007 Annual Report required by Section 203 of the Notification and Federal Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002, Pub. L. 107-174; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

6186. A letter from the Director, Equal Employment Opportunity, National Endowment for the Humanities, transmitting the Endowment's FY 2007 Annual Report required by Section 203 of the Notification and Federal Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002, Pub. L. 107-174; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

6187. A letter from the Director, National Science Foundation, transmitting the Foundation's annual report for FY 2007 prepared in accordance with Title II of the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act), Public Law 107-174; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

6188. A letter from the Chairman, Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission, transmitting the Commission's Fiscal Year 2007 annual report prepared in accordance with Section 203 of the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002, Pub. L. 107-174; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

6189. A letter from the Associate Special Counsel/EEO Director, Office of Special Counsel, transmitting the Office's FY 2007 Annual Report pursuant to Section 203, Title II of the No Fear Act, Pub. L. 107-174; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

6190. A letter from the Acting Director Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule—Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Catcher Vessels Less Than 60 ft (18.3 m) LOA Using Pot or Hook-and-Line Gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No. 071106673-8011-02] (RIN: 0648-XG58) received April 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

6191. A letter from the Director Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Vessels in the Amendment 80 Limited Access Fishery in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No. 071106673-8011-02] (RIN: 0648-XG70) received April 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

6192. A letter from the Director Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule—Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Atka Mackerel in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area

[Docket No. 071106673-8011-02] (RIN: 0648-XG52) received April 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

6193. A letter from the Director Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule—Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Snapper/Grouper Resources of the South Atlantic; Trip Limit Reduction [Docket No. 060525140-6221-02] (RIN: 0648-XG34) received April 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

6194. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards; Cargo Carrying Capacity [DOT Docket No. NHTSA-2007-0040] (RIN: 2127-AJ57) received February 20, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6195. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule—Information Returns by Donees Relating to Qualified Intellectual Property Contributions [TD 9392] (RIN: 1545-BE11) received April 9, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6196. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule—Section 807.—Rules for Certain Reserves (Rev. Rul. 2008-19) received March 20, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6197. A letter from the Deputy Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting notification that the Department intends to use ''no year'' IMET funds to provide Center for Civil Military Relations/Defense Institute for International Legal Studies (CCMR/DIILS) training in Sri Lanka; jointly to the Committees on Foreign Affairs and Appropriations.

6198. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Diversion Control, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's final rule — Authorized Sources of Narcotic Raw Materials [Docket No. DEA-282F] (RIN: 1117-AB03) received February 28, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); jointly to the Committees on the Judiciary and Energy and Commerce.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. RAHALL: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 900. A bill to provide for a federally sanctioned self-determination process for the people of Puerto Rico; with an amendment (Rept. 110–597). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. RAHALL: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 5151. A bill to designate as wilderness additional National Forest System lands in the Monongahela National Forest in the State of West Virginia, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 110–598, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Mr. WAXMAN: Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. H.R. 5712. A bill to require disclosure by Federal contractors of certain violations relating to the award or performance of Federal contracts; with an amendment (Rept. 110–599). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. DINGELL: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 5613. A bill to extend certain moratoria and impose additional moratoria on certain Medicaid regulations through April 1, 2009; with amendments (Rept. 110–600). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California: Committee on Education and Labor. H.R. 5522. A bill to require the Secretary of Labor to issue interim and final occupational safety and health standards regarding worker exposure to combustible dust, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 110–601). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania: Committee on House Administration. H.R. 3032. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to permit candidates for election for Federal office to designate an individual who will be authorized to disburse funds of the authorized campaign committees of the candidate in the event of the death of the candidate; with an amendment (Rept. 110—602). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. WELCH: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 1125. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5819) to amend the Small Business Act to improve the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program and the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) program, and for other purposes (Rept. 110–603). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. ARCURI: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 1126. Resolution providing for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2830) to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal year 2008, and for other purposes (Rept. 110–604). Referred to the House Calendar.

DISCHARGE OF COMMITTEE

[Omitted from the Record of April 18, 2008]

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XII the Committee on Science and Technology discharged from further consideration. H.R. 5819 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

[The following action occurred on April 22, 2008]

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII the Committee on Agriculture discharged from further consideration. H.R. 5151 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. MICHAUD:

H.R. 5856. A bill to authorize major medical facility projects and major medical facility leases for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2009, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BACHUS (for himself, Mrs. BIGGERT, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. BOEHNER, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. PUTNAM, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. MCCOTTER, Ms. PRYCE of Ohio, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. LATOURETTE, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. CASTLE, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Mr. HELLER, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. LUCAS, Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky, Mr. BONNER, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. LATHAM, Mr. TURNER, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, Mr. GALLEGLY, Mr. KIRK, Mr. TERRY, Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. BOOZMAN, and Mr. CARTER):

H.R. 5857. A bill to establish licensing and registration requirements for residential mortgage originators, improve mortgage disclosures, create an Office of Housing Counseling, to provide incentives to facilitate loan modifications, reform the regulation of the Government Sponsored Enterprises, modernize the Federal Housing Administration, improve home ownership for veterans, reform appraisal activities, and combat mortgage fraud, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committees on Armed Services, Veterans' Affairs, and the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BOSWELL:

H.R. 5858. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide incentives for carbon sequestration; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ACKERMAN:

H.R. 5859. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to provide that State grants under that Act shall be given to States having consumer beverage container deposit laws on a priority basis, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. ACKERMAN:

H.R. 5860. A bill to increase the average fuel economy of light-duty vehicles in the Federal fleet; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. CASTOR:

H.R. 5861. A bill to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to prohibit oil and gas preleasing, leasing, and related activities in certain areas of the Outer Continental Shelf off the coast of Florida, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. CHABOT:

H.R. 5862. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to require the reading of crime victims' rights in open court in criminal cases; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CUELLAR:

H.R. 5863. A bill to authorize additional resources to identify and eliminate illicit sources of firearms smuggled into Mexico for use by violent drug trafficking organizations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. FORTUÑO:

H.R. 5864. A bill to designate Puerto Mosquito Bay National Marine Sanctuary in Puerto Rico, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. GOODE (for himself and Mrs. MUSGRAVE):

H.R. 5865. A bill to amend chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code, to require a court adjudication before certain veterans may be denied the right to possess a firearm, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GRAVES:

H.R. 5866. A bill to expedite the increased supply and availability of energy to our Nation; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. MATSUI:

H.R. 5867. A bill to establish a grant program to assist retail power providers with

the establishment and operation of energy conservation programs using targeted residential tree-planting, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. PEARCE (for himself, Mr. KUHL of New York, Mr. NUNES, and Mr. MILLER of Florida):

H.R. 5868. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for the retention of members of the Armed Forces on active service or in an active status who would otherwise be retired or separated for a combat-related disability, but who are still medically able to perform noncombat-related military occupational specialties or duties; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. RODRIGUEZ (for himself, Mr. ENGEL, and Mr. REYES):

H.R. 5869. A bill to authorize additional resources to identify and eliminate illicit sources of firearms smuggled into Mexico for use by violent drug trafficking organizations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. RYAN of Ohio (for himself and Mr. WILSON of Ohio):

H.R. 5870. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to make grants to assist local governments with vacant housing problems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. SALAZAR:

H.R. 5871. A bill to designate the Ludlow Massacre National Historic Landmark in the State of Colorado, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. SESSIONS (for himself, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. AKIN, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. ARCURI, Mr. BACA, Mrs. BACHMANN, Mr. BACHUS, Mr. BAIRD, Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. BARTON of Texas, Mr. BECERRA, Mrs. BIGGERT, Mr. BILBRAY, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BOEHNER, Mr. BONNER, Mrs. BONO MACK, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BOREN, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. BOYD of Florida, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. BROUN of Georgia, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. BUYER, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. CAMP of Michigan, Mr. CAMPBELL of California, Mr. CANNON, Mr. CANTOR, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. CARNAHAN, Mr. CASTLE, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. CHANDLER, Mr. CLAY, Mr. COBLE, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. COOPER, Mr. COSTA, Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. CROWLEY, Mrs. CUBIN, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky, Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. DEAL of Georgia, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. DENT, Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. DICKS, Mr. DINGELL, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. DOOLITTLE, Mr. DOYLE, Mrs. DRAKE, Mr. DREIER, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. ELLSWORTH, Mrs. EMERSON, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mr. EVERETT, Ms. FALLIN, Mr. FEENEY, Mr. FERGUSON, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. FORBES, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. FORTUÑO, Mr. FOSSELLA, Mr. FOSTER, Ms. FOXX, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. GALLEGLY, Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, Mr. GERLACH, Mr. GILCHREST, Mr. GINGREY, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. GOODE, Mr. GOODLATTE, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. GRAVES, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. HALL of Texas, Mr. HAYES, Mr. HELLER, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. HERGER, Mr. HILL, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOBSON, Mr. HOEKSTRA, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. HOLT, Mr. HULSHOF, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. ISSA, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. JEFFERSON, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. KANJORSKI, Mr. KELLER, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. KIND, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. KINGSTON, Mr. KIRK, Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Mr. KNOLLENBERG, Mr. KUHL of New York, Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. LAMPSON, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. LATHAM, Mr. LATOURETTE, Mr. LATTA, Mr. LEWIS of California, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky, Mr. LINDER, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. LUCAS, Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. MACK, Mr. MAHONEY of Florida, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. MATHESON, Mr. MCCARTHY of California, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. MCCRERY, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. MCHUGH, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mr. MCKEON, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. MICA, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. MOLLOHAN, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mr. MORAN of Kansas, Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. MURTHA, Mrs. MUSGRAVE, Mrs. MYRICK, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. NUNES, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. OLVER, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. PASTOR, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. PENCE, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. PETRI, Mr. PICKERING, Mr. PITTS, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. POE, Mr. POMEROY, Mr. PORTER, Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Ms. PRYCE of Ohio, Mr. PUTNAM, Mr. RADANOVICH, Mr. RAMSTAD, Mr. REGULA, Mr. REHBERG, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. RENZI, Mr. REYES, Mr. REYNOLDS, Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. ROSKAM, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. ROSS, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. SALI, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. SCHIFF, Mrs. SCHMIDT, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. SHADEGG, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. SHULER, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. SKELTON, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. SNYDER, Mr. SOUDER, Mr. SPRATT, Mr. STEARNS, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. SULLIVAN, Ms. SUTTON, Mr. TANCREDO, Mr. TAYLOR, Mr. TERRY, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. TIAHRT, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. TURNER, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. UPTON, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. WALDEN of Oregon, Mr. WALSH of New York, Mr. WALZ of Minnesota, Mr. WAMP, Mr. WEINER, Mr. WELCH of Vermont, Mr. WELDON of Florida, Mr. WELLER, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. WHITFIELD of Kentucky, Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. WITTMAN of Virginia, Mr. WOLF, Mr. WU, Mr. WYNN, Mr. YOUNG of Florida, and Mr. YOUNG of Alaska):

H.R. 5872. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the centennial of the Boy Scouts of America, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. STARK (for himself, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Ms. WOOLSEY, and Mrs. MALONEY of New York):

H.R. 5873. A bill to provide for a paid family and medical leave insurance program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Labor, and in addition to the Committees on Oversight and Government Reform, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BURGESS (for himself and Mr. CARNAHAN):

H.R. 5874. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the establishment of a permanent Multiple Sclerosis National Surveillance System; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. SCHAKOWSKY (for herself and Mr. ROSKAM):

H. Res. 1124. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that there should be established a National Brain Tumor Awareness Month, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. ACKERMAN (for himself, Mr. PENCE, Mr. FORTUÑO, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. ENGEL, and Mr. POE):

H. Res. 1127. A resolution condemning the endemic restrictions on freedom of the press and media and public expression in the Middle East and the concurrent and widespread presence of anti-Semitic material, Holocaust denial, and incitement to violence in the Arab media and press; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee (for himself, Mr. GORDON, and Mr. SHULER):

H. Res. 1128. A resolution expressing support of the goals and ideals of National Carriage Driving Month; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. FORBES (for himself, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, and Mr. HAYES):

H. Res. 1129. A resolution regarding the readiness of the Armed Forces of the United States, and the implications for national security; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. GRAVES (for himself, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. SNYDER, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. KIND, Mr. ROSS, Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mr. POE, Mr. ENGEL, Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas, Mr. KIRK, Mr. GORDON, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. WOLF, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr.

MARSHALL, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. HONDA, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. HAYES, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. DREIER, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. RAMSTAD, Mr. WALSH of New York, Mr. HALL of Texas, Mr. GINGREY, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. FERGUSON, Mr. PORTER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. WU, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. ARCURI, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BARROW, Mr. WHITFIELD of Kentucky, Mr. CLAY, Mr. CARTER, Ms. SUTTON, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. PERLMUTTER, and Mr. KUHL of New York):

H. Res. 1130. A resolution recognizing the roles and contributions of America's teachers to building and enhancing our Nation's civic, cultural, and economic well being; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mrs. JONES of Ohio (for herself, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. BAIRD, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. BERRY, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. CARSON, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. ELLSWORTH, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. HARE, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. INSLEE, Mr. ISRAEL, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Ms. LEE, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MARSHALL, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. MICHAUD, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut, Mr. OLVER, Mr. POMEROY, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. WATSON, Mr. WATT, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. WALZ of Minnesota, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. BARROW, Mr. COOPER, Ms. KILPATRICK, and Mr. SHERMAN):

H. Res. 1131. A resolution recognizing that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention observes the month of April as National STD Awareness Month and urging the House of Representatives to focus greater attention on activities related to the prevention of STDs and screening and treatment for STDs; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. POE:

H. Res. 1132. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of Peace Officers Memorial Day; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. WALZ of Minnesota (for himself, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. RAMSTAD, Mrs. BACHMANN, Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Mr. KIND, Mr. OBEY, Mr. ALTMIRE, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. TOWNS):

H. Res. 1133. A resolution congratulating Winona State University on winning the 2008 Division II men's basketball championships; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 82: Mr. TIAHRT.
H.R. 154: Mr. PAUL and Mr. HINCHEY.
H.R. 211: Mr. CLEAVER.
H.R. 241: Mr. CALVERT and Mr. JONES of North Carolina.
H.R. 248: Mr. ROYCE.
H.R. 383: Mr. LAMBORN.
H.R. 579: Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. PICKERING, Mr. GILCHREST, and Mr. PALLONE.
H.R. 594: Mr. INSLEE and Mr. KAGEN.
H.R. 623: Mr. ELLISON.
H.R. 643: Mr. SIRES, Mr. RENZI, and Mr. NUNES.
H.R. 676: Mr. CLEAVER.
H.R. 685: Mr. BOOZMAN.
H.R. 728: Mr. HIGGINS.
H.R. 758: Mr. WITTMAN of Virginia.
H.R. 818: Mr. ELLISON.
H.R. 840: Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN
H.R. 895: Mr. ROGERS of Michigan.
H.R. 943: Mr. MILLER of North Carolina.
H.R. 971: Mr. KINGSTON.
H.R. 989: Mr. LATTA.
H.R. 1038: Ms. SPEIER.
H.R. 1050: Mr. STARK.
H.R. 1078: Mr. MILLER of North Carolina.
H.R. 1194: Mrs. BLACKBURN.
H.R. 1228: Mr. HINOJOSA.
H.R. 1264: Mr. ALEXANDER.
H.R. 1283: Mrs. EMERSON.
H.R. 1295: Mr. PEARCE.
H.R. 1306: Mr. CRENSHAW and Mr. CONAWAY.
H.R. 1338: Ms. SPEIER.
H.R. 1343: Mr. POE.
H.R. 1353: Mr. JEFFERSON.
H.R. 1392: Mr. SHAYS and Mr. BURTON of Indiana.
H.R. 1409: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1420: Mr. BOUCHER.
H.R. 1422: Mrs. BACHMANN and Mr. KIRK.
H.R. 1475: Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, and Mr. LEWIS of Georgia.
H.R. 1553: Mr. WILSON of Ohio and Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1589: Mr. GOHMERT and Mr. PICKERING.
H.R. 1606: Mr. FILNER.
H.R. 1609: Mr. CARNEY and Mr. FEENEY.
H.R. 1616: Mr. HONDA.
H.R. 1621: Mr. ALTMIRE.
H.R. 1665: Mr. WU.
H.R. 1673: Mr. OLVER.
H.R. 1746: Mr. CROWLEY.
H.R. 1776: Mr. LEWIS of Georgia and Ms. SPEIER.
H.R. 1783: Mr. CONYERS and Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.
H.R. 1926: Ms. SCHWARTZ and Ms. LEE.
H.R. 1927: Mr. BERMAN and Mr. GOHMERT.
H.R. 1930: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.
H.R. 1932: Mr. PLATTS and Mrs. BLACKBURN.
H.R. 1967: Mr. WELLER and Mr. LATTA.
H.R. 1983: Mr. SMITH of Nebraska and Mr. SALAZAR.
H.R. 2021: Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. WEINER, and Mr. UDALL of Colorado.
H.R. 2032: Ms. SUTTON, Mr. FARR, and Mr. DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 2049: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 2131: Mr. SCHIFF.
H.R. 2159: Mr. PASTOR.
H.R. 2169: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut.
H.R. 2188: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas and Mr. LEWIS of Georgia.
H.R. 2267: Mr. BOYD of Florida and Mr. MURTHA.
H.R. 2303: Mr. SCOTT of Georgia.
H.R. 2352: Mr. CONYERS.
H.R. 2371: Mr. ARCURI, Mr. BOUCHER, Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas, and Mr. RUSH.
H.R. 2449: Mr. BRALEY of Iowa.
H.R. 2472: Mr. FILNER.
H.R. 2552: Ms. BERKLEY and Mr. ELLISON.
H.R. 2593: Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. Speier, and Mr. GUTIERREZ.
H.R. 2676: Ms. BALDWIN and Mr. PASTOR.
H.R. 2686: Mr. MARSHALL.
H.R. 2694: Mr. SHULER.
H.R. 2744: Mr. HALL of New York and Mr. COSTA.
H.R. 2914: Mrs. BONO Mack.
H.R. 2933: Mr. BOREN.
H.R. 3010: Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Mr. PASTOR, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. TSONGAS, and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.
H.R. 3089: Mr. MCCOTTER, Ms. FOXX, Mrs. EMERSON, and Mr. BOUSTANY.
H.R. 3142: Mr. CARTER.
H.R. 3175: Mr. CARNAHAN.
H.R. 3197: Mr. CARNAHAN.
H.R. 3257: Mr. CUMMINGS.
H.R. 3289: Mr. PASTOR, Mr. SARBANES, and Mr. DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 3334: Mr. TOWNS.
H.R. 3434: Mrs. BACHMANN.
H.R. 3480: Mr. MAHONEY of Florida, Mrs. MYRICK, and Mr. Latta.
H.R. 3544: Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. ARCURI, Ms. CASTOR, Mr. BARROW, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Mr. MELANCON, Mr. ROSS, and Mr. DONNELLY.
H.R. 3652: Mr. MILLER of North Carolina and Mr. CAPUANO.
H.R. 3658: Mr. POE.
H.R. 3660: Mr. DONNELLY.
H.R. 3665: Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida.
H.R. 3750: Mr. COHEN and Mr. RUSH.
H.R. 3769: Mr. ABERCROMBIE.
H.R. 3846: Mr. Carson.
H.R. 3852: Mr. PICKERING.
H.R. 3861: Mr. WALBERG.
H.R. 3865: Mr. ROTHMAN.
H.R. 3870: Mr. MCGOVERN and Mr. STARK.
H.R. 3892: Mr. STARK and Mr. HIGGINS.
H.R. 3926: Mr. ALTMIRE.
H.R. 3934: Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida and Mr. TURNER.
H.R. 3955: Mr. SCHIFF.
H.R. 3968: Mr. CAMP of Michigan.
H.R. 3981: Mr. GUTIERREZ.
H.R. 4010: Mr. TAYLOR and Mr. PICKERING.
H.R. 4055: Mr. GUTIERREZ.
H.R. 4061: Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky.
H.R. 4105: Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. PASTOR, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. RICHARDSON, Mr. LEWIS of California, and Ms. BALDWIN.
H.R. 4122: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 4123: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 4133: Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. COLE of Oklahoma, Mr. WITTMAN of Virginia, and Mr. CARTER.
H.R. 4173: Mr. CLAY.
H.R. 4204: Mr. STARK.
H.R. 4265: Mr. HONDA.
H.R. 4279: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.
H.R. 4318: Mr. JONES of North Carolina and Mr. SHAYS.
H.R. 4335: Mr. FARR.
H.R. 4344: Mr. ALEXANDER and Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.
H.R. 4449: Mr. PASTOR.
H.R. 4453: Mr. HARE.
H.R. 4461: Mr. PASTOR.
H.R. 4544: Mr. MILLER of North Carolina and Mr. KANJORSKI.
H.R. 4790: Ms. RICHARDSON.
H.R. 4836: Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. ROSS, and Mr. MCINTYRE.
H.R. 4900: Mr. HASTINGS of Washington and Mr. PICKERING.
H.R. 4990: Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, and Mr. BERMAN.
H.R. 5130: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 5131: Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. ALEXANDER, and Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida.
H.R. 5155: Mr. HALL of New York.
H.R. 5176: Mr. DOGGETT.
H.R. 5223: Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD and Mr. HINOJOSA.
H.R. 5265: Mr. DONNELLY, Ms. HARMAN, and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.
H.R. 5404: Ms. ESHOO.
H.R. 5440: Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida.
H.R. 5442: Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.

H.R. 5443: Mr. HONDA, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. MEEKS of New York, and Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 5444: Ms. SOLIS.
H.R. 5447: Ms. DELAURO, Mr. MCINTYRE, Ms. WATSON, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, and Mr. HARE.
H.R. 5466: Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 5481: Mr. GOHMERT and Mr. PICKERING.
H.R. 5509: Mr. BROWN of South Carolina.
H.R. 5522: Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. WU, Mr. ALTMIRE, and Mr. SESTAK.
H.R. 5532: Mr. SESSIONS.
H.R. 5534: Mr. CARNAHAN, Mr. NADLER, Mr. ROTHMAN, and Mr. CASTLE.
H.R. 5545: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.
H.R. 5546: Mr. TIBERI, Mr. PORTER, Mr. CARNAHAN, and Mr. MARSHALL.
H.R. 5549: Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas.
H.R. 5554: Ms. BERKLEY.
H.R. 5561: Mr. MILLER of North Carolina.
H.R. 5571: Mr. MORAN of Kansas.
H.R. 5590: Mr. FILNER, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mr. GERLACH.
H.R. 5594: Mr. JONES of North Carolina.
H.R. 5595: Mr. SARBANES, Mr. REGULA, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, and Mr. BILIRAKIS.
H.R. 5611: Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut.
H.R. 5613: Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. WELLER, Mr. CARNAHAN, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. PORTER, Mr. GRAVES, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. KANJORSKI, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. ANDREWS, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, and Mr. ETHERIDGE.
H.R. 5627: Mr. MARSHALL and Mr. BACA.
H.R. 5637: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania and Mr. GUTIERREZ.
H.R. 5638: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.
H.R. 5640: Mr. WOLF.
H.R. 5646: Mr. GOODLATTE.
H.R. 5668: Ms. SPEIER.
H.R. 5669: Ms. CASTOR, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. EMANUEL, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. SHAYS, and Mr. MORAN of Virginia.
H.R. 5672: Mr. PICKERING and Mrs. CHRISTENSEN.
H.R. 5673: Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. POE, Mr. LATTA, Mr. BONNER, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mrs. MYRICK, and Mr. BOOZMAN.
H.R. 5676: Mr. YOUNG of Florida.
H.R. 5683: Mr. FATTAH, Mr. WYNN, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, and Mrs. CHRISTENSEN.
H.R. 5684: Mr. BOYD of Florida.
H.R. 5686: Mr. GUTIERREZ and Mr. TURNER.
H.R. 5695: Mr. BURTON of Indiana.
H.R. 5699: Mr. REHBERG.
H.R. 5712: Mr. SHERMAN.
H.R. 5721: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.
H.R. 5731: Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California and Mr. ALEXANDER.
H.R. 5734: Mr. PEARCE, Mr. FORTUÑO, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, and Ms. BORDALLO.
H.R. 5737: Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. LATTA, and Mr. LOBIONDO.
H.R. 5740: Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. ROSS, Ms. FOXX, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. BARROW, Mr. BILBRAY, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. FARR, and Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 5746: Mr. CARNAHAN.
H.R. 5749: Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. DAVIS of Alabama, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Ms. WATSON, and Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 5753: Mr. TOWNS.
H.R. 5755: Mr. WAXMAN.
H.R. 5759: Mr. MILLER of Florida and Mr. ALEXANDER.
H.R. 5770: Mr. SCHIFF.
H.R. 5771: Mr. DENT.
H.R. 5775: Mr. HENSARLING and Mr. COLE of Oklahoma.
H.R. 5784: Mr. BURTON of Indiana.
H.R. 5787: Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. TOWNS, and Mr. WAXMAN.
H.R. 5791: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. ISRAEL, and Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 5793: Ms. SPEIER and Mr. JORDAN.
H.R. 5796: Mr. TOWNS.
H.R. 5802: Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. CLAY, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Ms. NORTON, Mr. WATT, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Ms. SOLIS, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. REYES, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. WEINER, Ms. WATSON, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. TOWNS, and Ms. WATERS.
H.R. 5804: Mr. SHERMAN.
H.R. 5806: Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. TOWNS, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, and Mr. MORAN of Virginia.
H.R. 5815: Mr. SHERMAN.
H.R. 5825: Mr. TIAHRT, Mr. YOUNG of Florida, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. ALTMIRE, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mrs. BACHMANN, Mr. FORTUÑO, Mr. KAGEN, Mr. TANCREDO, and Mr. ELLSWORTH.
H.R. 5830: Mr. MAHONEY of Florida, Mr. CARSON, and Mr. CROWLEY.
H.R. 5833: Ms. HOOLEY and Mr. DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 5838: Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California.
H.R. 5841: Mr. MARSHALL and Mr. BOREN.
H.R. 5844: Mrs. TAUSCHER.
H.R. 5845: Ms. SPEIER.
H. J. Res. 23: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.
H. J. Res. 67: Mr. CONAWAY.
H. J. Res. 80: Ms. LEE.
H. Con. Res. 28: Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS and Mr. KENNEDY.
H. Con. Res. 81: Mr. DOGGETT.
H. Con. Res. 134: Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. RANGEL, and Mr. MCGOVERN.
H. Con. Res. 257: Mr. ROGERS of Alabama and Mr. MILLER of Florida.
H. Con. Res. 294: Mr. COHEN.
H. Con. Res. 299: Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. HINOJOSA, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. BOUCHER, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. TIBERI.
H. Con. Res. 305: Mr. LIPINSKI and Ms. SHEA-PORTER.
H. Con. Res. 318: Ms. SPEIER.
H. Con. Res. 320: Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. BORDALLO, and Mr. TURNER.
H. Con. Res. 322: Mrs. SCHMIDT, Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. FILNER, Mr. ELLSWORTH, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. WITTMAN of Virginia, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. WU, Mr. LATHAM, Mr. WELCH of Vermont, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin, Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. CARNAHAN, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. CARNEY, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. RADANOVICH, Mrs. BACHMANN, Mr. HASTINGS of Washington, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. WOLF, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. BOYD of Florida, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mr. WALZ of Minnesota, Mrs. BONO MACK, Mr. CANNON, Mr. WAMP, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Ms. CASTOR, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Mr. LATTA, Ms. GRANGER, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. CLEAVER, Ms. SOLIS, Mr. WALDEN of Oregon, Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. FARR, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. LEWIS of California, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. FEENEY, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. DOOLITTLE, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. HERGER, Mr. STEARNS, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. KING of Iowa, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. ALLEN, and Mr. THOMPSON of California.
H. Con. Res. 323: Mr. MARKEY.
H. Con. Res. 329: Mr. DENT and Mr. MCHENRY.
H. Res. 68: Mr. ELLISON.
H. Res. 76: Mr. CLEAVER.
H. Res. 102: Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut.
H. Res. 111: Mr. SIMPSON and Mr. LATTA.
H. Res. 127: Ms. BORDALLO.
H. Res. 353: Mr. MITCHELL, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, and Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.
H. Res. 620: Mrs. MUSGRAVE and Mr. ROYCE.
H. Res. 653: Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. WATSON, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, and Ms. LEE.
H. Res. 679: Mr. ARCURI and Ms. SLAUGHTER.
H. Res. 863: Mr. MCCOTTER.
H. Res. 888: Mr. LUCAS.
H. Res. 891: Mr. Fortuño and Mr. LAMPSON.
H. Res. 925: Mr. TURNER and Ms. SPEIER.
H. Res. 937: Mr. MARSHALL, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, Mr. MILLER of Florida, and Mrs. SCHMIDT.
H. Res. 987: Mr. ACKERMAN.
H. Res. 1019: Mrs. CHRISTENSEN.
H. Res. 1058: Mr. CUELLAR.
H. Res. 1069: Mr. WOLF, Mr. CANTOR, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. SHAYS, and Mr. HONDA.
H. Res. 1079: Mr. KUHL of New York, Mrs. DRAKE, Mr. KANJORSKI, Mr. BILBRAY, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. DREIER, and Mr. MCCARTHY of California.
H. Res. 1086: Mr. SNYDER, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. SPRATT, Mr. BOSWELL, Ms. LEE, Mr. HINOJOSA, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. WU, Mr. KLEIN of Florida, Mr. SKELTON, Mr. ROSS, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, Mr. SHAYS, Ms. SUTTON, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. WYNN, Mr. PASTOR, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Ms. WATSON, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, and Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD.
H. Res. 1091: Mr. BOUCHER and Mrs. DRAKE.
H. Res. 1109: Ms. SUTTON and Mr. MILLER of North Carolina.
H. Res. 1110: Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. BOYD of Florida, Mr. SIRES, Mr. KNOLLENBERG, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. HAYES, Mr. HOEKSTRA, Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. WELLER, Ms. GIFFORDS, Mrs. BACHMANN, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. MITCHELL, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. HONDA, and Mr. LINDER.
H. Res. 1111: Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. GIFFORDS, and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.
H. Res. 1112: Ms. BORDALLO.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, OR LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Under clause 9 of rule XXI, lists or statements on congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits were submitted as follows:

OFFERED BY JAMES L. OBERSTAR

The amendment to be offered by Mr. OBERSTAR or his designee to the Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 2830, the ''Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2007'', does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(d), 9(e), or 9(f) of rule XXI.

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BILL NELSON, a Senator from the State of Florida.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, our Father, You are our light and our salvation. Whom then shall we fear? We thank You for all of life's positive things. Help us to see them and to count them and to remember them, that our lives may flow in ceaseless praise.

Use our lawmakers. Control their minds that all of their thoughts will be guided by You. Shine Your light upon their path and strengthen them to walk according to Your will. Give them a sense of duty that they may leave nothing that they ought to do undone. Teach them to follow You, and lead them on the right path.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BILL NELSON led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 22, 2008.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BILL NELSON, a Senator from the State of Florida, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. NELSON of Florida thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of Senator MCCONNELL, we will be in a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 1 hour, with the time controlled by the leaders or their designees and Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each. The Republicans will control the first half, and the majority will control the final half.

Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1315, the veterans' benefits bill. We are going to have that vote at noon today.

Today, the Senate will recess from 12:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m., as we do every Tuesday, for our weekly caucus luncheons, and we will also recess from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. for the unveiling of former Majority Leader Daschle's portrait.

Tomorrow, the Senate will be in recess from 11 a.m. to 12 noon for a Gold Medal ceremony in the Rotunda honoring Dr. DeBakey and from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. tomorrow for a Senators-only briefing by Admiral Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. That will take place in S–407.

VETERANS' BENEFITS ENHANCEMENT ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, yesterday I spoke on the floor indicating that I thought it was really too bad that the Republicans held up another bill, this one dealing with veterans health benefits. We have hundreds of thousands of veterans returning from Iraq. Twenty percent of them have severe problems as a result of post-traumatic stress syndrome, many of them caused by those terrifying explosions over there that occur all the time, around them and to them. We have 150,000 men and women now in Iraq serving our country bravely.

The veterans' benefits legislation was reported out of the committee 9 months ago, and we have been trying to get permission from the Republicans to bring it to the floor, and they have refused. It expands eligibility for traumatic injury insurance; extends eligibility for adapted housing for those who have been severely burned; it increases benefits for veterans pursuing apprenticeships or on-job training programs; and 80 other provisions that are very important. But we learned yesterday from the ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee that the reason they have held this bill up and intend to continue holding it up is because this legislation restores veteran status to Filipino veterans who served under U.S. command during World War II.

This legislation is important. While our Republican friends are stalling for time, trying to maintain the status quo, our veterans—men and women, young and old—who served with distinction continue to wait for the support, care, and services they have earned. They are waiting for Congress to act.

As I have indicated, the Republicans have followed the lead of the ranking member of the committee and opposed the provision in the bill that provides pensions to Filipino veterans who fought by our side in World War II.

I say what I said yesterday: If you know nothing else about World War II, watch Tom Hanks' documentary of

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Printed on recycled paper.

World War II, what went on in the Philippines. We depended on the Filipinos. They fought bravely, valiantly by our side. So I find this opposition baffling. With threats emerging from every corner of our complex world, America needs allies. We need to set an example that we stick by our friends. We should be sending a message to the world that we need you to stand with us. We cannot fight the global war on terror alone.

What kind of example does this set? What better message can we send to our global allies than we will honor the past service of men and women born on foreign soil who rallied around our flag and fought for our freedom?

My friend from North Carolina, distinguished Senator BURR, argues we should not be providing pensions for Filipino soldiers who served our country but who were not injured during World War II.

World War II was a different war from the war we are fighting now. In Iraq, everybody is fair game to the terrorists. It was not that way in World War II. Only 20 percent—one in five—served on front lines taking enemy fire. The other 80 percent provided support services and engaged in intelligence gathering. They transported and maintained equipment. They took care of the ammunition. They repaired combat vehicles. They were in the Quartermaster Corps making sure the uniforms and other equipment the soldiers needed got to where they were supposed to go. They cooked the food. They acted, as we know, as nurses. It cannot be argued those 80 percent were any less a part of that war. It cannot be argued that sacrifices do not count. It cannot be argued that these men and women are less entitled to the benefits of veteran status. This legislation would give them $300 a month. Don't they deserve that? Doesn't this country owe that to them?

I urge my Republican colleagues to break away from this foolishness and join us in providing a pension for the brave Filipino troops who stood with us, fought with us, and helped us win World War II. I hope the Republicans will support all components of this legislation. It is good legislation, but it should be known that I have reached out to Republicans on this issue on many occasions, with no takers.

As I said to Senator BURR on the floor yesterday, if he does not like this provision, why hold up the whole bill? We should have been on the bill Thursday night, Friday, Monday. It is Tuesday now. Offer an amendment. Say: I don't believe these people who were not front-line soldiers deserve anything. They are old. The average age is 84. They do not deserve anything. Let's strike that with an amendment.

Let's have a debate on it and vote on it, not hold up the whole bill. But that is what is being done. If a majority of the Senators vote for the amendment, the bill will be altered. That is how the legislative process is supposed to work. We should not have to invoke cloture on a motion to proceed simply to begin to legislate.

So I hope cloture will be invoked and, if it is, we do not have to use the postcloture 30 hours to sit around and do nothing. We should be able to start legislating on this bill. I am not even asking Republicans to support the bill at this point, just support allowing us to move to the bill so we can start legislating.

This is an example; almost 70 times in a little over a year, the Republicans have stopped us from moving legislation. Is it any wonder that today it is reported ''Bush's disapproval rating worst of any president in 70 years''? That is no surprise. Holding up legislation, even legislation with which they agree, hold us up, just to stall, to maintain the status quo. What is the status quo giving the American people? Nothing. And that is how they feel about President Bush. That is why we see this headline in today's paper.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

VETERANS' BENEFITS ENHANCEMENT ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, of course the bill is not being held up, and of course the majority does not need permission from us to take up the bill. Today we will, in fact, vote on the cloture motion to proceed to the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act of 2007. It is my belief cloture should be invoked and will be invoked.

There is actually much to commend in this bill. It will improve the lives of our veterans by supplementing the level of assistance for disabled veterans for the purchase of automobiles and increasing assistance for those veterans who need to modify their homes to accommodate their disabilities.

I wish to recognize with admiration my colleague from North Carolina, the ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and thank him for his hard work on this bill. Yesterday, he made clear that he will offer a substitute that seeks to correct the one glaring flaw contained within S. 1315, a provision that would divert $221 million over the next 10 years to create a special pension for Filipino veterans of the Second World War living in the Philippines who have no service-connected disability. That money, of course, would be diverted at the expense of American veterans living in America. The Senator from North Carolina spoke eloquently about the fact that diverting these resources from our veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan represents misplaced priorities, and I agree with him.

My expectation is the Senate will have a healthy debate concerning this provision. Senators on my side of the aisle will have ample opportunity to amend the committee bill so we can have a bill that will pass with bipartisan support and be signed into law. It is my hope we can work together on this bill and produce another strong, bipartisan achievement for our veterans. I expect that to happen certainly in the very near future. We will have an opportunity in our conference at noon to discuss going forward, but we anticipate moving forward with the Burr amendment early in the process. I think we are going to be able to get a strong, bipartisan accomplishment in the very near future in the Senate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I want the world to hear what the Republican leader just said: We are not holding up the bill. That simply is without any basis of fact. That is why we are going to vote at noon on being able to move to the bill. In years past, it was done automatically. Rarely did we have to file a motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed. It is Orwellian, what my friend just said. Of course they are holding up the bill. And we have asked other times to move to this legislation, as far back as November 2007.

So, Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that following morning business, we move to the bill, we vitiate the need to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed, that all germane amendments would be in order—and certainly what Senator BURR said he wanted to do would be totally germane. It is a striking provision.

I ask unanimous consent that following morning business, the Senate move to the bill that is before the Senate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I really think any observers will find all of this quite silly, really. We are going to discuss the measure at noon. Many in my conference are not on the Veterans' Affairs Committee and have not had an opportunity to hear from Senator BURR about this issue. Yesterday was a no-vote day. Members were not around. We are going to discuss the matter at noon.

I already indicated to my good friend the majority leader that we are going to be able to move forward, I think, with dispatch on this issue, and we are going to get a bipartisan accomplishment. No amount of trying to steamroll the minority into giving up its rights is going to work. Maybe that is one of the reasons this Congress has a lower approval than the President of the United States. My good friend the majority leader never misses an opportunity to talk about the President not being very popular. Every time in the future the majority leader wants to bring up the President's popularity, I will bring up the popularity of this new

majority which makes the President's popularity look really good.

What I think the American people would like for us to do is to quit this silly sparring back and forth, and finger-pointing, and legislate. We have a very good chance to begin this week with a strong bipartisan accomplishment, and I think we ought to get about it. As soon as lunch is out of the way and Senator BURR has had an opportunity to brief our Members on this measure, with which many of them are not yet familiar, we will sit down, as we always do, the majority leader and I, with smiles on our faces, and figure out how to go forward. And I think we will be able to get there in the relatively near future.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. MCCONNELL. I object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. So that it is very clear, the statement of the Republican leader was untrue. He can talk all he wants about finger-pointing. All we want to do is legislate. That is what we want to do. And it would seem to me, as this legislation has been pending for 9 months—reported out of the committee 9 months ago—that since we are dealing with the veterans, the people for whom we want to do the very best we can because they deserve it, that in 9 months the Republican caucus would have been able to focus on veterans and health care and not wait until today, April 22—or whatever today is, 9 months after the legislation was reported out of the committee—to determine what is in the legislation. Senators need to be briefed on how to take care of our soldiers medically? I think that is without any foundation.

I will also say this, Mr. President: I feel very good about my job as a Senator. I am very grateful to the people of Nevada for allowing me to serve in the Senate. But I am never going to come to the floor and denigrate this body, as my Republican friend obviously wants to do. The rating of the Senate, over the history of the country, the rating of the Congress is tied to the President. If the President is unpopular, the Congress is unpopular, the city council is unpopular. If you have a popular President, everybody feels good about the Government itself. So I will never come to the Senate or anyplace else and denigrate my job and those of my 99 colleagues. I think we have important responsibilities, and I think we should live up to those in a manner that is best in keeping with the Senate tradition.

I came here this morning to state a fact. I want to legislate on behalf of the Senate on legislation dealing with the medical care of our veterans, and it is being held up by the Republicans. That is clear. That is what I said, and I stand on that.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. At the risk of prolonging this a little longer, I don't think, at the end of the day, anybody in the country is going to believe we are obstructing this bill. This is a serious effort to legislate. Senator BURR has taken it very seriously. He has an important amendment to be offered, which will be offered later today. The Senate will have an opportunity to consider it.

Look, the way you get things done in the Senate is on a bipartisan basis, and the rules around here give the minority an opportunity to be involved. This is not the House of Representatives. I wish we had been able to get more done last year, but one of the reasons we didn't is because we had 34 Iraq votes. Some of my friends in the other conference told me last year that any week they weren't voting on Iraq was a bad week. We spent an awful lot of time on sense-of-the-Senate resolutions on Iraq last year.

Floor time is at a premium in the Senate, as the majority leader used to say repeatedly when he was the leader of the Democratic Party and in the minority. The Senate is not the House. Things don't move as speedily. Most observers of the Senate understand that. By Senate standards, this bill is going to move forward in relatively rapid order after the rights of the minority to offer amendments have been protected.

So I don't know what this little back and forth this morning is all about because I do think we are going to have an opportunity to get a bipartisan accomplishment in the very near future.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. What this is all about is the truth. That is what it is all about.

Senator DURBIN, assistant majority leader, on November 8, 2007, said this: This is Senator DURBIN speaking, Mr. President.

> I ask unanimous consent that the Senate may proceed to the consideration of calendar No. 336, S. 1315, at any time determined by the majority leader following consultation with the Republican leader; that when the bill is considered, the only amendments in order to the bill, other than the committee-reported amendment, be first-degree amendments that are relevant to the subject matter of the bill and that they be subject to relevant second-degree amendments; that upon disposition of all amendments, the committee-reported substitute amendment, as amended, if amended, be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read the third time, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The Presiding Officer asked: Is there objection?

The Republican side: Objection.

The objections to this go back months. So what is this about today, the Republican leader says? It is about the truth. It is about the Republicans stalling everything that comes up—everything—and then to have the audacity to come to the floor and say: We are not stalling anything.

We should have been on this bill a long time ago.

And during the period of time the Republican leader complains we were having numerous Iraq votes, we were trying to change the course in Iraq, Mr. President, because it needed changing, and it still does.

We have been here I don't know how many seconds this morning, but every second we have been here we have been spending $5,000 in Iraq—$5,000 a second or $12 billion a month. During the period of time he complains about our offering amendments related to the war in Iraq, our troops were getting killed at the rate of more than one a day. Tens of thousands have been wounded. A third of them are missing eyes. Their minds aren't good. One-fifth of them have brain problems—injuries to their brains. We have more than 3,000 double amputees and thousands and thousands of single amputees. We have an obligation to the American people to talk about the war in Iraq, and we are going to continue to do that.

So we don't apologize to anyone for the votes we took on Iraq. The first many years of this war—a 6-year war now—the war went along with the Republican leadership in the House and the Senate doing nothing about the war except patting the President on the back. We have not done that. We have been critical of the operation of the war in Iraq, but we have done everything we can to support our troops. We were the first to call for more body armor for the troops. We were the first to call for up-arming the vehicles so they wouldn't be killed as easily in those vehicles. We have done everything we can to support the troops. We have done everything we can to change the course of the war in Iraq.

The President has not allowed us to change the course of the war in Iraq, and we are here today for the truth. The truth is, we are trying to legislate for the American people and change the status quo. The Republicans want to maintain the status quo.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, with all due respect to my good friend, the majority leader, the American people are giving Congress such low approval ratings principally because of the rhetoric and the tone and the feeling that we can't accomplish anything.

I don't know why, on this particular Tuesday morning, at about the time we are going to go to a bill on which we could achieve an important bipartisan accomplishment, we want to engage in this kind of rancorous debate. We will have plenty of highly contentious issues to come before us. That is the nature of the legislative process. And certainly we have spirited debates in the Senate. But on the measure that we are about to go to later today, I think there will be very little difference of opinion, and at the end of the process we are likely to have a bipartisan accomplishment that we can all feel good about.

So I would hope we could improve our moods and attitudes this week as

we go forward and see if we can't accomplish something important for the veterans of our country.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business for up to 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

IRAQ SUPPLEMENTAL

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I, too, am confident that we will pass important legislation on a bipartisan basis this week to provide the benefits to veterans that they have earned and that they deserve, but we can't forget the unfinished business of this Congress last December when we wrapped up the fiscal year 2008 appropriations bill and we left a balance of more than $100 billion that the Department of Defense said it needed to fight the global war on terror.

In other words, it is important to support our veterans, but I would submit it is equally important to make sure we are supporting our troops currently in the fight and in harm's way, and this Congress has an unfortunate record of delaying that and playing political games with that money. It is time that should end.

In the Army alone, this shortfall amounts to $66 billion. As a result, the Army will run out of pay for Active Duty and National Guard soldiers in June unless Congress acts promptly.

At the same time, funding for extra vehicle armor, hospital construction and renovation, and new service vehicles will dry up. Our troops will not have the resources they need to carry out their mission unless we act soon to pass this emergency supplemental appropriation.

Provincial reconstruction teams will also run out of funding. These teams are an integral part of our strategy in Iraq and go a long way to fostering growth, freedom, and good ties to the Iraqi communities and ensuring we win the battle for hearts and minds as well.

We have also appropriated less than half of what the military leaders in Iraq tell us they need for the Commanders' Emergency Response Program, or CERP, which is essential for continued bottom-up reconciliation efforts. We should not hold this funding hostage to political gains, and it should not become a vessel for porkbarrel projects and bloated spending.

We should pass a clean emergency supplemental funding bill for our troops as soon as we possibly can, and I hope immediately following the passage of this legislation we are on today.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT JUSTIN YOUNG

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it is my honor to speak today about a young man whose courage and strength have earned him the Silver Star, and more importantly the respect and admiration of all those who have heard about his story.

SSG Justin Young was born in Mesquite, TX, just outside of Dallas. The son of John Young and Kathy Sutton, Justin was a swimmer for the Boerne High School Greyhounds. After graduating, he told his dad he needed to find his priorities and his focus in life. That level of maturity and insight is rare for someone so young, and it already tells you something about the character of Justin Young.

Justin decided what was best for him was to join the U.S. Army. I doubt anyone in this body would deny that the U.S. Army has a long and storied history of taking young men and women with strong character and transforming them into proven soldiers, and also into courageous leaders as well. Justin was no exception.

Just over a year ago, on March 24, Justin and the rest of the 82nd Airborne were conducting operations in Diyala Province in Iraq. As the squad leader with C Troop, Justin led his nine-soldier squad into a compound in Qubbah, Iraq, a location where known enemy fighters were entrenched.

Once inside the compound, Justin and his troops quickly encountered armed insurgents. Justin disarmed and detained a guard before pressing on. In the confusion of the initial entry, Sergeant Young was ambushed by a hidden fighter about 10 feet away. The enemy fired his AK–47 assault rifle, hitting Justin's rifle three times and striking Justin once in the chest. The force of these shots sprayed shrapnel up into Justin's neck and knocked him off his feet.

Injured, and with a broken weapon, Justin killed his attacker and got to his feet. Now, it is difficult for us here in the comfort of our Nation's Capitol to imagine what such a fight for one's life must be like. We can only try to imagine the chaos and confusion, the adrenaline, the pain, and the fear. You wouldn't blame anyone for pulling back after something like that. But, frankly, that is one thing that makes these young men and women so exceptional, and that is what makes them the U.S. Army.

Justin got up, took a confiscated enemy AK–47 and three magazines, and refusing medical attention, continued to lead his troops through 5 more days of fighting. That is, Mr. President, the kind of courage, strength, and selflessness that ought to leave all of us in awe.

Justin finished out his 15-month assignment in Iraq in August and came home, a hero to many—perhaps not the least of which being his father. Try as he might, his dad John simply could not put into words how proud he was and is of his son. After having dinner with Justin's unit at Fort Bragg, he said simply, ''He's unbelievable and so are his friends.'' Both Justin and his father would be quick to remind us that even though Justin received this medal, it is all the men and women serving in our military who deserve our admiration and respect.

John told me that while ''Justin was there for his buddies, they were there for him, too.'' Soldiers like Justin and his squadmates are a prime example of the great commitment all of our troops share, not only to each other but to our country as well. As such, they serve two of the most noble principles the world will ever know.

What is Justin doing now? Having found his focus and oriented his priorities, with an example of true courage and dedication, Justin reenlisted in the Army just before finishing his first tour. Despite his harrowing experience, Justin stood in the sands of Iraq and he raised his right hand and swore to continue his service to the defense of our great Nation. Recognizing his great courage and leadership, Justin is now training with the hopes of joining the special forces.

That is why I wanted to come to the floor today and honor Justin's exemplary service to our country. He is just one example of the bravery, courage, and strength of thousands of Texans, both past and present, who have served in the U.S. military.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I appreciate my colleague from Texas putting a personal face on this war. Our young men and women are making tremendous sacrifices. We here in the Congress should be willing to do our part to ensure they succeed in their mission. Hearing a story like Justin's simply confirms that we should redouble our efforts to fund what they need to carry out their mission.

The majority leader talked a little bit earlier about delays with the legislation that is currently pending before the Senate. It is going to take us 2 or 3 days, presumably, to complete this legislation that is currently pending—2 or 3 days. That is not a big delay in the Senate. But 14 months is a big delay, and that is the time since the President first asked for the supplemental

appropriations to help fund our troops fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan—14 months ago. That is a real delay. It is because I believe the majority party believed they could delay and delay and thereby apply pressure to accomplish one of two objectives—either put pressure on the administration to back off of the war effort or, knowing we are now really up against a funding crunch, put pressure on the President to accept a lot of unrelated spending, spending that has to do with our pet projects here at home. That is on the theory that the President would have to sign a bill because our troops are so desperate for the funding they need, even if that bill includes a lot of unrelated spending Members of Congress want for their folks back home. We should not submit to what I would refer to as legislative blackmail, to hold our troops hostage, in effect, for this domestic spending. Nothing else explains this 14-month delay.

We have already been told by the Secretary of Defense that it is critical that this supplemental funding be provided to the troops to prevent a slowdown in daily efforts in training and equipping, the halting of military operations and enabling us to replace lost or damaged equipment for ongoing operations. All of these are implicated by this delay.

General Petraeus, when he was back here, added another reason. He stressed the importance of this supplemental appropriations to further progress in Iraq. Here is what he said:

> The Commander's Emergency Response Program, the State Department's Quick Response Fund, and the USAID programs enable us to help Iraq deal with its challenges. To that end, I respectfully ask that you provide us by June the additional CERP funds requested in the supplemental. These funds have an enormous impact.

In other words, it is not just the funds to buy the equipment and support our troops for their mission there but also to enable our military to provide what is necessary to enable the Iraqi people and the Iraqi Government there to succeed.

All of these are reasons for acting with speed. Yet for 14 months Congress has delayed the supplemental funding.

The Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Jim Nussle, stated during his testimony last week to the Senate Appropriations Committee that if the supplemental request is not provided to the DOD by Memorial Day, then the Army and Marine Corps will be forced to take funding from other areas of their operations budget and will even have to start laying off civilians and contractor personnel. It will certainly force the Pentagon to use short-term expedients which are very costly. In other words, instead of having the ability to spread out their contracts over time, which is a much more economical way of acquiring services and equipment, the Pentagon is forced to pay a premium for short-term contracting, and it is forced to move funds from general accounts to support priority expenditures specifically related to the conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is already adversely impacting the Department of Defense.

Clearly, military planners are leery of engaging in a new operation when they do not even know that the material assets they are going to need for that operation are going to be available or that what they have available today is not going to be replaced in the future because this supplemental funding has not been provided.

We have no more important obligation as Members of the Senate than funding our troops when they are in the middle of a battle. That is precisely the situation right now.

In fact, let me just quote something that was said just a couple of days ago by Ayman al-Zawahiri, currently the leader of al-Qaida. Here is what he said in a long audio message, among other things:

> Iraq today is now the most important arena in which our Muslim nation is waging the battle against the forces of the Crusader-Zionist campaign. Therefore, backing the Mujahidin in Iraq, led by the Islamic State of Iraq, is the most important task of the Islamic nation today.

We are in a war, and what Zawahiri said in one sense is right. This is the most important arena in which this conflict is currently playing itself out. We have a choice: to leave in defeat or to continue to assure victory.

We have sent our troops in harm's way to achieve their mission. They are accomplishing it. The surge General Petraeus has implemented is working. It is up to us to do our part in this effort. All we have to do is have a brief debate and a vote, and the vote is to send money the troops need to sustain their operation. We have known this now for 14 months, yet Congress continues to dither. Now we have run out of time.

There has been a suggestion that in this effort to fund our troops, we should combine all of the spending into one massive appropriations bill. It would be well over $100 billion. If all it does is fund the troops, then that is fine. But if it is used, as I said before, as a way for the majority to sneak through either unrequested defense spending or our favorite other domestic pet projects, that would be a grave injustice to our troops.

I note the distinguished chairman of one of the subcommittees in the House of Representatives on the Appropriations Committee has revealed that he is ready to move the particular bill here because he is going to use it as a way to add other items to the Pentagon, including additional Navy warships and the procurement of new C–17s and F–22 fighter planes beyond what the Defense Department has budgeted. Maybe those are good defense expenditures, maybe not, but the reality is that they should stand on their own two feet as part of a general authorization and appropriations process and not be put on the backs of this supplemental appropriations bill which is what is needed to fund our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Others have been looking at the supplemental as an opportunity to increase funding for their favorite nondefense programs. It has been suggested by members of the Senate Appropriations Committee last week that some $24 billion in nondefense spending might be added for that purpose.

As I said, Congress should not be extorted into supplying nonwar spending on this supplemental appropriations bill, the emergency bill to fund our war effort. Any effort to do that I suggest should be rejected—among other things, because we know the President has said he will veto a war supplemental funding bill that contains nonwar-related items or strings attached such as some kind of a timetable for troop withdrawal from Iraq. Knowing that is going to be vetoed, it would be irresponsible for the Congress to go ahead and send him a bill and take additional time to get the bill back and redo it in a way that will be not vetoed.

The bottom line is that we have to take care of our troops. We have to support them in the mission we have sent them to achieve. It is time that we get about that, and I urge my colleagues, when the war supplemental comes to this body—hopefully next week—to act with alacrity, we will pass it and not hold it hostage to our other spending priorities that do not relate to our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I wish to spend a minute talking about what a supplemental is because oftentimes the words we use up here do not have the clarity for the American public as to what they really mean. A supplemental appropriation is an appropriation that is outside the budget. What does that mean and what does that mean to the average taxpayer? That means all the money that is used to pay for the supplemental will be borrowed. It is not coming from taxes today. It does not fit inside the pay-go rules. It purely and simply is borrowed from our children.

I have significant problems with that. If you look back at our history, President Roosevelt cut 29 percent out of his favorite domestic programs during World War II. President Truman cut 26 percent out of domestic programs to pay for the Korean war. We routinely, year after year, charge the war to our children.

I raise the issue for two points. No. 1 is that is the way the President has chosen to do it, and I fault him as well as the Congress. But No. 2 is this great propensity of ''legislators'' who add everything including the kitchen sink to it because it is a free pass and it is outside the budget.

The last appropriations bill that we did that was a supplemental had $17

billion added to it that did not have anything to do with the war, didn't have anything to do with priorities in this country, didn't have anything to do with that other than adding things on because it was outside the budget so they could spend more inside the budget.

I am in my fourth year in the Senate. One of the things we have done ever since I have been here is try to root out waste, fraud, and abuse. There is no question right now that in the Federal budget—almost $3 trillion—over $300 billion right now that is in the appropriated programs and in the mandatory programs is lost to fraud, waste, and abuse. So we are going to be bringing a bill to the floor for $120 or $107 billion, plus probably another $10 or $15 billion that the porkers will add to it and oink all the way, and nobody is going to offer anything to offset it out of the fraud, waste, and abuse—the waste we have because we are not paying attention to the running of the Government. We hear this big debate about earmarks, the prerogative to make sure that we point to things. The fact is, the way you point out things is to do oversight on the waste, fraud, and abuse.

If you think this is not accurate, let me give you a list of where the waste is. There is $90 billion worth of fraud in Medicare right now, and there is $10 billion that we pay that we inherently pay wrongly. So that comes to over $100 billion in Medicare alone that should not be going out the door. We are not doing a thing about it. Nobody is going to offer an amendment. It will not even be judged as in order with the rules, to get rid of the fraud in Medicare. Medicaid is same thing—$30 billion in fraud, $15 billion in overpayments for people that we just made a mistake in paying. No, there is not going to be anything offered during the supplemental to fix that, so right there you have $125, $130 billion that would pay—just in fixing Medicare and Medicaid fraud.

There will not be a rule that will allow us to vote on that. There will not be a way for us to do it because that is hard work, and we do not want to do the hard work.

Social Security disability fraud, $2.5 billion; the governmentwide overpayments, improper payments, overpayments for other things, $15 billion. These are not my numbers, these are documented numbers by either the GAO, the Congressional Budget Office or the IGs; $8 billion that the Defense Department pays out for bonuses for companies that did not earn the bonus or performance awards.

There is not going to be anything in this to fix that. It is not even going to be made in order. And $4 billion that we are being defrauded on a crop insurance modernization program, where we allow for crop insurance a higher rate of return than any other casualty or insurance company could earn.

No bid contracts, $5 billion. U.N. contributions that are purely waste, that get defrauded and wasted, $2 billion. We buy $64 billion worth of IT projects a year, and at least 20 percent of it is wasted. That is another $12.8 billion.

Nobody is going to fix that on this. No, we are going to borrow the money from our children. So I raise the issue that we are going to pass a supplemental, and the games are going to be played on it like they are every year. People are going to add things that are not a priority; they are going to add them in—they are not in the budget—knowing they are going to go straight to the debt. Is it in our interest for us to consider, as we do the supplemental, what we are spending right now per American family on different things?

Let me spend a minute to outline that every American family is paying $8,668 for Medicare and Social Security every year; every American family is paying over $5,000 a year to defend this country; we are spending $3,752 for antipoverty programs every year; we are spending $2,000 a family for interest on the national debt, which is going to be higher next year because we are going to borrow all the supplemental and add that to our debt.

Federal employee retirement benefits cost every family in this country $1,000 a year—$1,000 a year for every family. Veterans' benefits, $750 per family; health research and regulations, $692; education, $578; highway mass transit, $455; unemployment benefits, $320; international affairs, $300.

We have a deficit that is going to be $800 billion this year. While Congress sits on its heels and has debates about legislating or not legislating, we are going to continue the same bad habits of not holding agencies accountable, not being transparent about what we are doing, and we are going to say we funded the war, but we are not going to make any of the hard choices about it.

When this bill comes to the floor, it is going to have $17 to $20 billion that does not have anything to do with the war but has everything to do with political directives outside the budget so we can spend more money.

Washington does not need a raise, it needs a cut. It is time for us to pay for the war by getting rid of the waste, fraud, and abuse in this Federal Government. Unfortunately, there is not the character or the courage in either the House or the Senate to take on that fight because it might impact political careers.

So as you listen to the debate when we come up with the supplemental, we need to fund our troops, there is no question about it, but we should not be funding our troops on the backs of our children. We should be funding our troops on the backs of us, and we ought to be doing that every time.

So I am going to do all in my power to try to offer amendments to offset the funds in this war supplemental. I know the rules will prohibit me from doing many of them. But I am not going to stop talking. I am not going to stop talking about the $350 billion that goes down the drain and steals the future and opportunity from our children.

That is exactly what we are going to be doing. And we are going to be smiling all the way through and patting ourselves on the back that we funded the war. But we did it on the backs of those who do not have the same opportunities we were given. We are going to steal those opportunities from the next two generations.

It is time for Congress to start doing its job. That means tough, rigorous oversight and staying within the budget guidelines and spending the money like it was ours, not like we had an unending credit card that never comes due.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland.

FAIR PAY RESTORATION ACT

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, thank you very much. I too wish to speak as in morning business.

All over America today, people are celebrating Earth Day. But we, the women of the Senate, have another day we are commemorating, it is called Pay Equity Day. That means women should get paid equal pay for equal or comparable work.

You are going see the women of the Senate dressed in red today. We are going to be on the Senate floor, we are going to be in our committees, and we are going to be doing our job. But we wear the color red with solidarity for women all over who say: We are red in the face because of the way women have been treated in terms of our pay.

Right now, in the year 2008, women still make less money per hour than men for the same or comparable job. If that was not hard enough about the business practices, we actually have a Supreme Court that agreed with discrimination.

So today we come to the floor with legislation that has been developed, on a bipartisan basis, to reverse a Supreme Court decision called the Ledbetter decision.

You have to hear this. Last May, the Supreme Court made an outrageous decision that said women cannot get equal pay for equal work if they do not do it within the first 180 days that a discrimination occurs. The decision was sexist, it was biased, and it did not understand the reality of women's lives or the reality of the workplace.

Their decision was a step backward for women, and it hit women right in the pocketbook. It violates the American concept of fairness and justice and equal treatment under the law.

Let me tell you about Lilly Ledbetter, who brought the case to the Supreme Court. I met her in the HELP Committee—the Health, Education, Labor Committee—when we were listening to the testimony about it. I listened to her story. This is a woman

now who is beyond middle-age, who has worked 19 years for the Goodyear Corporation.

Systematically, she was underpaid from the day she walked in that door. Not only did she get less pay for the work that she did, but she did not get comparable raises when the men got theirs.

What does that mean? Not only did she have less earnings in her work, though she worked as hard, received excellent ratings, and was promoted, but it also now will show up in her pension; she will get less Social Security and she will get less pension. So remember, when discrimination begins, it is compounded over a lifetime.

Now, Lilly Ledbetter is a real American. She fought the system on her own time and with great risk. She fought the discrimination and took it to the Equal Opportunity Commission, took it to the courts, and then took it all the way up to the Supreme Court. Along the way, she had to raise her own money to do this, while the big corporate interests at Goodyear had fat-cat, billable-hours lawyers against her.

She faced sexual harassment in the workplace because she dared to speak up and speak out. Well, Lilly Ledbetter would not give up. If she was the only case in America, it would be wrong, but this is a persistent pattern in the workplace. And also it has now been approved by the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court said: Someone cannot sue their employer over unequal pay if that person does not file suit within 180 days after the pay was established.

Once again, the Supreme Court does not get it. How many women know the salary of their coworkers, especially in the first 6 months on the job? The reality of the workplace is that often people are forbidden to talk about their salaries. What if you were hired at an equal rate with your male counterpart, but he gets a raise every few months and you do not? The Supreme Court decision was outrageous. It was so bad that Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, God bless her, God bless Justice Ruth, she stood up and actually spoke from the bench to read her dissenting opinion.

That is unprecedented. Usually, they file it and let it go into the history books. But Justice Ginsburg wanted to put the world and this Congress on notice that we better act. Justice Ginsburg said in her dissenting opinion:

> In our view, the court does not comprehend or is indifferent to the insidious way in which women can be victims of pay discrimination.

She encouraged the Congress to fix it, and we will fix it. We will. Unfortunately, wage discrimination exists. Woman now earn 77 percent for every dollar our male counterpart makes. Women of color even get paid less. African-American women get paid 68 cents for every dollar a White man makes. That is almost a 40-percent difference.

The Supreme Court decision will make it almost impossible for women workers to close this wage gap and to get the remedy they deserve, and what they should get, under our doctrine of fairness, is equal pay for equal or comparable work.

From the bench, Justice Ginsburg did call on the Congress for action. She said, ''Correct the mistake.''

Well, when Justice Ruth speaks, and by the way, do we not miss our Justice Sandra Day O'Connor? Justice Alito wrote the primary assenting opinion. They told us the Court made a mistake and the Congress could fix it. Well, fix it we will. We will be soon voting on the legislative process in the bill itself to right this wrong. We will be voting on legislation that will correct this mistake.

This legislation was authored by our great Galahad in the Senate, Senator KENNEDY. He did it in consultation with we, the women in the Senate: Senator CLINTON, myself, Senator SNOWE, women on both sides of the aisle. He reached out to us. We reached out to the best legal thinking.

This bill will amend title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This bill will amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964, so the statute of limitations for an employee to file a wage discrimination suit runs from the date of the actual payment of the discriminatory wage, not from the hiring. So every time you get a paycheck, it will be an act of discrimination, which will reset the clock so you can file your case.

That means employees can sue employers based on each discriminating paycheck, and it does not limit the time a worker can get the remedy she deserves. This bill is about fairness, justice, and respect. Is it not time, is it not time? When we think about Lilly Ledbetter and all those wonderful women similar to her, a woman who worked for 19 years, she was not exactly sure when the disparity developed, she could not quite get to all that.

A jury found they had discriminated against her. They awarded her $400,000 in backpay. The Supreme Court took it away from her. Well, today, we are going to give it back to her. We are going to make sure she and her guts and her grit, in standing up for herself, has stood up for all women.

We who are the women of the Senate stand up as well, I believe also with the very good men who work with us. Men of quality never fear women who seek equality. We are doing that today. We believe in this country all people are created equal. We need to make sure it is in the Federal law books and in your personal checkbook.

All people are created equal in the Federal lawbook and in your personal checkbook. People should be judged by their skills, their competence, and by the job they do. Once you get that job because of your skills and talent, you should get equal pay for equal or comparable work.

Lilly Ledbetter was an honest and hard-working person for 19 years. She is entitled to every cent she worked for. Because Lilly Ledbetter stood up, we rise with her. We are going to correct the Supreme Court decision. We are going to pass this reform legislation that is called the Fair Pay Restoration Act. We ask the Presiding Officer to join with us today. For all of us who wear red, this is going to be a great victory.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TESTER). The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to join my colleague from Maryland, the distinguished Senator MIKULSKI, who has always fought for women's rights because she knows that is what will make our country strong. I serve on the Health, Education, and Labor Committee with the Senator from Maryland. We saw Lilly Ledbetter come before our committee to speak about her experience in a factory where she was not given fair pay. Over time it went all the way to the Supreme Court, where she lost her right in her own lifetime to ever be compensated for the pay she lost because she wasn't treated fairly. She came before our committee, and she was such a woman of dignity and courage, not speaking for herself—anything we do on the floor won't help her personally—but speaking for all women who will come behind her for decades, to make sure they have the right to get equal pay when they are performing an equal job.

I thank Senator MIKULSKI for her leadership and urge our colleagues tomorrow to vote with us so we can go to the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act and once and for all assure that our daughters and future generations will have access to equal pay.

This Senate has a very proud history of working across the aisle to pass civil rights laws. Those historic laws ensure that all people have equal rights, regardless of race, religion, gender, or national origin. I am proud that they ensure that my daughter now has the right to work in the same jobs and achieve the same success as my son. But even though women are doing the same jobs as men and working as hard every day, they still are not equal on one important day. That is payday. On payday, women will take home 77 cents for every dollar paid to their male coworkers. That pay gap is even wider for African-American and Latino women. African-American women earn 67 cents on the dollar and Latino women earn 56 cents for every dollar a white man makes. I know some people out there say: That can't be true. It is true.

I rise on Equal Pay Day to recognize that we still have a lot of work to do to ensure fairness in society. Tomorrow is the day the Senate can go on record saying we in this country are going to stand behind the women and men and their children who rely on them to bring home a paycheck.

The pay gap that exists is true regardless of skill or education. It is so deeply engrained in society that many jobs dominated by women pay less than jobs dominated by men, even when the work they do is almost exactly the same. In my State of Washington, a woman with a college degree earns about $20,000 less than a man with the same education. According to a study by the American Association of University Women, the difference in pay starts as soon as that woman enters the workforce. That study found that within a year after graduating from college, a woman will already earn less than her male classmates in nearly every major. So that is a problem when one starts out. It is also a lifelong problem, because by the end of her career, a female worker will have lost an average of $250,000 in earnings.

It is just as important to make it clear that the pay gap is a problem for everyone. This disparity hurts millions of families. In almost 10 million households, mothers are the only breadwinners, and in many cases those women are also supporting parents and extended family members. In far too many of those households women have to struggle to pay for rent or heat or food or gas, especially today as prices are rising. Think of how much better off families would be if a woman were paid a wage equal to men, especially as the economic downturn grows worse and expenses rise.

If women and men made an equal wage, single working women would have 17 percent more income each and every year. Ensuring they earn a fair paycheck could cut the poverty rate in half. Wage disparity follows those women into retirement. Women today are twice as likely to live in poverty over the age of 65. Women are more dependent upon Social Security for a greater percentage of their retirement income. All of us are staring down the looming Social Security crisis. Think how much better off we would be if women could save a little more for retirement and contribute more to Social Security.

My colleagues and I should not have to be here talking about this today. I should not have to come to the floor in the year 2008 to make a case for equal pay. Not only is it a no-brainer, but fairness and equality are fundamental American values. We are not asking for special treatment. We are here because, despite all the work done to ensure equal rights, women haven't achieved equality. We are here because we run the risk that pay discrimination laws are growing weaker, not stronger, if we don't act.

As Senator MIKULSKI discussed, the Supreme Court last May took a big step backward with its decision on Ledbetter v. Goodyear. That decision went against Congress's intent and 40 years of EEOC practice. It made it almost impossible for workers who suffer pay discrimination to now seek justice.

Today on Equal Pay Day, we urge our colleagues to support legislation that would reverse that decision and ensure workers have a fair shot at fighting discrimination. The Ledbetter decision requires many workers to file a claim within 180 days after their employer discriminates against them, but it does not recognize that in many cases workers don't even know they have been discriminated against for years. It may take them much longer than 180 days to gather the proof. Frankly, for women in the workplace to be aggressive in finding out how much other people get paid in order to even file a case is very difficult. This sounds an awful lot like the Supreme Court is asking our workers to be mindreaders. That is unfair. It is not what Congress intended when we created that law in the first place.

The Ledbetter Fair Pay Act will allow workers to file a claim within 180 days of any discriminatory paycheck. It gives workers the ability to discover the facts and to challenge ongoing discrimination. Although the Ledbetter case involved gender discrimination, the decision applies to all kinds of discrimination, including religion, race, age, disability, and national origin.

Our Nation was founded on the principle that all of its citizens are created equal. We think they ought to be equal on payday as well. As a mother and grandmother, I want my children to live in a country where my daughter can earn as much as my son. Now is the time to ensure that that can be true by strengthening our pay discrimination laws. Now is the time to ensure the Senate's history of civil rights cannot be eroded.

Tomorrow is an important day for women and men. I urge my colleagues to vote with us to consider the Fair Pay Act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, I also rise to talk about Lilly Ledbetter and some practical realities regarding this issue. I had the honor of representing a number of people on discrimination cases during the time I practiced law in Kansas City. I represented people on age discrimination, race discrimination, and gender discrimination. I am familiar with the law before Ledbetter. The thing about this decision that is hardest for me is how unpractical it is. When I was a single mom with three small kids in a job with a lot of responsibility and long hours, I had to be very practical in the way I lived my life. Working women across this country are very practical people. They have to prioritize. They make multitasking a way of life.

I look at this decision from a practical standpoint. Here is what sticks in my craw. They are acting as if when you get a paycheck, immediately some switch is turned on in your head that says: My paycheck is discriminatory.

There is no way women in the workplace can look at their paycheck and immediately determine they have been discriminated against. They don't know what everybody else is making. If you are going to say that someone only has 180 days to file a complaint on discrimination from the date the decision is made to make that complaint, what you are saying is that everybody in the workplace, whether they are an elderly person, whether they are a minority, whether they are a woman, they are going to have to turn into a detective every time they get a paycheck. They are going to have to run around and interview their colleagues as to how much money they are making to make sure their paycheck is fair. That is dumb. That is just dumb.

First, you are not even supposed to talk about your paycheck in the workplace. In many places of employment, the boss says it is against policy to discuss with other people what their salary is or what your pay is. So what we are saying to the women and to the older workforce and to members of minorities is: Now you have to figure out what is in the head of your employer. And by the way, you have 6 months.

If I were an employer in America, I would say: Hey, talk about hurting productivity.

Instead, doesn't it make sense that we should be able to show a pattern of discrimination that is reflected in a series of paychecks? Of course, it does. Who has the best knowledge as to whether someone is being discriminated against? I will guarantee you, it is not the person receiving the check. I think about the cases I represented and what kind of incredibly high bar it would have been for each one of those individuals to figure out in 180 days whether their paycheck was fair.

It is funny how people around this place talk about activist judges. I have a feeling that when we debate this issue today and tomorrow, and as this vote occurs, we won't hear a word from the other side about activist judges. This was, in fact, a Supreme Court decision that radically changed the law as we knew it, as it has been practiced in this country, as it has, in fact, been embraced by this country. This Court, by the narrowest of margins, said 5 to 4 that they were going to upset all that law and make it very difficult for people in the workplace to have their day in the bright sunshine of justice.

I am tempted to call it an activist judiciary. They are out of control. We have to do something about the judiciary. Instead, what we need to do is what we have always done in our history. We have to correct it. By the way, that decision spoke to us in terms of asking us, in the dissent, to take the steps necessary to put the law back where it was before that fateful day last summer when the Supreme Court said to the people who have been discriminated against: We are going to make it really hard for you to hold your employer accountable.

This is not a twilight zone of liability for companies. This is a situation where all the damages that someone

can receive is just 2 years, regardless of how long the discrimination has gone on. Mr. President, 180 days is a very short period of time in terms of filing a complaint—much shorter than any other statute of limitations that is out there for any wrong anyone suffers in our country.

I think people need to remember how Lilly found out about this. The jury found in her favor. The EEOC found in her favor. The law was in her favor—until the Supreme Court overturned it.

How did she find out she was being discriminated against? She had been there all these years. She had started out on an even keel with the colleagues who were men. Someone slipped her an anonymous note. There is not a tote board somewhere she could have checked. Someone slipped her an anonymous note in the workplace and said: Hey, do you realize what is happening to you? You need to start asking some questions about what is happening to your pay.

This is not just about women. This is also about the older workforce. By the way, with the economy the way it is right now, under this administration, people are having to work longer. People who used to think they could retire at 62—forget about that—they are working into their late sixties, into their seventies. In fact, we have many Members in this body who are working hard every day who are well beyond their early seventies who are contributing on a daily basis to this place. Should those people be discriminated against because they are older? Should they have to figure out in 180 days that a younger colleague is making a bigger paycheck?

What about the minorities in this country? This is not just about women. This is about discrimination. We need to send a very clear signal to the rest of the country that we understand we have to fix this and we have to fix it quickly.

This is not a bunch of whining over something that is not important. That 22 cents in Missouri that a woman makes less than a man is important. It is important to pay for the gas. It is important to pay for the daycare. It is important in order to make the bills come out even.

In Missouri, the figure is that women earn 78 cents for every $1 earned by men. The median annual income for a man with a college degree in Missouri, from the years 2004 to 2006, was $59,000. For a woman with the same amount of education, it was $46,000. The American Association of University Women did that study in the State of Missouri.

We need to unite behind this legislation. This is not going to be onerous for employers out there. It is fair. It is just fair. It is what we pledge allegiance to every day in this room: equal justice for all. Let's make sure we fix this. Let's make sure we move and pass this bill and send it to the President. I will tell you what, if this President has the nerve to veto this bill, I know a lot of women in America who are going to wake up and get busy before November.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to be recognized, if I could. I ask to speak in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold the suggestion?

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Yes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

VETERANS' BENEFITS ENHANCEMENT ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this morning on the floor of the Senate is a bill entitled the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act of 2007. Nine months ago, this bill came out of committee, and this bill is now on the floor and to be considered.

Back in November of last year, I asked for permission to bring this bill up for consideration in the Senate and have amendments. It is the orderly process of the Senate, a deliberative process: a debate—and one might expect that is what we do around here. But, sadly, at that point the Republican minority objected to bringing up the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act, even though it had passed out of the committee with an overwhelmingly positive vote.

What is included in this bill? A long list of important changes in the law, changes which will give to our veterans, especially those returning now disabled from combat, benefits they absolutely need: housing, education.

In addition, there is a provision in here which I support—was happy to join as a cosponsor—related to Filipino World War II veterans. I think it is long overdue that the U.S. Senate recognize the contribution made by so many Filipinos in World War II to the success of our war effort. They fought so gallantly and courageously and stood by our troops at a moment we desperately needed their help. Those who are not students of history may have forgotten or never read that our fight in the Philippines was a bitter, long, and tragic battle that ended well but only after great sacrifice by the Filipino people, by the Filipino soldiers, and by our American soldiers.

This provision in the bill related to veterans:

> would deem certain service before July 1, 1946, in the organized military forces of the Philippines and the Philippine Scouts as active military service for purposes of eligibility for veterans benefits.
>
> [It] would provide that the children of deceased or totally-disabled service-connected Filipino veterans who qualify for educational benefits would be paid at the same rate and under the same conditions as the children of other veterans.

Mr. President, this is long overdue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Time for morning business is expired.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 minutes on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, would the clerk report the motion to proceed to the bill at this point, or should I proceed?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is appropriate to close morning business and then report the motion to proceed.

Morning business is closed.

VETERANS' BENEFITS ENHANCEMENT ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume the motion to proceed to S. 1315, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

> A motion to proceed to the bill (S. 1315) to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I see Senator KLOBUCHAR on the floor. I think she was coming to speak in morning business, and I may have used the minute or two that was remaining for her. I wish to address the motion to proceed to the bill that is pending, but since she is on the floor, I would like to give her a chance to speak at this moment before I do. So I ask—if it meets with the approval of the Senator from North Carolina—unanimous consent that the Senator from Minnesota be recognized for——

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Five minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. Five minutes, and that following her remarks, I be recognized for 10 minutes to speak on the pending motion to proceed.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, and I do not plan on objecting, if the 5 minutes is to come out of the majority's time for the debate—which the time is split between now and 12 o'clock between the majority and minority—if Senator KLOBUCHAR's time comes out of the majority's time, fine.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is my understanding Senator AKAKA wants to speak for up to 10 minutes. So I am trying to figure out—we have 38 minutes remaining before the vote, so that would allow 19 minutes per side. If Senator AKAKA needs 10 minutes, I would ask for 4 minutes and yield 5 minutes to Senator KLOBUCHAR, if that meets with the Senator's approval.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Chair hears none, and it is so ordered.

The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I say to my colleague from Illinois, thank you very much. I appreciate the time. If I go less than 5 minutes, I will give you back the rest of the time.

EQUAL PAY DAY

Mr. President, I am proud to join with my colleagues today, many of whom were here earlier—Senator MIKULSKI, Senator MURRAY, Senator BOXER, and Senator MCCASKILL—in support of Equal Pay Day.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy appointed Eleanor Roosevelt as chairwoman of the President's Status on Women Commission.

In 1963, the Commission's findings enumerated rampant discrimination against women in the workplace: in hiring, in accommodations, and in pay. This was part of the larger catalyst to finally pass—that same year—the Equal Pay Act.

It is a sad reality that still, 88 years after the 19th amendment gave women equal voting power and 45 years after the passage of the Equal Pay Act, it takes women 16 months to earn what men can earn in 12 months. In other words, today, Equal Pay Day, marks the day it takes women to finally catch up to where men were back in January.

But Eleanor Roosevelt was a strong, wise woman, and she brought to that first Commission her personal philosophy that ''It's better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.'' That is why it is so important that the Senate take up the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act on the floor this week. We must light a candle to the pay discrimination women continue to experience across the country.

This important legislation will reverse a 2007 Supreme Court ruling—Ledbetter v. Goodyear—that significantly limited the rights of individuals to sue for gender-based pay discrimination.

The facts that gave rise to Lilly Ledbetter's case are all too common today. Lilly Ledbetter was a hard worker, working at Goodyear Tire as a manager for 20 years. When she started at Goodyear, all the employees at the manager level started at the same pay. She knew she was getting the same pay as the men did. But early in her tenure as manager, the company went to another system. Payment records were kept confidential, and Lilly did not think to ask what her colleagues were making. She did not think to look at her pay raise and ask if men in the department were getting the same. As the years passed by, the pay differential between what she made and what the male managers were making just kept getting bigger. She only found out about it from an anonymous note from a coworker.

At trial, she was able to prove discrimination. But the company appealed the jury's finding, and the Supreme Court, in a five-to-four decision, decided that Lilly filed her charge too late. Essentially, they read the law to say that she would have had to file it within 180 days of Goodyear making its first discriminatory decision.

Although this decision completely ignores the realities of the workplace—that employee records are kept confidential and that there is no way to know when it starts unless we require women to start the embarrassing practice of asking what men make—we can do what Eleanor Roosevelt says. We can bring the realities to the light. We cannot expect women to challenge practices they do not know are happening, and by passing this law we can start to give women those 4 months back—those extra months it takes to allow them to catch up to their male colleagues.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act passed out of the committee 9 months ago, and 6 months ago I came to the floor and asked that we consider it. I could not imagine there would be any delay in wanting to bring critical help to our veterans.

This legislation expands eligibility for traumatic injury insurance under the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance Program. It extends housing benefits to individuals—veterans—with severe burns. It increases benefits for veterans in apprenticeship or on-job training programs. And it restores veteran status to Filipino veterans.

The bill had a positive vote coming out of committee, and the Republican minority objected, 6 months ago, to bringing it up. Then, last week, when we tried to bring up this bill to help the veterans again, the Republicans initiated a filibuster trying to stop us from bringing this bill forward.

This morning, the Republican leader explained it was because the Republicans need to sit down at noon and talk about the bill so they understand it. The bill has been out of committee for 9 months. It is very clear what is in this bill. There was no need for a filibuster—except for the fact that is the strategy of the Republican minority.

So far, the Republicans have filed, during this legislative session, 66 filibusters—and continue to file them—66 filibusters, including a filibuster against this veterans' benefits enhancement bill. They continue to file these filibusters in an effort to slow down or stop the Senate from considering legislation.

Last week, they wanted to stop a technical corrections bill that made corrections in spelling and grammar and a few references in a bill passed years ago. It took us a full week to pass a bill, which should have taken no time at all, because the Republicans slowed us down.

This week is even worse—that they would force a filibuster on a bill to help veterans. Why? Why in the world would they do that? From the beginning, we said if they had an objection to any provision in this bill, they could offer an amendment. I know the Senator from North Carolina objects to giving Filipino war veterans—who served next to American soldiers, risked their lives and died on behalf of Americans—they object to the idea of giving $300 a month to the 18,000 surviving Filipino World War II veterans who would be eligible. They object to it but will not come to the floor and just offer a motion to strike. No. They will filibuster to drag this out for days at a time. This is not fair. It is not fair to the veterans who wait on this important legislation. It certainly is not fair to the Filipino veterans.

You have to understand that during World War II, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued a military order calling to service the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines to stand next to American soldiers to fight and die. This entitled—many believe—those who served beside U.S. troops to some recognition from the United States of America. My goodness, how many more years will we wait? Those 470,000 Filipino veterans risked their lives to save American lives and their homeland and to fight for the same values we treasure, and we have put them off that long. A cloture motion was filed, forcing a vote today at noon.

I can tell you that the continued efforts by the Republican minority to stop and stall any efforts for change and progress is being noted by the American people. We only have 51 Democrats. It takes 60 votes to overcome a Republican filibuster, which means we need nine of them to join us. Maybe they will at noon. But the obvious question is, Why did we have to go through this? Why did we have to wait when there was an objection last November? Why did we have to face a filibuster? It is critical to pass the Veterans Benefits Enhancement Act and do what is right for our veterans and the Filipinos who stood beside our troops and fought in World War II.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina is recognized.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, let me say this. It is disingenuous to come to the floor and suggest that I, or any Member of the minority, have stood in the way. I have stood in the way when the conditions to move forward were such that it diluted the minority's ability to represent its Members but, more importantly, the American people, and to limit us in the time of debate and in the amount of amendments. Yes, sir, it was not offered to have a full and open debate. We are in the process—and, as I said, I urge my Members to vote for cloture. I am sorry we have to have the vote, but that is the only thing that assures us the ability to have the time to debate these issues.

I think what you will find is how much we are all in agreement, which is 98 percent, and there is 2 percent on which we have a difference. I respect the chairman and other Members who believe a special pension should be set up for Filipino veterans who live in the Philippines and have no service-connected injury. But I disagree with that as a priority over our guys.

So I plan to offer an amendment that I have never had an opportunity to

offer which embraces 98 percent of what the chairman has in his bill, but it elects to prioritize our soldiers in enhanced benefits over the $221 million that is now devoted to Filipino veterans who live in the Philippines and have no service-connected injury.

I believe it is time for us to stand up for our guys versus that select group to whom there was never a promise made.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii is recognized.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I again urge my colleagues to vote for cloture and express their support for consideration of S. 1315, the proposed ''Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act of 2007.'' This comprehensive bill, reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, would improve benefits and services for veterans, both young and old. We should be debating and voting on this bill now. It has been on the calendar since last August.

It is well past time for this body to address and resolve the differences of opinion on provisions in this bill—so active duty service members, veterans, and their survivors can receive improvements to benefits for which they may be entitled without further delay.

Mr. President, I respect the fact that Members have different points of view on parts of this bill, but I do not understand why there is an unwillingness to debate.

As I noted yesterday, for seven months, all I have asked for is debate on this bill. I reached out in October, November, and December of last year, in an effort to come to an agreement to hold that debate. This session, my efforts to reach a time agreement or to negotiate, including in February after the committee's ranking member introduced an alternate bill to S. 1315, have been rejected time and time again.

Mr. President, I am disappointed that members of the minority have continually stood in the way of veterans receiving the enhanced benefits they deserve. I am discouraged that they have not been willing to engage in debate—the business of the Senate. This is not the way that we should be conducting business on behalf of those who have served under the U.S. flag.

A number of things were mentioned yesterday by my colleague, the committee's ranking member, which seem to demonstrate significant confusion about the process that has brought us here.

For example, the ranking member spoke of being asked to agree to no amendments and limited debate time. That is simply not true. What I asked for was an agreement to limit amendments to the bill to only those that relate to the bill. After identifying such amendments, we would then seek to define the time needed to debate these amendments. This represents the way the Senate most often gets its business done and certainly is the process that the Veterans' Affairs Committee follows on those occasions when there is a need for floor debate.

It may be that my colleague does not believe there should be any limitation on amendments to this bill.

If there is no limitation on what amendments can be offered during debate of this bill, I anticipate that other Senators will bring forward a significant number of amendments. Some will be based on measures considered by the committee and not adopted. Some will be based on measures that were debated by the committee and included in other bills now pending on the calendar. Some will represent issues not yet considered by the committee and thus not subjected to the hearing and debate process. And lastly, I am certain that a number of amendments will represent issues not under this committee's jurisdiction.

That does not appear to me to be a desirable way to get our business done. However, if that is the ranking member's preference, let him say so.

Another misleading statement made by the ranking member was his suggestion that the committee was not willing to talk about changes to the bill. That statement cannot refer to the actual committee process last year—where the provision relating to Filipino veterans was noticed—and an amendment was offered—and debated.

After the bill was reported, I clearly expressed my willingness—on multiple occasions—to reach a compromise on the pension provision. As I noted yesterday, the only debate raised in the committee was on the amount of the pension for Filipino World War II veterans, not on eliminating the pension entirely.

The provision prevailed in committee. Now the ranking member offers one option: to give these elderly Filipino veterans nothing. That is not a compromise.

I am ready to debate the core issue—but I am not prepared to abandon a provision that I believe is right.

I believe it is the moral obligation of this Nation to provide for those Filipino veterans—who fought under the U.S. flag during World War II. We must act to ensure that these veterans are not left to live out their twilight years without acknowledgment that their service during World War II is valued. I am not going to abandon them without a fight.

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to agree to begin the process of debating this bill. If cloture on the motion to proceed is achieved, I hope that the ranking member will join me and our party leaders to craft a workable agreement that allows for a full debate on this bill—and on his amendment to it—along with any other amendments to provisions in the bill. Once this bill is disposed of, our committee will be in a position to bring forward other bills, including whatever bills we report out of committee later this year.

I look forward to a spirited and in-depth debate on this bill. This is a debate we could have had two months ago or even late last year. Let us not waste any more time. Let us work together to join the issues and have the Senate do its business. I ask my colleagues to join in voting for cloture.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina is recognized.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I have a deep respect for my chairman and friend, Senator AKAKA. I think the Senator has suggested that over the course of the last half year we have had some disagreements. I don't expect him to know everything that has been communicated to staff or that my staff communicated to his staff.

The reality is that we are here today, and we each respect each other. We are both honored to serve in the Senate. We both have the same responsibility to the same people—and that is the American taxpayers—to make sure we are fiscally responsible but, more importantly, that we are prudent, that we prioritize things where they are needed the most.

At noon today we will have a cloture vote on the motion to proceed to S. 1315. For one, I have mixed feelings about where we are in the process. I share the frustrations of Chairman AKAKA. The proud tradition of the Senate committee on Veterans' Affairs has been to write laws that improve benefits and services for our veterans. Those laws typically enjoy bipartisan support. As a result, the committee's bills have almost always passed by unanimous consent. In fact, I asked the Senate Library to confirm that for me.

Since 1990, there have been only two rollcall votes on bills reported from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs: the first in the 102d Congress which cleared by a vote of 99 to 0; the second was in the 105th Congress and cleared by a vote of 98 to 0. There were no amendments that received rollcall votes on either of those bills.

This tells me that Republicans and Democrats have always been able to reach a compromise on committee bills out of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. There has been no need for floor debate or rollcall votes when it comes to the veterans bills. The norm is to find a common agreement before moving forward, even on policy issues with which one side or the other may not agree.

This has changed during this Congress with the unprecedented vote on cloture that we will have today. The chairman, in the spirit of our relationship, sent me a letter on, I believe, the 10th of the month requesting that we work on this. The next day, the majority leader of the Senate filed cloture. I am not sure how quickly I am supposed to jump through the hoop for him, but I didn't do it fast enough. I say that with the knowledge that the chairman and I both have that we are not in charge. We don't always make the decisions on the course the Senate will follow.

Let me briefly outline for my colleagues the key disagreement that has held up this bill for so long; namely, the provision that seeks to use $221 million over the next 10 years to create a special pension for Filipino veterans who have no war injuries, are not U.S. citizens, and who reside in the Philippines.

There are four groups of Filipino veterans. Here is a chart. There are the old scouts, who enlisted in the U.S. Army. They are veterans of the U.S. Army through and through. You see in the benefits that is exactly what is displayed. We have the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines, Recognized Guerilla Forces, and new Filipino Scouts, individuals committed to the Armed Forces of the Philippines and, yes, at times were under U.S. command.

The important thing to notice is our disagreement is with the pension for nonservice-connected disability and the death pension for survivors. It is the $221 million that is suggested to create a special pension for 13,000 individuals whom I do not dislike. I do not want any Member of this Congress to think in any way that I devalue what they did. But I have researched this in history, which we will get into over this debate, that Congress never intended for something such as this to be extended.

I, again, have profound respect for the World War II service of Filipino veterans. Their contribution to victory in the Pacific is a matter of historical record. We honor them—I honor them—their service, their sacrifice. We have good friends in the Philippines. But the issue at hand is not the merit of the service rendered by Filipino veterans. The issue is whether creating a special pension for them in the Philippines is responsive to the following questions:

Is it the right priority in time of war when the needs of our men and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan are so great?

Two, is it appropriate policy, given the purpose of VA pensions and the vast differences in the United States and Filipino economies?

And last, is it fair to U.S. pension recipients from whom this money is taken to pay for this special pension in the Philippines?

Let me ask that another chart be put up because I think it is absolutely crucial that we understand exactly what we are talking about in a $300, or $221 million, special pension.

For a U.S. veteran, if they qualify for a special pension, we are going to get their annual stipend to $11,181, which is 17 percent of U.S. median income. We are going to take American veterans slightly above the poverty level. If it is a married veteran couple, we are going to get them to $14,643, which is 22 percent of the median income in the United States and slightly above the level of poverty. Special pensions were designed to make sure a veteran was out of poverty. We were not putting them into the middle class in the United States, but we were getting them out of poverty because that was the right thing to do. If it is a surviving spouse in the United States, they get a payment of $7,498, which is 11 percent of the median income in the United States.

Today in the Philippines, the Filipino Government provides $120 a month pension for these 13,000 individuals Senator AKAKA is targeting. I am not taking into account the $120 a month that the Philippine Government is providing for each one of these 13,000. But if they are a single veteran in the Philippines with the stipend that Senator AKAKA's bill has, we will provide $3,600 a year, which will be 87 percent of the median income of the Philippine economy. If you add in to that number the $120, we see they far exceed the median income of the middle class of the Philippines. If, in fact, it is a married couple, the stipend from the United States in a special pension for a Filipino living in the Philippines with no service-connected injury is $4,500, 108 percent of the median income of a Philippine family; in the case of a surviving spouse, $2,400, or 58 percent of the median income.

It is important to understand that the VA pension is designed for veterans who have no service-related injuries and who are poor, according to the U.S. definition of poverty. The maximum VA pension payable to a U.S. veteran puts them 10 percent above the poverty threshold and 17 percent of median income.

The Philippine Government, as I said, already provides a monthly pension to Philippine veterans, putting them at roughly 400 percent over poverty with the $120 pension that the Philippine Government provides, and 35 percent of the average income of the household. Adding an additional VA pension on top, as considered in S. 1315, would put a single Filipino veteran at roughly 1,400 percent over the Philippine poverty level.

What are we talking about in simplistic terms? We are going to allow a U.S. veteran to get slightly over the poverty level. The percentage was 10 percent. But we are going to create a special pension for Filipinos who live in the Philippines and have no service-connected disability that is going to make their percentage over poverty 1,400 percent when U.S. veterans are at 10 percent over the poverty line and 21 percent above the average household income.

A VA pension benefit is not designed to put a veteran in the middle class. It certainly does not in the United States. I do not believe it is our responsibility to do it in the Philippines, and I do not believe in this time of war that it is a priority of this country.

It is meant to ensure that no wartime veterans suffer the indignity of poverty, whether you are in the Philippines or whether you are in the United States. We have defined that in the United States as 10 percent above the poverty line.

I can argue that is not good enough, but I can certainly make the case that going to 1,400 percent above the poverty line is not right. It is not the right policy, and it is certainly not the right priority. Creating any new pension benefits for Filipinos in an effort to rectify what some call an injustice would only serve to create a new injustice for U.S.-based veterans because of an enormous discrepancy in the two Nations' economies.

As I said, I have deep respect for Senator AKAKA. We will have a spirited debate, I am convinced, over the next 2 days, 3 days—whatever our leadership decides. That is where it gets out of our hands. I am willing to do it. I have done my homework. I am willing to get into the 1946 Senate hearings when the Senate debated an act where they took benefits away because they researched it to find out if we promised veterans' benefits be extended. And the court's interpretation was they extended it and, quite frankly, the Congress in 1946 legislatively took those benefits away that the court had awarded.

I have Senate hearings from 1948. And in the 1990s, I have the Clinton administration that came to this body and lobbied that this was not the right thing to do; they were not supportive of it. I am willing to share that information with all our colleagues, and over the next couple of days, I think everybody will get a great history lesson on what happened with our decisions and who has testified since 1944 to the Senate about this issue.

I do not expect any American who listens to be less than educated on whether this is the right move or the wrong move. But I also believe my colleagues will recognize the fact if we are establishing 10 percent above poverty for U.S. veterans and we are down here talking about a special pension to individuals who live in the Philippines who have no service-connected injury that is going to be 1,400 percent over poverty, this is the wrong thing for the Senate to do.

Mr. President, I am going to yield to my good friend and former ranking member of the committee. But I do want to say before I yield to him, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the cloture motion. I want to proceed. I want to debate this issue. I want to make sure every Member of the Senate has an opportunity to hear the full breadth of what has happened since 1946, and I am prepared to do exactly that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I understand we are under a unanimous consent agreement for a vote at 12 o'clock?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I will be brief, only to amplify what Senator

BURR spoke to clearly and, I hope, understandably. First and foremost, understand that my relationship with the chairman of Veterans' Affairs Committee, DANNY AKAKA, is a personal one and one of great affection. Here is a man today attempting to do the right thing and probably, in all fairness, is leading with his heart, and that I respect greatly.

There is no question, there remain in the Philippines 13,000 veterans who fought gallantly to save their island from Japanese domination and fought with us and under our flag to do just that. They deserve to be compensated, and they have been compensated.

Immediately following the war, the United States Government put $620 million into the repairs of the Philippines. In today's dollars, that is $6.7 billion.

Then we left a VA hospital in place so that these veterans could receive first-class health care. And we did and they do and it is still there and it is still operating.

Then we added $22 million—and that is worth $196 million in today's dollars—for equipment and construction. America did its part then, and it does its part today. The question is what is reasonable and right compensation.

I stepped down as ranking member on the Veterans' Affairs Committee last September. In doing so, I was well aware of this bill, and the chairman knew at that time that I agreed with 99.9 percent of it. It is a good bill. It is an important bill for America's veterans, and it ought to be passed.

At that time, I thought I offered what was a reasonable compromise; that we would reduce the level of the proposed increase in compensation to nonservice-connected Filipino veterans living in the Philippines; that we would not lift them to the standard to which Senator BURR has just spoken; that they would deserve some help. The chairman had found an offset in a court ruling that took money away from our veterans, and it was sitting there.

I would have much preferred rewriting the law and reinstating that money to our veterans to abrogate the court decision, but we did not do that. So I offered a compromise at that time. It was roundly rejected by the committee. It simply did not fit where the chairman wanted to go. Therefore, from that point forward, I opposed the bill. It is a matter of fiscal responsibility. It is a near quarter of a billion dollars over the next 10 years, and it does exactly what the ranking member, Senator BURR, spoke to. It lifts these Filipino veterans above their poverty line into a middle-class status in Filipino society. Well, that is OK; none of us should deny that. But we don't do that for our veterans who live here. If you are a Filipino veteran living here legally, you get full compensation as a veteran living in this country.

We do tie a benefit to a poverty level and a cost-of-living standard, and we always have. I certainly wish we could do more, but this budget is nearing $100 billion. The overall VA budget is nearing $100 billion. Four years ago, 11 percent; 3 years ago, 12 percent; 2 years ago, 13 percent; last year, an 18-percent increase. No budget in America, other than defense, has increased that much. And why are we doing it? Because collectively this Senate and this Congress have always believed in fair and responsible compensation to America's veterans—America's veterans.

We also try to compensate those who support us and work in our behalf as the veterans of the Filipino society did what is right and what is reasonable.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I believe what the Senator has offered in this Senate bill that is on the floor, S. 1315, is too much. There is a middle ground. I offered it once, and it was rejected. I hope we can revisit that as a reasonable amendment when we get to the amendment process.

I thank my colleagues, Senator AKAKA and Senator BURR, for their work on this legislation. It is good legislation. With a little fine-tuning, then it will be fair, and we ought to support it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I commend my ranking member and former ranking member for their comments. I look forward to a good debate. I thank them for joining in asking for Senators to vote for cloture.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order and pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 336, S. 1315, the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act.

Harry Reid, Daniel K. Akaka, Barbara Boxer, Patty Murray, Byron L. Dorgan, Edward M. Kennedy, Christopher J. Dodd, Benjamin L. Cardin, Patrick J. Leahy, Bernard Sanders, Sherrod Brown, Amy Klobuchar, Richard Durbin, Ken Salazar, Sheldon Whitehouse, Max Baucus, Daniel K. Inouye.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to S. 1315, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON), the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. KYL. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. DOMENICI), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 94, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 109 Leg.]

YEAS—94

Akaka	Dole	Menendez
Alexander	Dorgan	Mikulski
Allard	Durbin	Murkowski
Barrasso	Ensign	Murray
Baucus	Enzi	Nelson (FL)
Bayh	Feingold	Nelson (NE)
Bennett	Feinstein	Pryor
Biden	Graham	Reed
Bingaman	Grassley	Reid
Bond	Gregg	Roberts
Boxer	Hagel	Rockefeller
Brown	Harkin	Salazar
Brownback	Hatch	Sanders
Bunning	Hutchison	Schumer
Burr	Inhofe	Sessions
Byrd	Inouye	Shelby
Cantwell	Isakson	Smith
Cardin	Johnson	Snowe
Carper	Kennedy	Specter
Casey	Kerry	Stabenow
Chambliss	Klobuchar	Stevens
Coburn	Kohl	Sununu
Cochran	Kyl	Tester
Coleman	Lautenberg	Thune
Collins	Leahy	Voinovich
Conrad	Levin	Warner
Corker	Lieberman	Webb
Cornyn	Lincoln	Whitehouse
Craig	Lugar	Wicker
Crapo	Martinez	Wyden
DeMint	McCaskill	
Dodd	McConnell	

NOT VOTING—6

Clinton	Landrieu	Obama
Domenici	McCain	Vitter

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 94, the nays are zero. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. CONRAD. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, would the Chair advise me, was the last vote 94 to nothing?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. DURBIN. I would like to say to the Chair and to all those following this debate, we wasted 4 days of the Senate's time, 4 days to come to a bill for veterans' benefits. We tried to bring this bill up last November. The Republicans objected. We tried to bring it up last Thursday, and they started a filibuster so we had to burn off 4 or 5 days.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, the Senate is not in order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will be in order.

Mr. DURBIN. We had to burn off 4 or 5 days of doing nothing because of another Republican filibuster. So far in this Congress the Republicans have initiated now 67 filibusters. The record in the Congress before this Republican minority was 57 filibusters over a 2-year period of time. They have now broken that record by 10, and we still have 8 months to go this year.

We are wasting more time. When I ask the Republicans why did you filibuster a bill for veterans' benefits, they said because when we have lunch today, we want to talk it over.

This bill was reported by the veterans committee 9 months ago. How many veterans have been created in 9 months? How many more have needed job training, health care benefits, and housing, and now our Republican minority wants to talk it over?

If we are going to do the people's business in this Chamber, this filibuster mentality on the Republican side has to come to an end. There are critically important issues. Wouldn't it be great if we had finished the veterans health bill last Thursday and could have started debating today the cost of gasoline across America; the impact of high diesel fuel prices on truckers; what the jet fuel costs are doing to the airline industry? But no, another Republican filibuster, the 67th filibuster in this session.

I hope the people of the United States understand what the problem is. To break a filibuster, it takes 60 votes. There are only 51 Democrats. The voters of America will have their chance to vote in November.

Mr. DORGAN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. DURBIN. I yield for a question.

Mr. DORGAN. Isn't it the case the vote we had is on the motion to proceed? This is not on the issue, this is on the motion to proceed to an issue? So we have a filibuster on the question of shall we proceed. Time after time after time, isn't it the case that even on motions to proceed, we discover the other side demands 60 votes, then demands to have the full 30 hours elapse after the vote has taken place? This one was, I think, 94 to zero. There was a requirement that we go to a motion to proceed—94 to zero—so it was not controversial, it was a matter of bleeding time. It makes no sense, with all that we have to do.

Mr. DURBIN. Through the Chair I say in response to the Senator: That is exactly the case. I would like to make a unanimous consent request that we go to the bill immediately and entertain germane amendments to the bill. Let's start this bill right now. Let's get this done for the veterans. I ask unanimous consent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I object.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Parliamentary inquiry, Mr. President? I would like to ask the Senator from Illinois if germane amendments include a substitute amendment? I have heard the debate, or at least the statements of the two Senators. But the issue is not going to the bill. We have not filibustered the motion to proceed. It was unanimous. The question is are the minority rights going to be recognized? Will we be able to offer amendments, germane amendments, substitutes?

I would like to know, before we proceed further to the bill, if we are going to be able to have enough amendments so the minority rights are protected.

That would be my question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. DURBIN. Would the Chair identify the Senator who objected to the unanimous consent request to move to the bill immediately and consider all germane amendments?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. I happened to be here for the vote. You know, this is a game that has been played by both sides, last year and this year too. The majority calls up a bill, they generally file cloture. And, frankly, that does not mean there is a filibuster. As you can easily see, the vote was basically unanimous to going ahead with the bill.

What bothers me is that time after time we have had situations where we were not able to even offer amendments, even a limited number of amendments. But generally we get to that point around here because we have to. And it is the only right the minority has. So that is one reason that occasionally the minority will require cloture.

But there is also too much of this filing cloture by the majority the minute the bill comes up. That, of course, is a game, frankly, with no intention on our side to filibuster the bill or stop the bill.

So these high numbers that are said are mythical, to be honest with you. And, frankly, I hope someday we can realize that this is a legislative body where both sides have certain rights and that one side cannot roll over the other side without at least giving them an opportunity to file amendments.

Frankly, the other side, the majority side, has been able to win on amendments anyway in many cases. I think to stand and say that the Republicans are causing all of this mixup is not quite as accurate, as I think the record will show.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

INTERNATIONAL FOOD ASSISTANCE

Mr. KOHL. Last year, the World Health Organization reported that 25,000 people died every day from hunger-related causes. Let me repeat that number: 25,000 people who died every day last year.

The World Health Organization further reported that of that 25,000 people who died, 18,000 were children. That means that in the time it took me to say that last sentence, a child somewhere in the world has died. It also means before I finish this sentence, another child will have died from hunger. For lack of food, a child dies every 4.8 seconds.

As grim as these facts are, things have grown worse, much worse. We are witnessing what could be called a perfect storm of world hunger. The world's supply of food is down, food demand is up, the climate is changing, and crops are failing.

Food production resources are shifting every day to energy production, food costs are skyrocketing, and, indeed, entire societies are falling apart as a result. This is not another round of appeals for humanitarian food assistance. There is something new and very troubling occurring.

One of the greatest responsibilities of Government is to assure people the basic necessities of life. When that assurance fails, governments fail with it, and an already insecure world moves that much closer to chaos. The most basic need, of course, is the need for food. However, in recent events around the globe, 33 countries have experienced riots and violence because of a failed food supply, including countries in this hemisphere. In the face of hunger, order breaks down, and reason is lost. People are painfully realizing that food production is not keeping up with food demand, and this is a recipe for global disaster.

Last month, the Director of the World Food Program, Joesette Sheeran, wrote to President Bush on the immediate need for increased food assistance due to rising food and related costs. I met with Director Sheeran last week and got a firsthand appraisal of the dire situation.

Rising food and transportation costs have created a $750 million hole in the World Food Program budget which had assumed that the U.S. contribution this year would include a pending $350 million supplemental request for PL 480.

Unless this Congress acts, thousands of people will die, and an increasing number of societies and nations will be at risk. This is indeed a world crisis.

Last week, OMB Director Nussle appeared before the Senate Appropriations Committee, and when asked to state whether he thought there was a need to provide food assistance above the President's request of $350 million, he declined. He dodged the question.

There is no way to dodge this problem. This is a problem of world security. This is a problem of U.S. security and our place in the world. We must and we will respond.

As chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, I take the issue of international food assistance very seriously. Although the President's supplemental request of $350 million was predictable—after all, he has requested the exact same amount for 3 years in a row—it is totally blind as to what is happening in the world. It is therefore very dangerous.

If the United States wants to maintain its role as a world leader, there is no better way to do that than to step forward now, take full account of what is happening, and take meaningful steps to stop the suffering, to stop the

hunger, stop the dying. In fact, it is time to be a leader.

So I will continue to work for food funding assistance at a level that does not turn a blind eye to the suffering in the world, nor the danger to the world community. So I ask other Senators to join me in stating support to fight this perfect storm of world hunger and to support action to do something about it.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, tomorrow we will have a vote to proceed——

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has an order to recess.

Mrs. BOXER. I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 6 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I thank you all for indulging me.

FAIR PAY ACT

Tomorrow we will have a vote to proceed to the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act. Four of my Democratic female colleagues spoke on this earlier today—four or five. I wanted to add my voice to their voices because, as I stand on the floor of the Senate some 45 years after passage of the Equal Pay Act, it is unfortunate that workers throughout the Nation will suffer pay discrimination based on gender, race, religion, national origin, disability, and age. They still suffer this.

We still have a long way to go on equal pay for equal work. It stuns some people to learn that women still earn 23 percent less than men, and the pay disparity is still so great that it takes a woman 16 months to earn what a man earns in 12 months.

In 2006, an average college-educated woman working full time earned $15,000 less than a college-educated male. According to the American Association of University Women, working families lose $200 billion in income per year due to the wage gap.

This is an important point because so many women now work. We know this. So families are struggling to make ends meet with higher gas prices, higher college tuition, higher food prices, higher health care, all of that. We know there is not an easy solution that will eliminate all pay discrimination, but the bill we hope to go to tomorrow, the Equal Pay Restoration Act, will ensure that when an employer discriminates based on gender or race or any other factor, the employee can take his or her case to court.

There was a very bad decision that was made by the Supreme Court which reversed decades of legal precedent, and this was the Ledbetter decision. With its decision, the Court imposed a serious obstacle for equality, equal pay, by requiring workers to file a pay discrimination claim within 180 days of when their employer first starts discriminating.

Now, that is an impossible standard to meet. You really do not know when that moment occurs. What was important about this decision is it threw out the law that had always worked well and would have protected people such as Lilly Ledbetter from discrimination.

Her story is not unfamiliar to many female employees. She was a female, she was a manager at an Alabama Goodyear Tire plant when she discovered, after 19 years of service, that she was earning 20 to 40 percent less than her male counterparts for doing the exact same job.

It took her a long time to ferret this information out. As Justice Ginsburg noted in her dissenting opinion, the pay discrepancy between Ledbetter and her 15 male counterparts was stark. In 1997, her last year of employment at Goodyear, after 19 years of service she earned $5,600 less than her lowest paid male coworkers, and she earned over $18,000 less than her highest paid male coworkers.

Evidence submitted at her trial showed that Mrs. Ledbetter was denied raises, despite receiving performance awards, and in some cases female supervisors at the plant were paid less than the male employees they supervised.

So when Ms. Ledbetter discovered this, she took Goodyear to court, and the jury awarded her full damages. But the company, Goodyear, appealed the jury's decision.

In 2007 the Supreme Court made this very bad decision and said she could not sue for back pay despite—and with which they agreed—the overwhelming evidence that her employer had intentionally discriminated against her because of her gender.

But, they said, it took Lilly Ledbetter longer than 6 months to determine she had been a victim of years of pay discrimination. So, in other words, because it took her more than 6 months to figure this out, she was denied any kind of help.

It does take a significant amount of time in many cases for the truth to be known. Here in the Capitol, if you work for the Government, everybody's pay is on record. And you can see it; it is a public document. But in a private sector plant there may be no way to find out.

As Justice Ginsburg pointed out: Compensation disparities are often hidden from sight for a number of reasons. Many employers do not publish their employees' salaries, and other employees are not anxious to discuss what they earn. So this controversial decision is having serious impacts.

In the 10 months since the decision was handed down, the Ledbetter precedent has been cited 207 times by Federal district courts and courts of appeal. So it means, it seems to me from what I gather, from that statistic alone, many people are being denied equal treatment under the law: equal pay, equal treatment.

So what does the bill do that we want to go to, we Democrats on Wednesday, tomorrow? It simply restores the law to what it was in almost every State in the country before the Ledbetter case was decided. It does so by helping to eliminate the unreasonable barrier created by the Supreme Court and allows workers to file a pay discrimination claim within 180 days of each discriminatory paycheck. That was the law before Ledbetter.

The Ledbetter decision was a giant step backward in the fight for equal opportunity and equal rights. Goodyear engaged in chronic discrimination against female employees, but because of the Ledbetter decision, the Court must treat intentional ongoing pay discrimination as lawful conduct.

Employers who can conceal their pay discrimination for 180 days can continue this practice, and there is no redress. We must ask ourselves: Is this the standard that Congress should be proud of? Is this the kind of standard that we should support, where somebody is treated in an unfair fashion, is paid less than somebody else simply because of their gender?

It is not right. It seems to me, if we are going to have fairness and justice in America today, the least we can do is overturn the Ledbetter decision. Justice Ginsburg told us: ''Congress, the ball is in your court.''

That is why I am so pleased that Senator REID is bringing this opportunity before us tomorrow. Today, as we reflect upon the importance of fairness and equity to our society with a celebration of Equal Pay Day, we must restore this important protection and return the law to its meaning. I hope tomorrow when we get a chance to move to this bill our colleagues will all vote aye because what is fair is fair and what is wrong is wrong. We need to fix this problem. Equal pay for equal work is a value that we should hold dear.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:45 p.m., recessed until 2:16 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. DURBIN).

VETERANS' BENEFITS ENHANCEMENT ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. KENNEDY. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEVIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DIVER HEROES OF THE CHICAGO FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask a few minutes of the Senate's time to

tell you about four men and a little boy.

Last Friday, Stanko Bojanovic decided to take advantage of a warm, breezy spring afternoon to enjoy a walk with his 2-year-old grandson along Lake Michigan near Belmont Harbor in downtown Chicago.

Mr. Bojanovic was sitting on a park bench at Belmont Harbor with his grandson nearby strapped in a stroller at his side, when a strong gust of wind blew up. Witnesses said the wind sent soda cans sailing by. That wind also pushed the stroller into the harbor with the little boy still strapped in.

Mr. Bojanovic, the grandfather, immediately jumped into the harbor. Passersby saw him bobbing in the water, clinging to the side of the breakwall, and pleaded with him to try to swim to a nearby rescue ladder but the grandfather refused. In broken English, he kept yelling, ''Boy! Boy!''

Those standing nearby grabbed their cell phones and called 9–1–1.

At the moment the call came in, a helicopter carrying Chicago Fire Department divers Brian Otto and Bill Davis was lifting off from nearby Midway Airport, where they had stopped for fuel. The men were already in scuba gear for a drill. Four minutes later, their helicopter landed at the harbor.

At almost the same moment, another crew of a dozen Chicago Fire Department rescue divers were finishing an underwater training exercise at a pool not far from the harbor. They changed into scuba gear and arrived at the harbor just seconds after the helicopter.

Divers Brian Otto, Bill Davis, Cedric Collins, and Bob Skwarek dove into the water near where the grandfather had pointed. There was zero visibility in the murky water so they searched in a grid pattern, feeling their way along the harbor's rocks.

Diver Cedric Collins told a Chicago Sun Times reporter that he prayed, ''Let me find him.''

Less than 3 minutes after the firefighters arrived, diver Brian Otto spotted the little boy's hair waving in the water.

As he tried to lift the toddler, Otto realized that the boy was still strapped into his stroller. He was going to have to lift the little boy and his stroller 10 feet to the water's surface.

Otto, who has a little 4-year-old son of his own, told the Sun Times: ''You see this kid underwater, and you're a firefighter, you're a rescue diver, but you're also a father. I held nothing back.'' He told himself: ''No matter what, we're going to get to the surface. And we're doing it now.'' He lifted the little boy, stroller and all, to paramedics waiting on the pier.

Three minutes passed between the time the firefighters arrived and the time they pulled the little boy, Lazar Ognjenovich from the water. His body was pale blue and icy cold. It is estimated that he was under water for 15 minutes.

Today, little Lazar Ognjenovich remains in critical condition at Children's Hospital in Chicago.

Medical researchers not involved in the case say there is reason to hope. They note that toddlers are sometimes able to survive long periods underwater better than adults and point to a Utah girl who was submerged in water for 66 minutes in 1986. Two years later, when an article about her appeared in a medical journal, she had made a full recovery.

Lazar's grandmother said Sunday that the little boy is showing signs of improvement. She notes that last Saturday—the day after his rescue—was ''Lazarus Saturday,'' a special holiday for Serbian children. She told a Sun Times reporter that she believes God was watching over her grandson.

As for the brave men who rescued the little boy—Brian Otto, Bill Davis, Cedric Collins and Bob Skwarek, members of the Chicago Fire Department's Air Sea Rescue Unit and Scuba Team 687—they were all back at work the next day.

In a story in this morning's Sun Times, Bob Skwarek said that rescue divers train for moments like the one they experienced last Friday. Still, he said, ''You really do feel 10 feet tall'' after a rescue.

Bill Davis and Cedric Collins have both been with the Chicago Fire Department for 9 years and with the scuba team for about a year and a half. Brian Otto has been with the department for 18 years and a diver for 3½ years. And Bob Skwarek has been with the fire department for 28 years and a diver for about 2½ years.

They come from the neighborhoods of North and South Chicago: Mount Greenwood, Hegewisch, Roseland and Gage Park.

They have won praise from Chicago Fire Commissioner Ray Orozco and from people all over that great city who have read or heard about their heroism. They deserve every word of that praise.

In his great book Working, Studs Terkel, the legendary Chicago writer, and a great friend interviewed all kinds of everyday working people about their jobs.

Many of the jobs involved risk and backbreaking labor. Some of the people Studs spoke to disliked the work they did.

He also spoke to a firefighter, who said he liked his work very much because you can actually see what a firefighter produces. You see the results of firefighters' work and sacrifice in homes saved, families rescued. And sometimes you see the results of their heroism in little boys pulled miraculously from the waters of Lake Michigan.

On 9/11, we all received a poignant and painful reminder that the real heroes very often are not famous. Most are known only to their families and friends and the people with whom they work.

Many times since 9/11, we seem to have forgotten that basic truth.

Last Friday at Belmont Harbor, four firefighters from the great City of Chicago reminded us.

I ask that this Senate join me in saluting their courage and the courage of all the working men and women in this country who take risks and make sacrifices to rescue others, literally and figuratively. They are truly American heroes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

EQUAL PAY DAY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I thank our majority leader and our leadership for scheduling a vote on what is known as the Ledbetter legislation tomorrow. We expect that we will have that vote tomorrow evening sometime. I think it is important that the membership understand that we will. It is appropriate today that we have a number of our colleagues speak about the importance of this legislation because today is Equal Pay Day. It has been designated Equal Pay Day. It has been Equal Pay Day for a number of years.

What do we mean by Equal Pay Day? We mean equal pay for equal work. That has been a goal of this country going back actually to 1963, when we passed the Equal Pay Act. At that time, the disparity between men and women for doing the same job was 60 cents to the dollar that the men were getting. We have seen that figure close over time, now to 77 cents, but still there is a disparity. As long as we have had a disparity, it has been and is wrong.

As a country, we have tried to remove forms of discrimination, bigotry, and prejudice that have existed in our society, and the bigotry and prejudice that exist in terms of pay has been there for some time. Since 1963, the Congress has taken action not only on pay for women but in terms of other groups as well. It has made progress in making sure that African Americans are not going to feel a disparity. We did that in 1964 with Title 7 of the Civil Rights Act under President Johnson. Look at the Senate vote, the ultimate vote, 73 to 27. Republicans and Democrats alike said—the Civil Rights Act was primarily focused on public accommodations provisions but also had another very important provision—we will not permit a disparity and discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, gender, or religion in terms of pay. African Americans and other workers were going to be able to get equal pay.

Then, we have the age discrimination. We said, under President Johnson, if individuals are going to be able to do the job, and they happen to be older but yet they have the competency and the skills and they are going to be able to do an equal job, we are going to make sure they are not going to be discriminated against. We have said women will not be discriminated against, minorities will not be discriminated against, and people will not be discriminated against by age.

In 1973, we said: Well, what about those who have some disability? We

said we are not going to discriminate against those people either. Maybe they have a mental or a physical disability, but if they are able to do the job, and they are qualified to do the job, they ought to get paid for doing the job. That is what we said. We saw that vote was a voice vote, under President Nixon, supported by the administration.

Then, we had later provisions: the Americans with Disabilities Act, which was enacted to provide greater kinds of protections for the disabled; additional civil rights protections; and others; the Civil Rights Restoration Act. So the sum total, since 1963, has been a constant drumbeat, a constant march, a constant statement by the Congress and by the administrations by, as we have seen, Democrats and Republicans alike, that said: When it comes to equal pay, it is going to be equal pay for women and for men, it is going to be equal pay for people with disabilities, older workers, African-American workers, Hispanic workers, and others. This chart shows the various groups that, under the EEOC'd laws, have found out they have been discriminated against.

This chart shows, as of a year ago, in 2007, the EEOC had received more than 7,000 pay discrimination claims. Here it is for disability cases—as I mentioned earlier, we passed the Americans with Disabilities Act—and for national origin cases—we have protections for that group, those people who come from different kinds of ethnic backgrounds—for age, race, and gender discrimination as well.

We see that with regard to race, there have been 2,300 claims; with regard to gender, there have been some 2,400 claims. There are the cases for those with disabilities and the national origin cases. These are cases that were brought because we passed laws over the period of 40 years that said: If you are going to work, and work hard, in the United States of America, and you are going to do effectively the same job as someone else, you should be paid the same. We have not solved all the problems of comparability in this legislation. That is another issue which is enormously important and one we should address, and I hope we will address, in this Congress because it is extremely important. All we are trying to do is deal with the pieces of legislation that I have mentioned and restore a remedy. We can have a right and, as all of us understand, a right is not worth very much if we do not have a remedy. That is what this legislation is all about: to give a remedy to victims of pay discrimination, like Lilly Ledbetter. The remedy is that when workers are given unfair pay for doing effectively comparable work, that they are entitled as a matter of right and a matter of law to fair compensation.

It is interesting, in the dissent in the Ledbetter case, the dissent asks for congressional action. We are giving congressional action. That is why I am going to be interested in the arguments of those who are opposed to it. Here a Justice of the Supreme Court invites the Congress to take the action. We are taking the action. What we are effectively doing is restoring the law to what it was prior to the Supreme Court decision—nothing more than that.

I will review what exactly this law does here. What this legislation, the Ledbetter legislation, does, is it reverses the Supreme Court's unfair Ledbetter decision. It holds employers accountable for ongoing discrimination. As we pointed out, the Supreme Court held that Lilly Ledbetter should have known she was being discriminated against by her employer on pay, even though the employer controlled the books, controlled all the documents and was not sharing that information with the employees. Nonetheless, the Supreme Court said: Well, she should have found out in any event. If she did not, it is tough luck on her. Tough luck on you. Tough luck on you. Imagine, the Supreme Court of the United States, after all of the legislation and all of the congressional intent in the last 40 years, saying: Tough on you.

So the employer holds it in a safe, and Lilly Ledbetter cannot find it. Tough on her. Doesn't have a remedy. Too bad. Go ahead and continue to discriminate. In the United States of America, after what we have gone through in terms of civil rights—the battle to knock down the walls of discrimination over the period of these last 40 years? Tough on you.

Is that what we have come to? Is that what the Supreme Court is saying to a hard-working mother who has worked hard, tried to provide for her children, has demonstrated and won award after award for good performance? Tough on you. You could not find it in that sacred safe of the employer. Too bad. You lost your remedies. Too bad.

That is what this is all about. What we are doing is restoring congressional intent.

So what this legislation does not do: It does not encourage workers to delay the filing of claims. It does not eliminate the statute of limitations in the pay cases. It does not increase the litigation. We have the CBO's analysis. I have referred to it. It does not create new grounds for filing lawsuits. We answered all of these arguments. This is what it does not do. We have given the answers. They are not just my answers, they are the answers of the CBO's independent review.

What we are basically doing, and the reason why we are doing it, is to effectively restore the law to what it was previously. As this chart indicates: the lighter green being what the law was previously—that is what we are returning it to—the darker green being what the law was as interpreted by the EEOC, and the orange were the dissenting states. So this is going back to the previous rule.

This would be right to do at any time, but it is particularly important now. The reason it is particularly important now is because of the kind of economic conditions we are facing in this country at this time, where families are being squeezed. Working families are being squeezed. The middle class is being squeezed. In that squeeze, no one is getting squeezed harder than the women in our society, particularly working women. Their participation pension and retirement plans is falling. Look at what has happened to women's participation in pensions over the last 6 or 7 years. It has dropped, I think, close to 10 percent. We are finding out that their rates of unemployment are increasing faster than the unemployment figures in terms of men. Their savings are down. Women's savings are down. So they have a greater difficulty in dealing with the economic reversals we are facing at the present time. They have more home foreclosures because their savings have been down. So they are under an incredible squeeze.

This chart is an example of how adult women are seeing a sharper rise in their unemployment rate. Their rate is going up 21 percent as compared to 15 percent for men. On earnings, women's earnings are falling faster than men's. So their earnings are going down faster. We are finding out that their unemployment is going up faster and their earnings are going down faster.

If you take what happens to different women within the general group, look at women's net worth. Unmarried women have $13,000 less in net savings than unmarried men. Here it is, the difference, as shown on this chart. So in this time of recession and economic stress, these issues become much more acute. This is the right answer at any time, but it is particularly something that can be done now that can make a difference to these working women—something that can be done now: restore a right. That is what this is basically all about.

As I mentioned, this is targeted on women, but the application is across the board. It affects other groups in our society. It affects African Americans and Hispanics, and they have been hard hit by the economic downturn. If pay is discriminatory against African Americans and Hispanics—and we saw the pie chart, which shows it is, with thousands of claims every single year—they are going to be denied the remedy. This legislation applies to women. It applies to minorities. It applies to people discriminated against because of their religion. It applies to the disabled. It applies to older workers. Otherwise, they are going to get shortchanged. They are facing the economic realities in a much harsher way now.

We have an opportunity to do something about it. The House of Representatives has done something about it. Tomorrow we can do something about it. Show me something, anything, any piece of legislation that can have a better, more positive impact in terms of the income of working women than this vote tomorrow. That is what it is about.

Finally, let me give you these figures to demonstrate what this meant to Lilly Ledbetter. This is a reflection of what was actually in the Court's decision. She was making $44,000 a year. She received $5,600 less than the lowest paid male coworker during her last year at Goodyear. The highest paid male coworker was getting $62,000. She had the qualifications and was doing the job the same as her colleague who got $62,000. The lowest paid male worker—whose skills were much less than Lilly Ledbetter's—was still getting paid more. You cannot get it any clearer than this chart about what the facts are. These are not facts I am making up. These are the facts accepted by the courts, not questioned by the Supreme Court. There it is.

The most powerful is listening to Lilly Ledbetter herself. She has testified. Anyone who is interested ought to read her testimony, and can read through the hearings in our committee about this. She explains it in great detail: how she first heard about it, and how she was treated, and what the Supreme Court decided. She has taken a double whammy because not only has she suffered, and will not recover her wages. We have a 2-year limitation on back pay—you can only recover in terms of the 2 years. Her retirement was based upon what she earned and so that has also been lost during this period of time. That was lost, will be lost, continues to be lost. Imagine that. Imagine the unfairness of that. We are not addressing that. We are not dealing with that. We should be, but we are not. That is basically and fundamentally wrong.

I mentioned earlier the CBO. The Congressional Budget Office agrees that the Fair Pay Restoration Act will not increase the litigation. The Fair Pay Restoration Act will not establish a new cause of action for claims in pay discrimination. CBO experts said the bill would not significantly affect the number of filings with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. What they are basically saying is, what this will do is it will have the law enforced and people will pay attention to it.

Many employers are, obviously, good employers, and are playing by the rules. But not all of them are. Those who are not playing by the rules should not be able to exploit people in the workplace on the basis of their gender, race, national origin, religion, disabilities or age.

Finally, we have seen—and I have shown this chart previously of the various groups that support this legislation. These are only some of the groups. I have included a more complete list in the RECORD. We have the groups representing the disabilities community, the American Association of People with Disabilities; elderly people, the AARP feels very strongly about the discrimination against the elderly; the NAACP, for the obvious reasons, not only because of discrimination on the basis of race, but all the forms of discrimination they continue to fight and oppose. We have the auto workers, who see prejudice and discrimination and who are fighting for full rights and equality. We have the National Congress of Black Women and the Religious Action Center, because of the moral issues raised by this. And we have the U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce.

We will have an opportunity to address this and speak more about it. I cannot think of an issue where it is more an issue of fundamental fairness. Americans try to understand some of the complex issues about which we deal here. They are not always easy to understand and to catch and find their way through. Probably one of the great mysteries is the ERISA law, which was put in by our old friend Jacob Javits. An amusing aspect of that was when Jacob Javits passed on to his eternal reward, he took all the knowledge about ERISA with him. All of us find complexities in trying to deal with that. It has important implications in terms of health and the job market.

This is simple. Everyone gets it. The American people understand it, because it is about fairness. If there is one issue Americans understand, it is fairness. They believe that when somebody works, they ought to be adequately paid. Americans don't believe one person ought to be paid a different rate for doing the same job as another person. They don't believe that because their skin is a different color, or because of gender, or because of disability, or because of sexual orientation they should be paid less. They don't believe it. If the person is qualified to do the job, and does the job, they ought to get equal pay. This Senate has gone on record time and time and time and time again over the last 40 years, by overwhelming votes, against pay discrimination. We have our chance tomorrow to restate that commitment. I hope the vote will be overwhelmingly in favor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine is recognized.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to proceed for 15 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, our Nation faces record high energy prices, affecting almost every aspect of daily life. The price of gasoline, home heating oil, and diesel is creating tremendous hardships for American families, for truckdrivers, and for small businesses. High energy prices are a major cause of the current economic downturn.

It is clear we need a dramatic change in our energy policy to protect ourselves from rapid increases in oil prices, without sacrificing our environment for future generations. We must rally around a national effort to achieve energy independence for our economic, environmental, and national security.

I have recommended that we establish a national goal of energy independence by the year 2020. I don't know if we can get all the way to energy independence by that year, but I do know if we do not establish a goal, if we do not strive to achieve energy independence by a date certain, we will never get there. I believe that had our country embraced this goal in the 1970s, when we were reacting to the embargo, we would be nearly at energy independence right now.

I am proposing today a 10-point plan to get us started on this important effort. It is a plan that includes both actions that we can take in the short run to help mitigate the impact of high prices, as well as actions to achieve energy independence in the long term.

Many causes appear to be responsible for the skyrocketing increase in oil prices: the timing of Government purchases for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve; speculative trading on futures markets; increased global demand for crude oil; instability in the Middle East, Mexico, and Venezuela; supply decisions of the OPEC cartel; insufficient U.S. refining capacity; and the declining value of the dollar.

We will always use oil for part of our energy needs, but we need to decrease our reliance on foreign oil and be smarter about managing our supplies. It is appropriate that Senator LEVIN is in the chair as I discuss the first step that I believe we should take right now to help curb the increase in oil prices.

The administration's decision to fill the Strategic Petroleum Reserve when oil prices are at all-time highs defies common sense. As the Presiding Officer is well aware, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve is an emergency stockpile of oil that already contains some 700 million barrels. In 2005, the Presiding Officer, Senator CARL LEVIN of Michigan, and I joined forces on a bipartisan amendment that directed the Department of Energy to better manage the Strategic Petroleum Reserve by requiring the Department to avoid purchases when prices are high.

There are two reasons why that should be done. First, the Federal Government should not be removing oil from the marketplace at a time when there is a lot of pressure on supplies, as there is right now.

Second, it makes absolutely no sense for the Department of Energy to be buying oil at the height of the market. That is a bad deal for us as taxpayers. Unfortunately, I don't believe the Department of Energy is abiding by the Levin-Collins law. We questioned the Department at a recent hearing before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, and there was no indication that the kind of analysis the law requires is being done. So I have called upon the President to stop filling the reserve until prices drop. It simply

does not make sense for the administration to be making purchases right now.

The Energy Information Administration has estimated that the impact on gas prices of these purchases for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve is between 4 and 5 cents a gallon. Other experts believe it is considerably higher than that. At the hearing I mentioned, one energy expert said:

> DOE's actions added between 5 and 20 percent to the price of oil.

The Department of Energy should stop purchasing oil for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, and it should stop immediately. There is simply no compelling homeland security or national security reason for these purchases to be made now.

No. 2, we need to extend Federal regulation to the oil futures markets. Excessive speculation on futures markets is likely another factor pushing up oil prices. Unfortunately, there is a lack of publicly available data to track the effect of speculation on prices, and manipulation can go undetected on certain electronic markets that are unregulated. Experts testifying before our Investigations Subcommittee all agreed that greater transparency and better reporting of trades could help prevent abuses such as were documented in the natural gas markets in 2006. One of the experts testified that he believed the current high oil prices are inflated by as much as 100 percent—driven by excessive speculation. Other experts think it is not that high. But shouldn't we know and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, which oversees the trading of agricultural commodities on the futures markets and also oversees the regulation of the energy futures markets as well? That would not prevent these markets from performing their important risk-hedging functions, but it would allow regulators to spot and act quickly upon evidence of deliberate attempts to distort prices and excessive speculation.

No. 3, we should curtail the tax breaks for major oil industry companies and, instead, redirect those funds to consumers and to alternative energy.

With net profits of a single oil company reaching almost $10 billion in a single quarter, we simply should not expect taxpayers who are struggling to pay their energy bills to continue to subsidize the oil industry. Congress should act to repeal the needless tax breaks for big oil companies and instead use those billions of dollars to fund the remaining proposals that will move us toward energy independence.

During consideration of this year's budget resolution, the Senator from Michigan and I joined forces again to provide for the rescission of needless tax breaks for major oil companies. Our proposal would redirect the revenue to support renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives. Our amendment was accepted as part of the Senate budget resolution. We need to build on that momentum and quickly take up legislation to enact this proposal once and for all.

The fourth step we can take in the short-term: One program with an immediate impact is the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, better known as the LIHEAP program. It is the Federal grant program that provides vital funding to help our low-income and elderly citizens meet their home energy needs. Nationwide, over the last 4 years, the number of households receiving assistance under this program increased by 26 percent, but during that period, Federal funding increased by only 10 percent. So the obvious result is that, at a time of record high prices, the average benefit under the LIHEAP program actually dropped.

We need to fully fund this program. I tell my colleagues that while it is a glorious spring here in Washington, Maine and many other States are still struggling with temperatures that drop into the thirties at night. We need to fully fund the LIHEAP program at the authorized level of $5.1 billion. And for the long term, we should also restructure this program to make it more flexible so that States can take a reasonable approach to low-income energy issues and better balance energy bill assistance so we can provide some grants to winterize the homes of those who qualify for low-income heating assistance.

No. 5—and now I am getting into the long-term aspects of this plan—we need to improve energy efficiency.

Let me discuss the six steps toward the goal of energy independence. First is to make more efficient use of the energy to heat and power our homes, our offices, and our buildings.

I have introduced a comprehensive energy bill that would double funding for the Department of Energy's weatherization program. On average, weatherizing a home reduces heating bills by 31 percent, and overall energy bills by $358 per year.

The legislation would also provide predictable funding for the valuable Energy Star Program, which helps consumers buy energy-efficient appliances. It would extend the renewable energy tax credit through 2011 and the residential investment tax credit for solar and energy-efficient buildings through 2012.

It also includes an energy efficiency performance standard for utilities that would help them improve their efficiency. According to the Alliance to Save Energy, an energy efficient performance standard for utilities could save consumers $64 billion and avoid the need to build 400 powerplants, preventing 320 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions. Making buildings, appliances, and utilities more energy efficient would dramatically reduce our use of oil and save money for consumers at the same time.

No. 6, we need to implement a renewable electricity standard. Another component in my 10-point energy plan would revamp the way we produce electricity in this country. We need a national renewable electricity standard that would require the utilities to generate at least 15 percent of their electricity from environmentally sound, renewable energy sources by the year 2020. This would move us away from a reliance on coal and natural gas for electricity and diversify our energy supply to provide more price stability.

(Mr. SANDERS assumed the Chair.)

Ms. COLLINS. There are 28 States, including Maine, that already have a renewable electricity standard. We should follow their lead and establish a national renewable electricity standard.

I do wish to say, in enacting a standard, we need to make sure the benefits of renewable electricity reach rural areas, and that means building adequate transmission capabilities.

I know the new Presiding Officer, the Senator from Vermont, is also very committed to this goal.

No. 7, we should invest in cellulosic ethanol and renewable fuels. I want to distinguish between cellulosic ethanol versus corn-based ethanol. We have oversubsidized corn-based ethanol. It is causing tremendous distortions. It is causing shortages in food supplies. It is driving up the cost.

I have talked with a baker in Lewiston, ME, who cannot buy rye flour anymore because it has been displaced by farmers switching to grow corn. That is not what I am talking about. I am talking about the very promising development of cellulosic ethanol which could be made, for example, from switchgrass and from wood chips, waste wood, for example. That is why I am proposing to expand tax credits for cellulosic biomass. At the same time, those fuels have a much smaller life cycle environmental footprint than does corn-based ethanol and traditional fuels.

We can do so much in this area. I am proud researchers at the University of Maine have been at the forefront of developing commercially viable technologies to produce ethanol from cellulosic sources.

In addition to cellulosic ethanol, my 10-point energy plan calls for the expansion of other sources of clean renewable energy. During the height of the oil crisis in the 1970s, many Maine families turned to wood as an affordable way to heat their homes. With oil prices soaring, wood is once again the fuel of choice for an increasing number of consumers.

Unfortunately, many of the wood stoves that were purchased three decades ago are outdated, they are inefficient, they waste fuel, and they contribute to air pollution. The good news is the new style wood stoves emit 70 percent fewer emissions, and they produce as much energy with 30 percent less wood. This is a real breakthrough that allows consumers to get more energy out of their wood stoves and also to reduce the air pollution from wood stoves. In fact, I saw a demonstration where you could not see any

emissions at all coming from these new clean-burning wood stoves because there is a second burn of the emissions so they are far more efficient.

Unfortunately, making that change from an old dirty, inefficient wood stove to a modern, clean, and safer wood stove or a wood pellet stove is expensive. That is especially difficult for many families today. That is why I have introduced legislation to provide a tax credit so consumers can afford to trade in to these better wood stoves, and I am delighted the authors of the housing bill we recently passed agreed to include, at my behest and at the urging of others, a $300 tax credit for consumers who purchase these new clean-burning wood or pellet stoves.

Wood is a renewable resource and its increased use for home heating is inevitable in these times of high oil prices. We now have the technology that makes their use better for the environment and for human health, as well as safer and more affordable.

No. 8, we need to promote tidal, geothermal, solar, and wind energy. Other clean renewable energy sources include the tide in our oceans and the moderate temperatures that can be tapped under our land.

The U.S. wave and tidal energy resource potential that could reasonably be harnessed is about 10 percent of national energy demands. We have to put all these sources together and look at the broader comprehensive picture.

Once again, I am very proud that a consortium of the University of Maine, the Maine Maritime Academy, and industry is poised to become a key test bed for improved tidal energy devices.

It still is more costly than traditional electricity production, and that is why we need to provide some tax incentives to spur this kind of alternative development in tidal, geothermal, solar, and wood energy.

No. 9, we need to improve vehicle efficiency and alternatives to gasoline. We must provide more efficient transportation options. Last year, we took a giant step forward because Congress enacted, and the President signed into law, a long overdue increase in fuel economy standards for automobiles, SUVs, and light trucks that will save a million barrels of oil a day. That is a great start, but we can do even more.

The amount of gasoline used in transportation amounts to 9.2 million barrels of oil a day. That is almost half our national consumption of 20 million barrels of oil each day. Currently, we import about 12 million barrels of oil a day. So if we reduce the consumption of oil products for transportation purposes, it goes a long way toward reducing our reliance on foreign oil and decreasing overall energy prices, or at least stabilizing them for consumers.

Flex-fuel vehicles and plug-in hybrid vehicles can help us meet the challenge of energy independence and lower prices. We should extend the existing tax credits for alternative fuel vehicles and consider providing a tax credit for consumers who modify their existing vehicles to be flex-fuel capable.

We need to put more money into research, into plug-in hybrid vehicles, and expand the tax credits in that area as well.

Plug-in hybrids hold great promise. If all the new vehicles that are added to the American fleet for the next 10 years were plug-in hybrids, an additional 80 billion gallons of gasoline could be saved each year. That translates into almost 2 billion barrels of oil. It is significant. It cannot happen overnight, but let's put in place the policy that will help us get there.

We also must do more to help existing vehicles be more energy efficient. The Energy bill I have introduced would direct the Department of Transportation to create a national tire fuel efficiency program that would include tire testing and labeling, energy-efficient tire promotions through incentives and information, and the creation of minimum fuel economy standards for tires. That makes a difference as well.

Heavy-duty vehicles also deserve our attention. They move our economy. The Energy bill I have introduced would help keep them on the move while helping to reduce both fuel consumption and emissions. It would require the Department of Transportation to develop a testing and assessment program to determine what is feasible to improve the efficiency of heavy-duty vehicles and then develop appropriate fuel economy standards.

Additionally, we should provide a Federal tax credit for the purchase of idling-reduction technology for heavy vehicles, such as big trucks. That could save a trucker almost $1,600 in fuel costs and $2,000 in maintenance costs each year. It seems almost every week I read or hear or talk with another trucker in Maine who has gone out of business because of the cost of diesel. Think if through these policies we could help those truckers save that kind of money in fuel costs and maintenance each year. It would make the difference for many truckers between staying in business or being forced out of business.

Finally, the 10th point of my plan involves public transportation. Public transportation is difficult in a State such as the Presiding Officer's and mine. There are only three cities in Maine that have regular public transportation. But it is important for the overall goal nationally of energy independence that we focus on public transportation for those areas where it is feasible.

It is one of the most efficient ways we can get more passenger miles per gallon of gasoline. The energy legislation I have introduced would promote the development of the use of public transportation by subsidizing fares, encouraging employers to assist their employees with fares, as we do in the Senate, where we subsidize the employees who use the subway, and by authorizing funding to build energy-efficient and environmentally friendly modes of transportation, such as clean buses and light rail.

The bill would direct the Department of Transportation to designate 20 transit-oriented developmental corridors in urban areas by the year 2015 and 50 by the year 2025. These corridors could be developed with the aid of grants to State and local governments to construct or improve facilities for motorized transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. We have to look at everything.

In these times of high energy prices, when American families are struggling with the costs of filling their gas tanks and heating their homes, we must act in the short term to provide them some relief, and we must embrace fervently a national effort to achieve energy independence.

This Nation has demonstrated time and time again throughout our history our ability to rise to the challenge. I remember when President Kennedy, in the 1960s, challenged our Nation to be the first to land a man on the Moon and how everyone rallied toward that challenge and we achieved the goal that the President set forth for us. Let's now establish another goal and embrace it as fervently. Let's establish the goal of energy independence by the year 2020. It is vital to our economic, our environmental, and our national security. If we embrace this goal, Mr. President, I am confident we can achieve it.

Mr. President, I thank the Chair, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am glad Senator AKAKA from Hawaii is on the Senate floor. As chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, he has done terrific work on this bill. S. 1315 was reported out of committee 9 months ago—9 months ago. Senator AKAKA has worked on a bipartisan basis to come up with a new set of benefits for our veterans, benefits that are long overdue to help those veterans who are returning from war and faced with serious medical challenges—to help them with housing, with education, and job training, and to right a wrong.

Since World War II, we have realized those Filipinos who fought next to our soldiers in that war have not been treated fairly, and I want to thank Senator AKAKA and Senator INOUYE for their leadership in making certain the Filipinos who were there when we needed them in World War II have a chance in this bill to receive at least some benefit for that service.

There were some 470,000 who originally served. There may be only 20,000

left. Time has taken its toll. But for those remaining veterans, we owe them a debt of gratitude, and we should compensate them for service rendered on behalf of the United States. President Franklin Roosevelt called on the Army of the Philippines to stand with us, and they did. They fought and many were wounded. Some died in the process. If the United States is going to be known as a country that remembers its friends, we should remember our friends in the Philippines.

This provision is opposed by the Republican side—maybe not all, but some, and they object to it. They will have a chance to debate that, and I hope we can draw a conclusion soon and move this bill forward.

It is unfortunate that this bill, as important as it is for the veterans of the United States, has been subjected to a filibuster by the Republicans. They have done everything they can to stop this bill from coming to the floor. You would think that something as basic as veterans' benefits would be bipartisan. It certainly was in the committee. It should be on the floor of the Senate.

Last Thursday, Senator HARRY REID, the Democratic majority leader, tried to call up this bill, and he was told no; that he would have to file cloture. To put that in common terms, it means we would have to wait—wait over the weekend, not finish the bill last week—and have a vote, which we had earlier today. The vote was at 12 o'clock, a vote which the Republicans insisted on before going to the bill. The final total on that vote was 94 to nothing. There wasn't a single Senator of either political party who voted against proceeding to this bill.

So all we did was delay this bill for another 4 or 5 days, and we find ourselves at this very moment in the same position. The Republicans refuse to come forward and offer a plan for considering amendments under the bill. The time may come, and I hope it doesn't, when we face another cloture motion, another effort to stop this, a delay tactic from the Republican side of the aisle.

Last week, the Republicans used this delay tactic to stop a technical corrections bill, a bill which just cleaned up some mistaken language—poor grammar, poor spelling—in a bill passed years ago, and a bill that was important because it related to highway and bridge projects and that created good-paying jobs in the United States. The Republicans filibustered that bill. It went on for days and days and days. We thought, well, when it comes to a veterans bill, they are not going to use that filibuster again. But they did.

To date, the Republicans have engaged in 67 filibusters during this session of Congress. They have broken the record. I guess it is a source of pride within their Republican conference. The previous record was 57 filibusters over a 2-year period. They have broken that record in 16 months with 67 filibusters. Each and every time they engage in these delaying and stalling tactics, it is an effort to stop legislation that would move us forward either in creating jobs, which are important for an economy that is facing a recession, or creating veterans' benefits for the thousands of veterans who expect and need a helping hand.

The Republicans continue to use this strategy. I don't know, perhaps someone has inspired them to do this, but I wish they would think twice. This country's veterans and their families expect us to work in a bipartisan way to try to help them. We have many times. But in this bill, in this critically important bill on veterans' benefits, the Republicans have thrown every obstacle in our path that they can legally under the rules of the Senate. That still leaves us with a major responsibility. We owe it to the veterans to get this job done.

I am glad Senator AKAKA is here, keeping his lonely vigil on the Senate floor. I know in a minute we are going to recess and come back in about an hour, but I thank him for his leadership on this important bill. I am hopeful after the break we can come back to the floor and finally find an accommodation and agreement on both sides of the aisle.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii is recognized.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that during today's session, all time during any previous recess and any upcoming recess be charged postcloture.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 4:30 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 3:30 p.m., recessed until 4:31 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. KERRY).

VETERANS' BENEFITS ENHANCEMENT ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN LITTLE

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I am honored today to pay tribute to an outstanding member of my staff. When I was elected to the Senate, one of the first things I had to do was to select and hire a chief of staff. It didn't take long for me to find John Little. He came to work for me in December 2004, even before I was sworn in as a Senator.

When I first met John, he was legislative director for the junior Senator from Alabama, my colleague JEFF SESSIONS. I asked JEFF if it would be all right if I approached John and hired away a key member of his staff. He was very gracious, and he told me that although he would be hard to replace, he thought it would be a great opportunity for John and wanted to make sure he didn't stand in his way in any way.

One of the reasons I came to Washington was to be engaged in the issues of the day and try to find solutions to the problems facing Floridians and all Americans. Having spent my entire public career in the executive side of Government, I didn't know the inner workings of the Congress and looked for someone with that skill and knowledge. John Little brought that legislative experience from day one to my office and has been an invaluable member of my staff and someone I have relied on and counted on every single day I have been in the Senate.

John's experience on the Hill started when he was a very young lawyer, fresh from passing the bar and eager to work in Government. He worked his way up from being a young staffer writing legislative correspondence to becoming a legislative aide handling policy in the areas of education and health care. John had the respect of his peers and would eventually become legislative director. He is known in the Hill community for being bright, aggressive, conservative and even-keeled. He knows the implications of both large and small shifts in public policy and the impact they might have on families and communities. He brought to the people of Florida a great amount of knowledge and experience and was a problem solver when we had problems we faced.

Through his work and in getting to know John personally, I have come to admire him greatly for his strength of character, a trait I greatly admire in him. In the face of challenges, John courageously rose to meet those challenges. He never wavered in his love of this institution or his love of this country, and he has served the people of Florida and the Senate, an institution that I know he loves, very well.

Over these last few years, John has demonstrated tireless dedication and loyalty to me and the people of Florida. We have successfully turned back attempts to breach Florida's ban on offshore drilling. We have sought and secured funds for restoring the Everglades. We have fought to ensure Florida's military people and bases have the resources they need to perform their duties. Throughout these and other achievements, John has remained humble and committed to ensuring the policies we have pursued were in the best interests of the people of Florida.

For those who know the life of a chief of staff for a Senator, it is not glamorous. The hours are long, the issues are complex and innumerable, and you rarely have the opportunity for an uninterrupted weekend. For these reasons, John has accepted a position in the private sector—a great opportunity for John. This speaks to his skill and knowledge as one of the great

qualities he possesses as chief of staff in the Senate. I am sad to see him go, but I am confident he will continue to find ways to serve the public good. He will be missed.

I thank him for his service, and I wish him all the best in all his endeavors. John is truly a friend. I will miss my personal day-to-day contact with him, but he is someone with whom I hope to have a lasting, lifelong relationship.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MCCASKILL). The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

TONY BLAIR

Mr. STEVENS. Madam President, last evening I had the honor of attending a dinner of the Atlantic Council, and at that dinner they honored the former Prime Minister of Great Britain, the Right Honorable Tony Blair. I want to quote from his speech, and I ask unanimous consent to have his whole speech printed in the RECORD after my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. STEVENS. He said this:

The transatlantic alliance is, of course, a product of historical connection, culture, language and tradition. But most of all it is an alliance of belief, of shared values, of a common outlook not just about nations and their common interest but about humanity and its common destiny. Out of the travails of the twentieth century, the alliance drew its history and its strength. In the fight against fascism, and communism, it confronted and defeated totalitarian ideology. Millions of our citizens died for the victory. Through their sacrifice, we gained our freedom.

More than that, we came to a profound understanding about what it is to be free. We realized through the pain and suffering, the difference between deferring to those in power and deciding who they are; between the rule of law and the caprice of dictatorship; between the right to speak out and the silence of the fearful.

Now with those twentieth century battles over, it is tempting to think that this alliance has served its purpose. But here is the important point about it. It was never, and is not now, an alliance only of interests. It was and is an alliance of conviction. We, in the West, don't own the idea of freedom. We didn't fight for it because of the happenstance of birth in Europe or America. It is there, in the DNA of humankind. It is universal in nature and appeal. We developed it, but we didn't invent it.

Now is the time to stand up for it. If we want our values to govern the twenty-first century, we must combine hard and soft power. We must show unhesitating resolution in the face of threats to our security; and we must show that our values are indeed universal, that they encompass not only freedom but justice, and not for us alone but for the world as a whole. We must show these values are global. And build alliances accordingly, starting with the renewal of our own. And we need to do it with energy and urgency. In the Middle East this is time critical. We must act now.

Two things I now perceive more clearly than in office. The first is: the fundamental shift of the centre of gravity, politically and economically, to the East, to China and of course India, but more broadly to the Middle and Far Eastern nations.

This evening I will focus elsewhere, but suffice it to say that we are still, in the West, not in the state of comprehension or analysis we need to be, fully to grasp this shift. China and India together will over the coming decades industrialize on a scale, and at a pace, the world has never seen before. In China especially, the implications are huge. Whatever the present controversies, a strong strategic relationship with it is vital; as it is with India. We are so much better able to fashion the terms of such a relationship if we do it in unison. That alone would justify and re-justify our alliance.

This is a challenge of diplomacy and statesmanship of one kind.

The other challenge arises from the security threat that occupied so much of the last years of my premiership. Today, as we meet, our armed forces face the prospect of a continuing campaign in Afghanistan and Iraq. I hope one thing unites us all. Whatever the debate about the decisions that brought us to these countries, there should be no debate about the magnificent and sustained heroism of our armed forces. British and American troops and the forces of other allied nations deserve our full support and our gratitude.

But this struggle is not limited to those fields of conflict. Out in the Middle East, it is there in the activities of Hezbollah in Lebanon, of Hamas in Palestine; it is played out in the street of Arab opinion every day. It has spread across the world. More than a score of nations have suffered terror attacks in the last year, still more have foiled them. They do not include only the usual list, but Thailand, Nigeria, China itself.

In the Middle East, the ideology that drives the extremism is not abating. The Annual Arab Public Opinion survey published last week was not striking simply for its specific findings but for its overall picture. The basic ideological thrust of the extremists has an impact way beyond the small number of those prepared to engage in terror. In sum, it shows an alarming number of people who buy the view that Islam is under attack from the West; the leaders to support are those like Nasrallah and Ahmadinejad who are perceived to take on the West; and there is a contrast between Governments and their people that is stark.

The extremism is a tiny minority activity; the ideas, prejudices and sentiments that drive it, are not. The truth is that the roots of this global ideology are deep, far deeper than I first thought in the aftermath of September 11.

I believe the eventual outcome is not in doubt. But it is possible, dangerously, to underestimate the size of this challenge. And it is possible completely to misunderstand its origins.

This global ideology is based on a total perversion of the true faith of Islam. Its revolutionary rhetoric and attachment to so-called liberation movements is a sham designed to hide its profoundly reactionary and regressive character. It is totalitarian in nature and compromising with it will lead not to peace but to a ratcheting up of demands, none of which are remotely tolerable.

But it plays cleverly on the insecurities and uncertainty deep within Islam. It speaks to a sense that the reason for its problems is not to be found within, but as victims of outside aggression.

So today the issue hangs in the balance. The Middle East is without doubt a region in transition; but in which direction will it travel?

Like it or not, we are part of the struggle. Drawn into it, Europe and America must hold together and hold firm. Not simply for our own sake, but for that of our allies within Islam. If we do not show heart, why should they?

If they don't see our resolve, how much more fragile is theirs?

So how is this battle won?

We have to recognize that though the circumstances and conflicts of the twentieth century are very different from ours, nonetheless, one thing remains true in any time and for all time: That if under attack, there is no choice but to defend, with a vigour, determination and will, superior to those attacking us. Our opponents today think we lack this will. Indeed they are counting on it. They think that if they make the struggle long enough and savage enough, we will eventually lose heart, and our will fade. They are fanatics but they have, unfortunately, the dedication that accompanies fanaticism.

We cannot permit this to happen. Where we are confronted, we confront. We stand up. And we do so for as long as it takes. This ideology now has a nation, Iran, that seeks to put itself at the head of extreme Islam. They need to know what we say, we mean and, if necessary, will do. If we exhibit this attitude, peace is more likely; because they will not miscalculate or misread our character. But if they think us weak, they will fight all the harder and risk all the more.

They need to see our belief. We should not apologize for our values, but wear them with pride, proclaim their virtues loudly; show confidence; ridicule the notion that when people choose freedom this is somehow provocation to terror; and do so together, one alliance.

This struggle did not begin on September 11th 2001. It isn't the fault of President Bush, of Israel, or of Western policy. The idea that we suppress Muslims in the West is utterly absurd. There is more religious freedom for Islam in London than in many Muslim countries.

Madam President, I found his statement very convincing. I urge Senators to read it.

EXHIBIT 1

SPEECH BY THE RIGHT HONORABLE TONY BLAIR

The transatlantic alliance is, of course, a product of historical connection, culture, language and tradition. But most of all it is an alliance of belief, of shared values, of a common outlook not just about nations and their common interest but about humanity and its common destiny. Out of the travails of the twentieth century, the alliance drew its history and its strength. In the fight against fascism, and communism, it confronted and defeated totalitarian ideology. Millions of our citizens died for the victory. Through their sacrifice, we gained our freedom.

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This evening I will focus elsewhere, but suffice it to say that we are still, in the West, not in the state of comprehension or analysis we need to be, fully to grasp this shift. China and India together will over the coming decades industrialise on a scale, and at a pace, the world has never seen before. In China especially, the implications are huge. Whatever the present controversies, a strong strategic relationship with it is vital; as it is with India. We are so much better able to fashion the terms of such a relationship if we do it in unison. That alone would justify and re-justify our alliance.

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This struggle did not begin on September 11th, 2001. It isn't the fault of George Bush, of Israel, or of Western policy. The idea that we suppress Muslims in the West is utterly absurd. There is more religious freedom for Islam in London than in many Muslim countries.

You can argue about the rights and wrongs of the military invasion of Iraq or Afghanistan, but to allow for a single instant that this action justifies not simply terrorism but the idea that the West is innately hostile to Islam, only has to be contemplated, rationally, momentarily, for its nonsense to be manifest. We get rid of two brutal dictatorships; put in place a U.N. led democratic process; plus billions of dollars in aid: Where exactly is the hostility to Islam? And the only reason our troops are forced to stay is because of terror attacks carried out by this ideology in defiance of the democratically expressed wishes of the Muslim people of both countries.

And if it is hard and bloody, how bizarre to blame the allied forces, there under a U.N. mandate and who are trying to keep the peace, rather than those using terror to disturb it.

Yet this paradigm that it is 'our' fault that this terror threat is with us, has infiltrated a large part of Middle Eastern public opinion and actually influences significantly a large part of our own. It has to be taken on.

And here is the good news. The same poll shows most Muslims want peace. Most support a two-state solution in Israel and Palestine. The modern minded rulers of the successful Arab economies are also admired. People in Iran don't hate America even if its leader does. Go beneath the surface and there are allies out in the region and within Islam; people who believe strongly in their faith, but know that the twenty-first century is not about civilisations in combat but in alliance. In other words people are open to persuasion.

And here is the point. To win this struggle, we must be prepared to confront; but we must also be prepared to persuade.

This is a battle that can take a military or security form. But it can't be won by military or security means alone. It is a baffle of ideas. To win, we must persuade people of what we stand for and why; and we must do so in a way that answers their concerns as well as our own.

We believe in freedom and democracy. We also believe in justice. We believe in equality. We believe in a fair chance for all, in opportunity that goes beyond an elite and stretches down into the core of society. That, after all, is the American dream; free not just in politics but free to achieve, to fulfil your ambition by your own efforts and hard work, to make something of yourself, to give your children a better start than you had.

To win this battle, we must demonstrate these values too. That is why the Middle East peace process matters. It is the litmus test of our sincerity. We should not in any way dilute our commitment to Israel's security. We simply have to show equal commitment to justice for the Palestinians.

In the coming months, we have a chance to put it on a path to peace. It will require Israel to do more to lift the burden of occupation and give the Palestinians a sense that a state is possible. It will require the Palestinians to do more to get the robust capability on security to give the Israelis a sense that a state is possible. It will require a different and better strategy for Gaza. And it will require a relentless, insistent focus on the issues, from the U.S. and the international community, macro- and micro-managing it as necessary, to get the job done. President Bush and Secretary Rice have made that commitment. This can be done. It has to be done. It is not optional. It is mandatory for success.

The origin of this extremism does not lie in this dispute; but a major part of defeating it, lies in its resolution.

Then, wider than this, we have to work with the modern and moderate voices within Islam to help them counter the extremism and show how faith in Islam is supremely consistent with engagement in the twenty first century, economically, politically, and culturally. There is a vast amount of toil and time and energy to be expended in building bridges, educating each other about the other, creating the civic and social networks of reconciliation.

I would go further still.

In Africa, we have a cause of justice which cries out to be pursued; one that is, at the same time, a moral imperative and a strategic investment; one that needs the attention of East and West. In climate change, we have an issue that demonstrates that justice is also part of the compact of responsibility between this generation and those of the future.

My argument is therefore this. The struggle can be won. But it can only be won by a strategy big enough and comprehensive enough to remove the roots as well as the branches. The battle will, in the end, be won within Islam. But only if we show that our values are theirs also.

The problem with so much of Western politics is that the argument is posed as one between the advocates of hard power and soft power, when the reality is, we need both.

This is where America and Europe, united, should act. America has to reach out. Europe has to stand up. Not a single one of the global challenges facing us today is more easily capable of solution, if we are apart; if we let the small irritants obscure the fundamental verities; if we allow ourselves to be assailed by doubt about the value of our partnership, rather than affirm, albeit self-critically, its strengths.

We need now a powerful revival of our alliance. In the world so rapidly changing around us, we cannot take a narrow view of our interests or a short-sighted view of our destiny. We can't afford to take fright at these changes and go back into isolationism. We can't avoid the challenges. But we can master them. Together.

The transatlantic partnership was never just the foundation of our security. It was the foundation of our way of life. It was forged in experience of the most bitter and anguished kind.

Out of it came a new Europe, a new world order, a new consensus as to how life should be lived.

Today times are different. Every era is different. What is necessary is to distinguish between what endures for one time and what endures for all time.

In our history, we discovered the values that endure. We learnt what really matters and what is worth fighting for.

And we learnt it together.

Today, the challenge to those values is different. But it is no less real. Our propensity to avow those values will shape the way the twenty first century is governed. Will these values become, as they should be, universal values, open over time to all human beings everywhere; or will they be falsely seen as the product of a bygone age? That is the question. It is fundamental. It is urgent. It is our duty to answer it.

Mr. STEVENS. I wish to address another matter, as I have a moment. I understand there is no time limit now; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. STEVENS. Madam President, before the Senate now is a bill, the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act of 2007. It is a very important piece of legislation. It would expand a series of benefits to our veterans, including traumatic injury insurance, adapted housing grants, and burial allowances. As a veteran, I am delighted this bill is here, and I am pleased the Senate has invoked cloture so we may debate it and find a way to reach an accommodation on it with those who may find some fault with it or some matter they may wish to try to change.

What I wish to address is the provisions for the Filipino veterans legislation. In this part of this bill, as far as I am concerned, we are talking about honor, the honor of the United States. In 1941, on July 26, President Franklin Roosevelt ordered all military forces of the Philippines into the service of the United States to fight the Japanese. They were a province of the United States at that time. They were not an independent nation right then. The President had the power to do that. He, in fact, conscripted all men 18 years of age and over into their military. He took them all, and they fought, they fought hard, they fought almost to the death as, really, I think any American knows who knows about the Long March and Corregidor and what it meant in terms of the time these people delayed the Japanese so we could find a way to rearm this Nation and find a way to eventually overthrow the threats of tyranny that existed as manifested in the attack of Japan on December 7, 1941.

After the war, these people were recognized as veterans by our U.S. Veterans' Administration. All of the Filipinos who went into the services were entitled to full VA benefits. In 1946, Congress changed that. They said that those veterans who came to the United States would get full benefits of being in the military service but those who stayed in the Philippines would not.

I think to deal with this you have to think about the fact that there were 470,000 Filipino World War II veterans still alive after the war. Millions died. Millions died in defense of our country. Yet here, today, there are 18,000 veterans still alive.

My distinguished friend from Hawaii, who is chairman of our Defense Subcommittee, and I went to the Philippines recently and visited with some of them. I am the oldest Member of the Senate on my side. My good friend is, I think, the second oldest on his side of the Senate. We found ourselves junior to these people who are still there. Those men who fought over there, who are still with us now, are very much in need of our help. They deserve what this bill would give them.

This benefit that this bill would extend to them is one-third the amount they would have received had they come to this country. That is what was intended to give them in the first place—one-third—taking into account really the cost of living and various other aspects of their life in the Philippines. They would get the benefits, one-third of the amount they would receive if they came to this country. If they came to this country, they would have been entitled to the veterans' benefits, to the GI bill, to all of the other benefits we gave the veterans after World War II.

Do you know why Congress gave that to those veterans? Because there were too many men seeking a job. They had to take the 16 million of us who survived and spread us out over the economy. They did so by giving us benefits—training as a pilot, we could build our own home and get the money to do that, we could go to school through the GI bill. These people thought they had that right, too, but Congress cut it off in 1946.

These people, who are the survivors now of that almost half-million people who survived as veterans, Filipino veterans of World War II, and who stayed in that country, those 18,000, have asked us for help, to finally be recognized once again for what they did.

The cost is really minimal. The Senate will hear all kinds of estimates on the amount. But 18,000 people—the youngest age involved is 82. They are just not going to be with us that long. Anyone who gives you some estimate of billions of dollars that it is going to cost to take care of these people and give them what they were entitled to long ago—I think it is overestimating it.

Again, I come back to my point. It is a matter of honor, the honor of the United States is at stake.

These people put on our uniform, wore our uniform, fought with our comrades, almost to the death, all the way to Corregidor, and the survivors were denied what they should have had.

If they came to the United States, they had the right to become citizens automatically. But if they stayed with their families and tried to reconstruct their country, we denied them that right, even though by staying at home they would have gotten one-third. If they got to come over here and be citizens they would have the benefits. There were no GI bills over there. If they came over here as citizens, became citizens, they had the full range of benefits.

Now, I do not get excited too many times on this floor. This one, this bill, excites me. There are very few of us left from World War II. When I came to the Senate, almost every person who was a Member had served in World War II. There are five of us left now. I hope the Senate will listen to the five of us because we are united. We say this is a wrong that has to be rectified. We urge the Senate not to change this bill, to support the bill that has been introduced by the distinguished Senator from Hawaii and his colleague with my cosponsorship.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey is recognized.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I understand my distinguished colleague from Alabama has a colloquy with Senator MARTINEZ for 5 minutes or so. I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized after the Senator from Alabama.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Alabama.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN LITTLE

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I thank my colleague, Senator MENENDEZ, for his courtesy. I will adhere to that timeframe. I ask to be notified in 4 minutes.

I would express my appreciation to Senator STEVENS for his service to his country during World War II, and Senator INOUYE, our decorated World War II veteran himself. Both served in harm's way for their country. We do value their opinions on so many important issues.

John Little, a native of my hometown of Mobile, AL, a product of UMS High School, a good high school in Mobile, graduated from Southern Methodist University with a BA in history,

got his juris doctorate from Cumberland School of Law in Birmingham, AL, a fine law school.

He interviewed and then joined my staff 9 months into my term, just as I had come to Washington. We hired John, and we told him he would have to start at the bottom. And he did. He handled judiciary issues and correspondence with constituents back home. But within a year, using his excellent writing and research, it was obvious he was destined to take on more responsibility.

John had great talent, and we made him our legislative counsel and gave him the responsibility of several issues, including education, labor, drug caucus work, welfare, and campaign finance reform.

In 2000, John was promoted to legislative assistant and counsel and he dove right into the largest issues of our time, at that point the Elementary and Secondary Education Act debate. We were dealing with a very important issue in education, in particular, the special ed or IDEA reform, the need to create a thoughtful, disciplined standard and reform for students and teachers in the classroom. It was a big problem. We were hearing a lot about it. John spent countless hours of work on this project as my legislative assistant and helped foster the strong reform that eventually would be accepted in the IDEA reform bill which was signed into law that is affecting positively every school in America today.

After 2 years spent on education, labor, and welfare and judiciary issues, I promoted him to my deputy legislative director and counsel. His portfolio grew on a whole host of issues. He also became a key point man in my office on nominations issues.

So after the departure in 2003 of my legislative director, John was the obvious choice to take over and manage the day-to-day legislative operations of my office. He and I spent countless hours together working on IDEA reform and other issues that were so important.

He spearheaded my efforts to promote our plans for a strong national defense, lower taxes, less regulation, and the thoughtful application of commonsense conservative values to promote and pass good public policy.

After the elections of 2004, a new Senator, my good friend and colleague from Florida, Mr. MEL MARTINEZ, heard of the outstanding work of my young legislative director and counsel. I suppose he heard about that because he called me to ask if he could interview him. And I certainly agreed to that.

I think he sought out John's leadership, know-how, interpersonal skills, and a command of the inner workings of the Senate, and he eventually asked if he could bring John on as his chief of staff.

Although I would lose a strong counselor and a legislative leader and friend, my loss was indeed Senator MARTINEZ's gain. So it has been for the past 3 years that John has been at the helm with Senator MARTINEZ as his chief of staff.

He will leave the Senate family now but will be taking on another important challenge in the corporate world. I know John Little well and the values and high ideals he holds dear. He truly loves the Senate and respects her traditions. He loves America. The Senate was a better place with him here.

Thank you, John, for your friendship, your strong personal support, and your service to the Senate and our great country. It has been a pleasure and an honor to work with you. We wish you every success in your chosen endeavors.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

FAIR PAY RESTORATION ACT

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I am here today to stand up for equal pay for women. Now, that is something we have been working toward for a long time, but we are still falling short of the goal.

For decades we have come together across party lines to help men and women earn the same wage for the same work. The Senate voted overwhelming for equal pay when President Kennedy was in office. We gave our support to the Civil Rights Act under President Johnson. We renewed that support during President Reagan's term and during the term of the first President Bush.

So we have had this history of supporting this proposal, this rule of law, under both Democratic and Republican Presidents. Even after all the progress we have made, we still have a long way to go. But last year, five conservative Supreme Court Justices threw a roadblock against fair pay for women.

Here is what happened. A woman named Lilly Ledbetter was one of only a few supervisors at a tire plant. She worked 12-hour shifts and constantly had to endure insults from her male bosses just because she was a woman doing what was thought to be a man's job.

It was not until late in her career that she discovered her company was cheating her, paying her up to 40 percent less—40 percent less—than her male colleagues earned doing the same exact job.

Lilly filed a claim, and a jury awarded her full benefits, full damages. But the Supreme Court said she was entitled to nothing—to nothing—simply because she did not discover the pay discrimination early enough.

According to the Court, in the narrow 5 to 4 decision, if you do not discover that you are being discriminated against right after your employer starts doing it, you might have to suffer the consequences for your entire career, and not only for your career of being shortchanged fair pay for what, in fact, you were doing equal to anybody else, man or woman on that company's agenda, but at the same time having a consequence as it relates to your pension and your benefits and your Social Security because all of those were factored by the income you make.

So when your income is discriminated against, even though you are doing the same job as anyone else in the company in that category, not only do you not receive the income during your working life, but you have a consequence for the rest of your life, in your retirement.

It is a discrimination that keeps on discriminating. Today we have a chance to change that, to make things right. Discrimination is discrimination no matter when it happens. If someone breaks the law, they should be held accountable for it.

This body must make it clear that women should be treated the same as men. We must make it undeniably clear that every worker should be paid fairly for their labor. We must proclaim in a unified voice the same types of voices that have previously held together in this body almost unanimously: that discrimination will not be accepted in the workplace, discrimination will not be tolerated in America.

The idea behind the Fair Pay Restoration Act is simple. It would restate the rule that the clock for filing a wage discrimination claim starts running from the day a worker receives a discriminatory paycheck, not the day the employer first decides to discriminate. This is, in essence, what the law was before the Court decision. It was the law of the land for a long time. All we simply say is, the Court is wrong. And even one of the Justices from the bench in a dissenting opinion said: ''This is something that Congress needs to change.''

If a female worker sees her wages are continuously falling behind those of her male counterparts, she should be able to challenge her employer, even if the original decision to discriminate was made years ago. As long as the discrimination continues, the right of a worker to challenge it should continue as well.

This does not only benefit women, it helps all in our country if they are getting cheated in their paycheck on account of their age, or their race, a disability, their national origin, or what religion they belong to.

Now, as usual, there are those who are trying to defend the status quo and scare us into believing that this law would cause a flood of litigation and undercut corporations' bottom lines. Unfortunately for them, history is not on their side in terms of those false fears.

We know this legislation is workable and fair because it was the law of the land for decades, for decades before the Supreme Court made its ruling. All this bill would do is make the law what it was before it was widely interpreted to be only 1 year ago. We simply want to return the standard to be able to protect an individual at the workplace from discrimination simply as the law was for decades before.

And this is not exposing companies to unlimited damages either. The fact is, liability is still limited to 2 years of back pay following the standard set in the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

We will hear a lot of goblins here, but the reality is the legislation we are considering as it was limits a company's liability to 2 years of back pay. Now, some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will ask why workers often cannot file their claim within 180 days from the first instance of discrimination.

Well, there are good reasons. There are good reasons for that. To begin with, many workers have difficulty comparing their salaries to coworkers, with many businesses actually prohibiting it, prohibiting an employee from making or attempting to make these comparisons.

Why would a company be concerned about the comparisons among people doing the same job within the context of a company? Why? What is it that they have to fear? What is it they have to hide? Even if a worker sees their pay is lower than their coworkers, they may not recognize it was a result of discrimination.

If a worker does recognize it as discrimination, they often have to wait to contact the EEOC or decide not to due to feeling ashamed or, more often, they fear retaliation by their company, and that is a real fear.

They fear the consequences of rocking the boat and figure a job in which they are discriminated against is better than being fired and having no job at all. Certainly, in this economy today, an economy that does not work for working families, those who are fortunate enough to have a job have to think about that extra burden of raising their voice against discrimination because they might, in fact, lose a job. So when people ask: Why can't they within 180 days go ahead and file their complaints, it is because it simply doesn't always work that way. I would ask those who raise the question: What happened during the decades of the standard of the law that existed? No one raised those concerns then.

Here is what it comes down to. If you vote against this bill, you are going on record and telling an entire nation you want to make it harder for a woman to get paid the same as a man for the same work. It is not about working less. It is not about having a privileged role. It is about being able to achieve pay for doing the same exact job, with all the pressures, all the challenges, all the skills anyone else would have, male or female.

These are challenging economic times, and the challenges are especially tough for women. For every dollar a man gets paid, women get paid 77 cents. Women's earnings have fallen six times as much as men as our economy began sliding toward a recession last year. The truth is, the glass ceiling might be a little higher than it was, but it is still there.

I don't want my daughter, who is fortunate to have gone to a great university, graduated, incredibly smart, to realize less in her power to earn simply because she is a woman compared to those with whom she is competing. Yet if we let the law stand the way it is, that very well can be institutionalized as something that may happen.

It is our responsibility as legislators, as Americans, as human beings to make sure this country holds the same promise for women as it does for men and that in the future our daughters have the same opportunities as our sons. Restoring a woman's opportunity to fight for fair pay is a big part of that. It has to be part of a broader strategy to get our economy back on track. We have to bring down the cost of health care, create green-collar jobs, and help workers get the training and education they need to succeed in a global environment in which intellect is the greatest asset the Nation is going to have, a world that has been transformed, where the boundaries of mankind have largely been erased in the pursuit of human capital so an engineer's report is created in India and sent back to the United States for a fraction of the cost, a radiologist's report is done in Pakistan and read in a local hospital by your doctor for a fraction of cost or, if you have a problem with your credit card, as I recently did, you end up in a call center in South Africa. The reality is that for the delivery of services created by an individual, we are globally challenged. For America to continue to be the leader economically, it needs to be at the apex of the curve of intellect, the most highly educated generation of Americans we have ever had.

Even as we move toward achieving those educational goals, what is it worth if my daughter graduates from Harvard but still makes 77 cents on the dollar that a man makes? It is fundamentally wrong. If we are going to prosper as a nation, that prosperity must be shared. I have said it before and it is as true as it ever was: Only a society with no second-class citizens can be a first-class society. Today it is time to act on that principle. It is time to vote for fair pay and ease the way to prosperity and justice for all. That is our choice. That is our opportunity. That is the responsibility of the Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SALAZAR). The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. INOUYE. Mr. President, when the Spanish-American War ended in 1898, the Philippines became a possession of the United States. It became a colony of the United States. We hate to use that word because we frown upon colonial powers, but we became a colonial power. As such, we exercised complete power over the people of the Philippines. Legally, we could arrest them. We could do anything we wanted. However, in 1934, we decided the status should change a little bit, and they became a commonwealth; however, not citizens of the United States.

Then in July of 1941, when war clouds began to appear in the Asia-Pacific area and the Japanese were invading other countries, the President of the United States issued an order forming the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines. The Commonwealth Army of the Philippines had 470 members. They were all Filipinos. They were assured, if combat should come about and they participated, they would be granted American citizenship, if they so desired. And they would receive all the benefits veterans of the United States would receive.

Well, December 7, 1941, became history. Two weeks later, the Congress passed a bill making it a very formal order of the day that if a Filipino came forward and volunteered to serve in the uniform of the United States and pledged to stand in harm's way on our behalf, at the end of the conflict, they would be granted citizenship, if they so desired, and receive all the benefits Americans received.

The Japanese invaded the Philippines. There were two great battles, the battle of Corregidor and the battle of Bataan. The battle of Bataan has been made part of the history of this Nation. We have seen countless movies on the Bataan Death March, one of the better known death marches in our history. In that death march, there were 75,000 prisoners of war. Of that number, 54,000 arrived at the prisoner of war camp; 15,000 died on that march. The distance wasn't too long. It was 75 miles. But they were given no medicine, no food, no water, and 15,000 died on the way. Six thousand escaped to become guerillas. Of the movies I have seen which show Americans being bayonetted, Americans being shot on the march, you never saw a Filipino on the march. Yet the record will show that of the 75,000 who participated in the death march, 15,000 were Americans and 60,000 were Filipinos.

Most of those who died before arriving at the prison camp were Filipinos. Strangely also, though they spent much time on the frontlines attacking Japanese, carrying out heroic acts, they received no medals, no Purple Hearts, no Bronze Stars, no Silver Stars, and no DSCs. They were serving under American command.

Well, we were victorious. But before we were victorious, General MacArthur left the Philippines and said: ''I shall return.'' The men whom he left in the Philippines were Filipinos. They had the job of harassing the Japanese, keeping them occupied so they wouldn't be moving to other areas to cause havoc. The casualties mounted in the thousands. Thousands died in our defense.

So what happens? Surrender terms are signed on the USS *Missouri*, and law and order is restored in the Philippines. Happy day. About a month and a half later, Washington sent one man

to serve in the Embassy, to take applications of those men who wanted to become citizens of the United States. But a month later, we called him back. That promise we made, if you want to become a citizen, you had to do it in some office in the United States, not in the Philippines. That is why they sent that man down there to represent us. When that man left Manila and returned to Washington, there was no one to take applications.

Then in mid-February of 1946, the Congress, our predecessors, passed a bill repealing that law they passed in December of 1941. They repealed it.

It is a matter of honor, as Senator STEVENS pointed out. Here was a promise, a solemn promise on the part of Americans. And by congressional action, we break that promise.

Here we have a bill before us that will restore this honor. It will say to the Filipinos, since your cost of living is not as great as ours, your pension will be one-third of ours. Well, one can say that is better than nothing. But if they want to become citizens, they can do it in Manila or in Honolulu or anywhere else.

There are 18,000 who want to become citizens. There are many others waiting. But as Senator STEVENS pointed out, the youngest surviving Filipino veteran is 82 years old.

As I speak, men are dying. By the time we consider this measure and pass it, there will be hundreds more who will die.

It is not a matter of money. It is a matter of honor. It is the American thing to do. If we make a solemn promise, we should be prepared to keep it. In this case, they were willing to stand in harm's way for us. The least we can do is to recognize this and to salute them as fellow Americans.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I have deep respect for Senator INOUYE, who just spoke. He is passionate. There is no American who can look at Senator INOUYE and not see an American war hero. He has committed so much, and his perspective on history is important for all of us to recognize. Before him, Senator STEVENS spoke, one of the foundations of the U.S. Senate. I find myself troubled to some degree that I am at odds with both of them on this issue.

I want Senator INOUYE to know how much I respect him and how much research I have done on this issue, and I will try to make my case for why I do not think this is a priority but to do it in the most respectful way I possibly can to individuals, such as Senator INOUYE, who have so much invested not just in their knowledge but in the commitment and sacrifices they have made.

Mr. President, we started debating S. 1315 earlier today. Where I ended off in that earlier debate was pointing out to my colleagues and the country how this special pension, a special pension we intend to provide to a very small group of Filipino veterans who were not enlisted in the U.S. Armed Forces but were under control of U.S. forces and command of U.S. forces—I just want to point this out to everybody: Currently, the Filipino Government provides a $120-per-month pension to this select group of individuals. That pension puts every veteran at 400 percent over the poverty line in the Philippines. What S. 1315 attempts to do is to create a new special pension funded by the American taxpayers that would take the average income of this select group of Filipino veterans to 1,400 percent above the poverty line in the Philippines.

Now, let me put that in direct comparison to the United States. We have special pensions in the United States that apply to our veterans because we believe it is important to say no veteran should live in poverty. Our commitment is such that it is roughly over $10,000 a year. Let me compute what that $10,000 means relative to the poverty line. It means they are 10 percent above the poverty line in the United States.

So with all due respect to my colleagues, I am supposed to come down here on behalf of my constituents, my taxpayers, my veterans, suggesting there is equity in providing a 1,400-percent pension stipend for Filipino veterans over the poverty level but only 10 percent for U.S. veterans? Well, I cannot do that. That is why I am at odds with some of the people whom I really love and respect in this institution.

As I said earlier today, I have done a tremendous amount of research on this issue because so many people have suggested with a high degree of certainty there was a promise that was made. Well, I cannot find that promise. According to information provided at a 1998 congressional hearing, the Department of the Army examined its holdings on GEN Douglas MacArthur and President Franklin Roosevelt and ''found no reference by either of these wartime leaders to postwar benefits for Filipino veterans.''

Now, I am going to ask that another chart be put up that displays the difference in Filipino veterans because I think most would believe there is one target we are after. What you see here is four different groups. You see Old Scouts. These are the Filipino soldiers who signed up with the U.S. Army, and they served side by side in the U.S. Army. Today, they receive every benefit, except for those living in the Philippines and outside of the United States. And medical care is only provided at a clinic that the VA has in the Philippines. Every other benefit they get. They are getting pensions. They are getting death pensions for their survivors. They are getting burial benefits. They are getting everything because they were part of the U.S. Armed Forces, even though they are Filipino.

The other three categories you see: the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines, recognized guerilla forces, New Philippine Scouts—yes, they were under the command of U.S. forces. Everybody in the Pacific was under U.S. force command. But they actually enlisted in the Filipino forces. We never solicited them. They could have joined the U.S. Army. They chose not to.

The reality is that just about every benefit, except for two, was extended to even the three groups that are the Filipino veterans. The two glaring exceptions are pensions for nonservice-related disabilities—nonservice-connected disabilities—and the death pension for survivors.

So what I want everybody to understand is, in a bill that totals over $900 million—that, I might add, we are funding. We are offsetting it because a court ruling took this away from U.S. veterans. We took money away in benefits from U.S. veterans. We are now using this $900 million the courts extracted to say we are going to enhance the benefits for our veterans here at home. As a matter of fact, over $300 million of it is life insurance changes we are making. And, yes, our veterans are benefiting from it. But $100 million of that $900 million is going in this category to beef up our commitment to Filipino veterans. But there is $221 million that is going to create a special pension, a pension for those Filipino troops who served as part of the Filipino military who were commanded by U.S. forces and never injured in combat. Let me say that again: Filipinos who live in the Philippines who were under U.S. command who served in the Filipino Army and have no service-connected disability.

This is not about disabilities. This is about a windfall. This is about a windfall that exceeds what our standard is here for our veterans, which is 10 percent above poverty, and currently the Filipino veterans are over 400 percent above poverty; and some in this institution suggest that the right thing for us to do is to raise their pension to 1,400 percent over the poverty level in the Philippines.

Some might say: Was it Congress's intent to grant full VA benefits to Filipino veterans? It is important to note that it was a 1942 VA legal opinion which concluded that Filipino veterans had served ''in the active military or naval service of the United States'' and on that basis were eligible for VA benefits.

Senator Carl Hayden, chairman of the subcommittee on appropriations, had this to say about the VA's legal determination regarding Philippine Army veterans during committee proceedings on March 25, 1946:

There is nothing to indicate that there was any discussion of the meaning of that term, probably because it is generally well recognized and has been used in many statutes having to do with members or former members of the American armed forces. It would normally be construed to include persons regularly enlisted or inducted in the regular manner in the military and naval service of the United States.

I go on:

But no one could be found who would assert that it was ever the clear intention of Congress that such benefits as are granted under . . . the GI bill of rights—should be extended to the soldiers of the Philippine Army. There is nothing in the text of any of the laws enacted by Congress for the benefit of veterans to indicate such intent.

This is our colleague in 1946.

I go on:

It is certainly unthinkable that the Congress would extend the normal meaning of the term to cover the large number of Filipinos to whom it has been suggested that the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1940 applies, at a cost running into billions of dollars, aside from other considerations, without some reference to it either in the debates in Congress or in the committee reports.

Now, I am quoting from the history of our congressional hearings, of our Senate hearings, in 1946, from the chairman of the subcommittee on appropriations.

Again, we have the Department of the Army examining the records of GEN Douglas MacArthur. We have the Department of the Army examining the papers of Franklin Roosevelt. They find no references by either of these wartime leaders to postwar benefits guaranteed to Filipinos. We have the records of the congressional hearing, and Senator Carl Hayden says: I have looked. There is nothing that suggests that this promise was ever made. Yet individuals come to the floor and they make this claim.

Now, I am convinced that—we are dealing with something 50 years later—it is very possible that memories are not exactly the same, that one person's recollection may be different today than it was in 1942 or 1944 or 1946. All the basis we have is to go back in history, to look at the documents, to see what the commitments were, and, more importantly, to try to get inside the heads of our colleagues then, to understand: If it was not in the letter of the law, what was the intent? Senator Hayden makes it very clear: It is not only not the letter of the law, it is not the intent of the Congress of the United States.

Now, what factors influenced Congress's decision to limit certain VA benefits to Filipino veterans in what is known as the Rescissions Act of 1946?

You see, in the United States we have the rule of law. When the courts determined, under their understanding, this set of benefits would apply, Congress actually passed legislation to rescind what the courts had awarded.

Again, quoting Senator Hayden:

The GI bill of rights is intended to benefit an American who served in the armed forces and who, upon discharge from the service, returns to civil life in the United States, where American standards of living prevail. . . . Whenever any part of the GI bill of rights is extended to Filipino veterans, the cost of living in the Philippines and other economic factors must be given careful consideration.

Let me go back to the chart I referenced. That is all we are applying. That is the only standard I am asking my colleagues to look at: that when we apply what sounds in the United States like a meager amount—$120 a month—what we are talking about is 400 percent over the poverty level. When we talk about increasing by $300 a month the pension, what we are doing is we are taking potentially a Filipino veteran who is already 400 percent over poverty, or more—assuming they have no other income—and we are putting them at 1,400 percent over poverty, which puts them way above the middle class of the Philippines. This is a tremendous windfall when you look at it from the standpoint of the size of the Philippine economy.

Mr. President, in total, S. 1315 proposes about $900 million worth of spending over 10 years. I will ask that a chart be put up so everybody can see what S. 1315 does. I think many have construed that I am opposed to S. 1315. I am the ranking member. I only have one piece I am opposed to. I have been accused of holding the bill up since last August. I have tried to negotiate this one piece since last August. What you see there is the Filipino piece, which is No. 1 on the list—$332 million out of $900 million. The actual pension issue is $221 million. There is the term life insurance program, $326 million for our kids; the State approving agencies, $60 million; mortgage life insurance, $51 million. You can go down the list. It is $909 million worth of benefits. I am only addressing a small sliver. It is a quarter of it in dollars, but it is a small piece. I am for everything else.

If you take the Filipino special pension out, today I will propose to pass it under unanimous consent. I made the offer to the majority leader yesterday. This chart lists all of the provisions of S. 1315, from the most expensive provision to the least expensive provision. Again, you can see that the Filipino piece is the most expensive provision in S. 1315.

During a time of tight budgets, and when multiple commissions have recommended that Congress focus our resources to improve the benefits of our U.S. returning combat veterans, it is plain wrong to put the needs of Filipino veterans, with no service-related injuries, who are residing in the Philippines, ahead of our own service-injured men and women returning from war. I am not sure it is defensible to suggest that we are going to institute that special pension, which means we are not going to divert that $221 million to our men and women.

I will have a substitute amendment tomorrow. The only change in my substitute amendment is that it keeps intact everything but the special pension. It diverts the special pension and it enhances the ability for housing upgrades for our disabled troops to be made from $50,000 to $55,000. It provides additional grants for disabled veterans who need upgrades to their vehicles that they drive; it will up the special grants by $1,000. We are going to address additional burial benefits. We are going to address some discrepancies in education benefits for our Guard and Reserve. We are using the $221 million solely to divert it to our veterans.

Each of us has met with veterans organizations and constituents who have asked us to address the needs that exist in the veterans community, particularly the needs of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who are defending us in the war on terror. The distinguished majority leader touched on this very point last Friday. Frankly, after reading his comments, I was hopeful he might support the amendment I am offering, the substitute amendment. On Friday, he talked about the number of Americans who died in Iraq. He talked about those who are coming home with physical and mental wounds. He made the following statement:

At the height of this war, with soldiers being wounded every day and soldiers coming home from Iraq every day, we can't even get a bill to deal with their health to the Senate floor.

All I have ever asked for is a fair opportunity to amend the bill and a fair length of time to debate the bill. The majority leader has to make decisions as to whether he files cloture motions. He has filed 67 of them, because 67 times they tried to short the minority on our ability to exercise the rights we have as the minority, which are not many.

But 67 times it has been done, so 67 times he filed a cloture motion. That is part of leading; I am sorry.

But don't suggest that the No. 1 thing that you are for is our guys, when $221 million of this is going to set up a new special pension fund for Filipinos, who live in the Philippines, with no service-connected disability. It is disingenuous.

There is consensus in this body for everything else in S. 1315, except for one provision. We have tried for months to negotiate that one provision. For my colleagues who want to know why this bill has been at a standstill, it is because we have been trying to shift the money to our kids—our children and our grandchildren. At the committee markup last June, Senator CRAIG put forward an amendment to redirect the Filipino pension fund to other priorities. It was rejected on a straight party-line vote—another rarity in the Veterans' Committee. We don't have party-line votes in the Veterans' Committee. For some reason, this year we have now had them.

In December, shortly after the Dole-Shalala disability commission recommended we improve a host of benefits for war-injured veterans, I offered

another proposal to redirect the spending on pensions for Filipinos to higher priorities. It too was rejected. Any claim that there has not been an attempt to try to negotiate what is in this bill is ludicrous. I put that proposal in the form of a bill, S. 2640. We cannot hide from it. We will vote on it. Members will be asked to choose between our veterans and a 1,400-percent pension over the poverty line in the Philippines. That will happen tomorrow.

This comes down to where our priorities are—the Senate and this Congress. I believe our priorities should be on increasing the benefits that apply to our guys. I believe that the substitute amendment I will offer that increases housing grants for profoundly disabled veterans who need their homes modified is important. It should be a priority. I believe the auto grants for profoundly disabled veterans who need the freedom of mobility to live independently is a priority. I believe improvements to the education benefits for returning Guard and Reservists is a priority. I am sad to say that we do increase the burial benefits. I am sorry it is a provision that people have to take advantage of. But burial benefit increase is a priority of this country. I believe all of these things are absolutely crucial.

I met a veteran from North Carolina last year, Eric Edmundson. He needed a vehicle because of his disabilities. An unbelievable soldier; an unbelievable American. He will never fully recover. He will only be mobile with the help of the aids we can make available to him. The Edmundsons found an accessible van to accommodate Eric's injuries for $45,000. They had to pay $14,000 out of pocket.

Can we put the need of that van for Eric Edmundson as a top priority? We can if, in fact, we shift the $221 million that is going to people who have no service-connected disability, don't live in the United States, aren't U.S. citizens, didn't serve in the U.S. Army, but were under U.S. command during World War II. We are not going to be able to do it if, in fact, we don't shift the money.

My amendment would increase the auto grant benefit to $16,000 and, more importantly, in the case of the housing benefit, the auto benefit, and the burial benefit, it would index it so that annually we don't have to go in and legislate an increase. It increases with inflation, so for the first time what Congress does is actually thinks about the future and makes sure our veterans receive a benefit that is reflective of the inflation in between times that we have legislated.

Creating a pension in the Philippines, I suggest, is simply bad policy. I will make a comment on why the Philippine pension is not only the wrong priority, it cannot be justified as a matter of fairness. It is important to understand that VA pensions are designed for veterans, as I said earlier, to stay out of poverty. When we left the Philippines, we made some commitments to the Filipino Government. We transferred to them multiple hospitals and all the equipment that was in those hospitals. As a matter of fact, we granted them, at the time, a tremendous amount of money. That money, in today's standards, would be well into the billions of dollars. We didn't walk away and leave anybody without. We made sure that we rebuilt the country, but we also left the infrastructure that was most needed.

Let me suggest to you that this pension creates a new inequity. There were a lot of troops in the Second World War under U.S. command. They might not have been a territory of the United States, but they signed up for their army, and they were under U.S. command. What is to keep them from claiming they are owed a special pension from the United States? They have never done it. These are the only ones who have. If you think of all of our global partners who could claim, based upon this precedent, quite frankly, it would be a difficult thing for this country to deal with.

As I said earlier, this new spending is paid for by reversing the effects of a U.S. Court of Appeals decision for veterans' claims decision that granted extra pension benefits to elderly and poor U.S. veterans in a manner that was never intended by Congress.

Let me explain in layman's terms what that means. The VA made enhanced payments to U.S. veterans—benefits that were never intended in the letter of the law or in the intent of Congress. When the courts determined that, they pulled back about a billion dollars from this country's veterans. It is that billion dollars that is used in the offset for the $909 million spending plan we have in front of us today. I may argue the court's decision, but to take money from veterans in the United States, who are slightly above the poverty threshold, and spend it on a new special pension for Filipino veterans, who are already 400 percent above poverty in the Philippines, is flat wrong.

Let me say that again. What the court exercised was to take money away from U.S. veterans who are slightly over poverty, and I have said constantly what we do with special pensions in the United States, we get about 10 percent over the poverty line. We have Filipinos today at 400 percent over the poverty line, and the debate we are having is whether we go to 1,400 percent over the poverty line.

One of the largest service organizations, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, agrees. It passed a resolution in August urging Congress to use funds from reversing the effects of the court decision on U.S. veterans and not to create new benefits for Filipino veterans. If my colleagues adopted that approach, as many of us have urged from the beginning, S. 1315 would have become law in August 2007.

The chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee is a good man. He is a friend. He sent me a letter on April 10, asking for my cooperation on a way forward with some of the contentious issues in S. 1315—primarily this—but on the very next day the majority leader was already talking about filing a cloture motion on the bill. I was perplexed a little. On the one hand, I had an offer to negotiate a way forward; but on the other hand, I have a cloture vote being proposed. I am not sure where the disconnect is. I don't like to look back. I believe we should look forward.

I am prepared to go to the bill. I believe it would be extremely healthy for this Congress and for the American people to be educated on exactly what this is about because this truly does beg where we place our priorities from the standpoint of the Senate. Are our priorities to fund our veterans, our kids with service-connected disabilities, or is our goal to set up a special pension for non-U.S. citizens who live in the Philippines, with no service-connected injuries, and to divert that money away from our kids?

The answer is pretty simple for me. I believe our priority is to make sure our troops get it. I believe our priority should be to make sure our soldiers get whatever they need, to make sure the Eric Edmundsons of the world have the van they need for their disabilities, to make sure those who need adaptive housing because of their severe disabilities from war have the money they need to upgrade their house so they can maneuver in it.

I daresay, a $1,000 increase on the auto grants and a $5,000 increase on the adaptive housing is not enough. I can tell my colleagues, we need to do more, and I am committed to say today I will do more. But how are we going to do more if we show something as irresponsible as a decision to spend $221 million that we have taken from U.S. veterans, away from people slightly over the poverty level, to allow it to go to individuals who are going to be above the middle class in the Philippines?

How can any veteran in America believe we are serious about prioritizing how we spend money in the future if, in fact, we display this type of judgment and willingness to extract money from our veterans to create new programs?

I am fairly confident we have a number of Members who would like to speak on this bill this evening. It is my hope we will have an opportunity to turn to consideration of the actual bill and to entertain any amendments our colleagues plan to offer on this bill.

When the majority leader left the floor earlier today, he said it was his request that we move as quickly to conclusion of this bill as we possibly can. I have given my colleagues a small snippet tonight of what the history I looked at says of our leaders at the time. There was no documentation, there was no hearsay, there was no intent of those leaders or the Congress to

actually extend a benefit such as those that have been described by some of my colleagues.

Clearly, this Congress, as any Congress of the future, could elect to add a benefit. For 50 years, the Congress could have added this benefit. The further we get from the 1942 act and the interpretation by the Court and the further we get from the 1946 Senate hearings that initiated the Rescissions Act that took the Court's interpretation of what the Filipinos were due away, I am convinced it requires somebody to do their homework and come to the floor and remind us of where our priorities are in this country; that until we have more than our kids need, the right priority is to spend it on ours and not necessarily on somebody else's.

I reiterate the fact that our veterans and our VA pension is designed for veterans who have no service-related injuries and who are poor, according to the U.S. definition of poverty, and the maximum VA pension payable to a U.S.-based veteran puts him at 10 percent above poverty and at 17 percent of the median average household income.

Again, the Philippine Government currently provides a $120 pension to this brave group of Filipino veterans, putting them at roughly 400 percent of poverty in the Philippines and 35 percent of the average household income. Adding an additional VA pension today, adding the pension that is already in S. 1315, would put a single Filipino veteran at 1,400 percent of the Filipino poverty level and 21 percent above the average household income.

Think about that. Our special pension is going to put them 21 percent over what the average Filipino makes annually.

If the argument I have made is not credible from the standpoint of prioritizing our spending, that it should be our kids and not necessarily their veterans, then I ask my colleagues: Is this our responsibility? Our responsibility is to take individuals and to put them 21 percent over the average working Filipino? I do not believe so. I do not believe that is a good thing. I believe it is wrong. But that is what we are being asked to do.

I am not sure the VA was intended to take people and put them in the middle class or, in the case of the Philippines, to put them above the middle class. It was to make sure our soldiers and their soldiers do not live in poverty. Clearly, they are doing better than we are today, and I challenge us to do more about ours, or maybe it describes for us the choice we have before us, that this would be ill-advised for us to proceed forward.

Since World War II, the United States of America has provided a tremendous amount to Filipino veterans. Congress authorized the construction and equipping of a hospital for the care of Filipino veterans. The Filipino Memorial Hospital Center VMMC was dedicated in 1955 and turned over to the Filipino Government free of charge. Congress authorized the transfer of another hospital located at Fort McKinley in the Philippines, including all the equipment contained in the hospital, to the Republic of the Philippines. Congress provided that annual grants be made to the Philippines to purchase equipment and material for the operation of these hospitals. Congress also authorized disability compensation, survivor compensation, funeral and burial benefits, dependents' educational benefits at the rate of 50 cents on the dollar for individuals residing in the Philippines and full-dollar benefits for those residing in the United States. Full eligibility for VA health care was provided to Filipino veterans legally residing in the United States.

We have done a lot. I am sure it is not as much as some want. We are faced with a job where we have people come in and ask every day—there is something everybody needs. I learned very early in life that the toughest thing to learn in life is to say no because that means somebody is upset with you. But you cannot go through life without learning the word ''no.'' You cannot do it in business, and you clearly cannot do it in politics. Maybe that is why Charles de Gaulle said politics is too serious a matter to leave up to politicians. It requires a participation level of the American people.

My hope is, over the next day, 2 days—whatever the leadership decides is the future of this bill—that we will have an opportunity to educate the American people and, at the same time, we will educate Members of the Senate that no matter how far you want to look back, no matter how much you want to try to speculate what went on, that when you stick with the written word, when you look at what President Roosevelt said, when you look at what General MacArthur said, when you look at what the Senate did and Senator Hayden—and they were there at the time and the Senate was charged with determining whether this benefit was appropriate—that from all the information in real time they looked at, their decision was the Rescissions Act, to take away what the courts had awarded.

Now, 50 years later, we are being asked not to apply what they thought was correct but to apply what we think today. Even if you use that standard, I daresay you cannot make a claim that a special pension that puts Filipino veterans who live in the Philippines, with no service-connected injury, 21 percent over the median income in the Philippines is the right thing for us to do.

I know there are several Members who are going to come over shortly. I expect Senator CHAMBLISS any minute.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MENENDEZ). Without objection, it is so ordered.

EARTH DAY AND GLOBAL WARMING

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, 38 years ago this week, Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin, a great environmentalist and a good friend of many of our colleagues who are still here, came to the Senate floor with a novel idea. He proposed one day each year to honor our planet, an occasion to rededicate ourselves to stewardship of the Earth and the fight against pollution. He called his idea Earth Day.

When Senator Nelson proposed the first Earth Day in 1970, our country's environmental outlook was grim. Smog choked the air of Los Angeles, New York, and other great American cities; many communities dumped raw sewage and untreated industrial waste in our greatest rivers, including the Mississippi and the Illinois and the Hudson. Polluted air and fouled water weren't the only challenges troubling our country. We had endured a series of tragic assassinations of great leaders, we were torn over a war in Vietnam, and we had seen civil rights riots and antiwar demonstrations in our streets. The Nation was divided and, frankly, losing the self-confidence for which Americans have always been known.

But Gaylord Nelson was an optimist. He believed that with imagination and dedication, despite all the problems going on in the world, we could attack at least one of our country's problems, and that was the problem of pollution. With the commitment of our people and the leadership from our Government, we could devise ways to clean up our rivers and our lakes and the air we breathe. He was right.

Since 1970, when Congress passed the Clean Air Act, we have greatly cut the amount of noxious substances in the air we breathe. Emissions of carbon monoxide have fallen by 50 percent since 1980, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, lead emissions are down 97 percent, and sulfur dioxide emissions have dropped by nearly 50 percent.

Since 1972, when the first clean water legislation passed, we have set high standards for water cleanliness and given our cities and towns the resources they need to stop dumping untreated waste. Our great rivers—the Mississippi, the Ohio, and the Hudson—are healthier today than they were 30 years ago.

Now, this doesn't mean we don't have challenges with the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act. As a member of the environmental committee, I know some of the problems we have seen with this administration in terms of rollbacks of some of these great strides. Nevertheless, we all know things have improved with the Clean

Water Act and the Clean Air Act since Gaylord Nelson declared Earth Day.

On Earth Day 2008, however, we confront a new environmental challenge. It is a challenge of equal and perhaps greater magnitude. I am talking here about global climate change.

For several years, our country had a debate over whether climate change was real or some sort of hoax perpetuated by doomsayers. That debate is over. There is now an undeniable scientific consensus that the Earth is warming. Study after study demonstrates that global warming is real and that it is affecting us now.

Early last year, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued its latest report on the science of climate change. This report was produced by some 600 authors from over 40 countries. Over 620 expert reviewers and a large number of government reviewers also participated. This is a very cautious group of scientists with a very conservative process for meticulously reviewing the evidence and reaching their conclusions through consensus. What did they conclude? Well, they concluded that changes in climate are now affecting physical and biological systems on every continent.

Last November, the IPCC issued a followup report. It concluded that ''warming of the climate system is unequivocal,'' based on observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures. It said that evidence from every continent shows dramatic changes in physical and biological systems, including melting of the permafrost, rising water temperatures, and changes in the habitat range of migratory animals.

So how did this all come about? Well, certain types of gases—most notably carbon dioxide but also methane and nitrous oxide—accumulate in the atmosphere and then absorb or trap the sun's heat as it bounces off the Earth's surface. The problem is that carbon dioxide doesn't dissipate quickly; it stays in the atmosphere for five decades or more, causing the Earth's temperatures to rise. This means that most of the carbon dioxide produced in the 1950s, the 1960s, the 1970s, and the 1980s—as I look at our pages, Mr. President, I realize many of them were not even born when this carbon dioxide was released—well, that carbon dioxide is still in our atmosphere today. And it means that carbon dioxide produced today will still be in our atmosphere in 2050 and beyond. All of that carbon dioxide has been trapping heat in our atmosphere. Over time, it makes global temperatures rise. In turn, sea levels rise—both because the water expands as the oceans warm and because melting glaciers and icecaps add more water.

Global warming is real, with enormous consequences for our world and for our economy. For example, here is a chart which shows the rising temperatures. Mr. President, 2006 was the hottest year ever in this country, capping a 9-year streak unprecedented in the historical record. The winter of 2006 was the warmest on record worldwide. Almost every State in our country is seeing higher temperatures.

You can see what we have here, with the coldest being 1, the warmest being 112. And you can see for several of the States it was the record warmest, and for most of the States it was much above normal, as in the Presiding Officer's State of New Jersey. Maybe you remember the year of 2006—it wasn't that long ago—and you can see how hot it truly was when you look at it from a worldwide perspective. It doesn't mean you won't have a year here or there that won't be normal, but when you look at the actual trend over the last decades, you see an increasing warming temperature.

Worldwide, glaciers are rapidly melting. In fact, almost everything frozen on our Earth is melting. A few months ago, it was reported that glaciers in the European Alps will be all gone by the year 2050. Experts believe that in 25 years there won't be a single glacier left in Glacier National Park. So if people are planning a vacation to visit Glacier National Park to see the glaciers, they better do it soon because experts predict that in 125 years there won't be any left.

Globally, sea levels have risen 4 to 10 inches over the past century. The frequency of extremely heavy rainfalls has increased throughout much of the United States.

The impact is especially dire in Greenland and the Arctic region. The temperature changes there have been the greatest, resulting in widespread melting of glaciers, thinning of the polar icecap, and rising permafrost temperatures. You can see here in our picture that since 1979, more than 20 percent of the polar icecap has melted away. There is the North Pole, and you see the Arctic sea boundary that we had in 1979, and now we have 20 percent melting of this icecap.

Well, I saw this firsthand, Mr. President, when I visited Greenland last summer with my colleagues from the Environment and Public Works Committee. Greenland has been called the canary in the coal mine for climate change. They have seen vast changes. We talked to local residents, and there are still more dogs than residents—more sled dogs—but we talked to some of the local residents who said they can remember the days when there was ice in their front yards, and now they are growing potatoes. They have lost the size of Texas and Arizona combined into the sea from the icecap in Greenland.

Other changes, such as the recent increase in the severity of hurricanes and other extreme or destructive weather events, are consistent with the kinds of changes scientists expect to occur on a warming planet. They are early indicators of even more dramatic climate shifts and economic damage that await us if we don't reduce greenhouse gas emissions and attack the problem of global warming. So here you have related economic losses, and these are, of course, from increased storms and wildfires.

I think we all remember well the wildfires in California. I remember this well because during the same time the wildfires were raging in California, we had a hearing in our Environment Committee where we had the commission on disease control testify. We noticed, when we looked at the written testimony, it seemed kind of chopped up. It turned out it had been edited by the administration. Among other things, of the parts that were edited out was a part about the effect climate change would have on disease and the mortality rates in our country. There was actually a part edited out that said it would lead to more wildfires in the Western States, just as the wildfires were raging in California.

So this is an example of the increased economic loss we have seen that are weather related in this country. You can see that from 1960 to 1969, and then you go up to 1988 to 1997, and of course I am sure you are going to see more now.

We have had fires in Minnesota and floods in Minnesota, and the people of our State are starting to see this in a very different way. In our State, one economic loss that isn't one of these hurricanes or fires is the decreasing levels of Lake Superior. That will be surprising to people who think sea levels are rising because Greenland's ice sheet is melting. Why would the level of our Great Lakes be going lower? They are going lower because the ice is melting more quickly, so the water evaporates, and Lake Superior is now at its lowest level in 80 years.

Now, you might think: Oh, Lake Superior is so cold, hardly anyone can go swimming anyway. Who cares? Well, it affects our economy in Minnesota because the barges are not able to come in. We have shipped something like 300 tons less, by my memory—we will have to correct the record if I am wrong—300 tons less of traffic because these barges cannot carry as much because the water level of Lake Superior is so low.

By that example, this is truly an issue that has finally moved out of the science labs and the classrooms and the seminar rooms and has entered the everyday conversations of people in my State. I hear it from hunters across Minnesota, who notice how our valuable wetlands are changing. I have heard it from the heads of our snow mobile associations, who testified at a forum I had with our Governor on climate change in January, because they have seen decreasing snow levels. I hear about it from ice fisherman because they have seen it takes longer for the ice to freeze and they can't put their fish houses out as early as they would like.

Just yesterday, USAToday had a story about the shrinking number of

moose in northern Minnesota. Biologists think that global warming is affecting the habitat of these moose and making them more vulnerable to parasites, causing an incredible reduction in the number of moose.

This is how real people in the real world are talking about this. They are worried about what is happening to their planet and the consequences that will have for all of us and our children and our grandchildren.

So the question is, How will we respond in Washington? I am actually going to give a talk on this every single week, Mr. President, up to our debate on this bill in June, and I figured a good day to start was with Earth Day. But just to summarize—and I will go into more detail in other floor remarks I will make—how will Washington respond?

In December, the Environment and Public Works Committee approved a landmark bipartisan bill to get our country moving in the fight against climate change. I thank my colleagues, Senators WARNER and LIEBERMAN, for their work on this legislation, and I thank Senator BOXER, the chairwoman of our committee, for her leadership in developing this bill and moving this bill through the committee.

This legislation is visionary, but it is also practical. The bill would, for the first time, set mandatory caps on carbon dioxide emissions, on greenhouse gas emissions. It would establish a cap-and-trade system to use market forces so that the private sector can reduce greenhouse gas pollution in the most efficient way possible.

And I can tell you, we have learned from experience. We did this with acid rain, and it was very successful. We have seen from what the European Union did what is good and bad, so we can learn from that experience and do, I would say, a better job in this country, if we can get this right.

This legislation, in its first title, also contains my proposal, the bill I introduced with Senator SNOWE, for a carbon counter, which is a national greenhouse gas registry, because you can't fix a problem if you can't measure it. Right now, we have 33 States off on their own starting a climate registry, which shows how absurd the situation is getting. They want to act because they are hearing from the people in their States. They know they can't wait, so they have started their own climate registry, instead of what makes sense, which is a Federal registry. And that is the first title of this bill.

In a few weeks, we are going to bring the Lieberman-Warner bill to the floor, and we will have a chance to take a historic step on behalf of our country—in fact, on behalf of the entire world. As we prepare to consider this important legislation, there is something else we need to remember, and that is that global warming is, of course, a huge challenge, but it also presents opportunities for our country. It gives us the opportunity to develop new technologies, new jobs, and new industries. It gives us the opportunity to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, which just hit another record of $117 per barrel this week. It gives us an opportunity to give consumers new, cheaper alternatives to fossil fuels. Whether it is an electric car, a hybrid car, or looking at what Brazil did with sugar cane, where they became energy independent, so they are not dependent on foreign oil, we know there are things we can do beyond what we are doing now with switchgrass, prairie grass, and all kinds of alternative technologies. But we have to set the standards as a government so we can encourage that kind of investment. We are not going to have a silver bullet here. As we like to say in Minnesota, we will have silver buckshot. We are going to have a number of proposals and alternatives, but we have to get moving by setting the standards.

This is an opportunity that we must seize now. I am proud to celebrate Earth Day today, to join with my colleagues and millions of Americans in honoring our planet. But in the decades since Gaylord Nelson sponsored the first Earth Day, the occasion has often turned into a symbolic event, a day for teach-ins at our schools and rallies at our State capitols. I participated in them myself.

But today, 38 years after its inception, we have the opportunity to return to the original spirit of Earth Day and celebrate the occasion with action, the action of investing in the farmers and the workers of this country instead of the oil cartels of the Mideast; the action of finally doing something to set that investment in place so we can develop the next generation of new technology, as we did when we said we were going to put a man on the Moon. It was great to put a man on the Moon and beat Russia—and look at what came out of that: the CAT scan and infrared technology. I remember in the 1970s my family went on camping trips with those little chocolate space sticks that came out of that trip to the Moon—hundreds and hundreds of new technological developments because our Nation put its mind on one goal.

This is another time to take action. We will have a chance to pass this climate change legislation that is forward looking, that is bipartisan, and that is pragmatic. We will have the chance to answer the call of the people in this country—the little kids with the penguin buttons, the hunters of Minnesota who see the changes of their wetlands. They see the urgency of this issue. We have a chance to regain world leadership on the most pressing environmental challenge of our day. We will have a chance to take our place in a great tradition of environmental stewardship in the Senate and to renew the promise that Americans made on the first Earth Day, 38 years ago.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, it is my understanding we are postcloture and I have up to 1 hour, is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will suspend for a moment, please. The Senator is correct.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to S. 1315, but to speak in favor of Senator BURR's alternative bill, S. 2640, the Veterans' Benefit Act of 2008. As we continue to prosecute the global war on terrorism and take care of our veterans who are returning from that effort, as well as take care of veterans from all our past conflicts, our Nation has an obligation to these veterans and their families who make the greatest sacrifices to defend our Nation and freedom across the world. This obligation extends to providing our brave young men and women with the optimal rehabilitation care, compensation packages, and long-term benefits for their service.

This is a very familiar issue to me, and I was pleased to offer several amendments with my Senate Armed Services Committee colleagues during last year's markup of the wounded warrior bill, which will go a long way to improving the treatment and benefits these wounded warriors will receive, both now and in the future. Both of the bills at issue today go a long way to further improving the care of our veterans and wounded warriors, and it is very clear that both Senator BURR and Senator AKAKA worked very hard to craft bills that will benefit our veterans and their families.

S. 1315 makes many significant changes in the area of insurance, housing, labor, and education benefits for our veterans. However, the bill pays for these increased entitlements by reversing a 2006 court decision, which would effectively take $2,000 annually from poor, elderly, disabled wartime U.S. veterans.

Also included in the bill's spending is $221 million to create a new pension benefit for Filipino veterans residing in the Philippines, all of whom are not U.S. citizens and none of whom have any disabilities relating to World War II service.

There are two significant problems with the new spending on Filipino veterans. First, it takes money from poor veterans in the United States, to in effect create a middle class of non-United States veterans residing in the Philippines. Second, it comes at the expense of benefit improvements that are needed for our returning combat veterans of the war on terror.

Under current law, a VA pension benefit paid to an individual U.S. veteran cannot exceed $11,181 a year, which is roughly 17 percent of the United States average household income. S. 1315 would create a new, special pension benefit for Filipino veterans in the Philippines that will put them at over 87 percent of average household income in the Philippines!

As Senator BURR stated on the floor earlier today, the contributions of Filipino veterans during World War II is a

matter of public record and is without dispute. We do owe them a huge debt. They fought on the side of the allies and made a significant contribution to the war effort. However, it is not fair to fund a pension for these veterans at the expense of poor U.S. veterans, which this bill unfortunately does.

I hope the supporters of S. 1315 will hear me when I say that a vote against this bill is not a vote against the contribution that the Filipino veterans made to the effort in World War II. Rather, it is a vote against taking an existing benefit away from a U.S. veteran.

Senator BURR's alternative, S. 2640, will provide veterans with improved life insurance policies, enhance the veterans mortgage life insurance program, improve disabled veterans housing benefits by 10 percent, as well as index future housing benefits to inflation.

S. 2640 also provides for automatic annual increases in burial benefits for our veterans families as well as improved educational opportunities to our National Guardsmen and Reservists who serve for a total of 2 years in an active-duty status.

In relation to Filipino veterans, S. 2640 provides a pension plan to Filipino veterans who have resided in the United States and have not received any benefits from the Filipino Government. In addition, it provides for full disability compensation for Filipinos residing anywhere in the world.

Our Nation's commitment and number 1 priority must rest with taking care of our current veterans, particularly those who have disabilities resulting from their service, which 2640 provides. I encourage my colleagues to support S. 2640, which provides the right compensation and the right policies for the right servicemembers.

I yield the remainder of my time to Senator BURR.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina is recognized.

Mr. BURR. I thank my friend and colleague from Georgia.

I think my colleague put it very well. The big question is, has the U.S. Government met its obligation to Filipino veterans? I think that is at the heart of what some Members have raised with respect to this special pension. Let me say, Filipinos who fought under U.S. command in World War II were no doubt invaluable to the victory in the Pacific. Yes, they were U.S. nationals at the time, but they were also on a timetable to transition to a newly independent, sovereign Philippine Union. Thus, their welfare has always been a shared responsibility between the U.S. Government and the Philippine Government.

Here is what the U.S. taxpayer has already funded to meet United States commitments to the Filipino veterans. After the war the U.S. provided $620 million—that is $6.2 billion in today's dollars—for repair of public property, war damage claims, and assistance to the Philippine Government. VA compensation for service-related disabilities and survivor compensation was also provided, paid at a rate that reflected differences in the cost of living in the Philippines.

Let me suggest, about this cost of living consideration, the first time it has been raised is not today by me. It was actually applied in the 1940s, at the conclusion of the conflict, to the United States.

No. 2, the United States provided $22.5 million—$196 million in today's dollars—for the construction and equipping of a hospital in the Philippines for the care and treatment of Filipino veterans. In addition, the United States provided annual grants for operation of the hospital which was later donated to the Filipino Government. The grant assistance continues to this day.

Survivors of Philippine veterans who died as a result of service are eligible for educational assistance benefits, paid at a rate that reflects the differences in the cost of living.

All of a sudden we have second reference to payments being made in the Philippines at the conclusion of the conflict where the cost of living differential was considered in what the United States payment was.

Filipino veterans legally residing in the United States are entitled to a full rated compensation, full rate cash benefits, full access to the VA health clinics and medical centers, and burial in our Nation's national cemeteries.

In addition to that, I have mentioned another hospital at Fort McKinley that was donated to the Philippine Government.

The big question for Members of the Senate and members of the Roosevelt administration, the Secretary of War at the time, was how can we best help the Filipino people? How can we best help these veterans? It was to reconstruct the country. It was to create an infrastructure where health care could be delivered. It was to repair roads. It was to repair the infrastructure so the Philippines post war could have an economy, not dissimilar to the Marshall plan in Europe where the United States and others—primarily us—funded the reconstruction of much of Europe. That is because we knew a country without an economy, without the ability to manufacture something, without the ability for its people to earn something, probably would not survive.

We made the right decision. We pumped into the infrastructure billions of dollars by today's standards. We gave them hospitals. We built them hospitals. We gave them equipment. We bought them equipment. Today we still provide a grant assistance to the Philippines for the care of Filipino veterans.

Some might say if we had a different administration maybe things would be different. On July 25, 1997, the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs heard testimony of Stephen Lemons, Acting Under Secretary for Benefits, in opposition to the bill granting full VA benefits to Filipinos. It was not the Bush administration, it was the Clinton administration. This has spanned 50 years. Think of the numbers of administrations. The quote then was:

> Its enactment would upset decades-old policies which have authorized some but not all VA benefits based on this service.

I go on:

> History shows that the limitations on eligibility for U.S. benefits based on service in these Philippine forces were based on a carefully considered determination of the government's responsibility towards them.

I also continue:

> Current law appropriately recognizes our two nations' shared responsibility for well-being, and should not be changed as proposed by this bill.

The Clinton administration lobbied Congress not to do what we are considering doing in S. 1315. What is it? To extend a new, special pension to Filipino veterans who live in the Philippines, who have no service-connected disability, that, along with the Philippine pension that is currently in place, would put these individuals at 1,400 percent over the poverty line and 27 percent over the average median income of the Philippine people.

Now, I went a little bit further. I checked out this book from 1948. It is called House Committee Hearings. I want to turn to one section I think is pertinent to this debate. Because 1946 was the year we passed the Rescissions Act. The Rescissions Act revised the Court's interpretation of what were VA benefits. This sheds a tremendous amount of light on the difference between my understanding and what those who were charged with investigating U.S. obligations at the time were.

There was a Father Haggerty who testified in front of the committee. These are Father Haggerty's words:

> It was constantly promised that as the Ambassador mentioned in radio broadcasts, official American broadcasts to the Philippines during the war, it was definitely promised by General MacArthur, General Wainwright, and also it has been acknowledged, I believe, that Filipino groups recognized the guerillas, acting as members of the United States Armed Forces, were entitled at one time to the complete GI bill of rights; that is, they were included. I believe that is correct, and were later left out.

Mr. ALLEN, a member of the committee:

> May I say this, Father, I know you are sincere about it. But I think you are in error there because there are three or four of us here on the committee who were present when the GI bill was written. And I do not think this was ever entered into.
>
> The chairman: ''It did not come up?''
>
> Mr. ALLEN: ''The Filipinos never entered into it.''
>
> Father Haggerty: ''I am also speaking of the impression that they all had.''
>
> Mr. ALLEN: ''We are not responsible for impressions, of course.''

I said earlier I have tremendous respect for my colleagues who are on the

opposite side of this issue with me. I am sure their recollections—they served, I did not—are probably as accurate as Father Haggerty, who in 1948, voluntarily, I think, went in front of a House committee, probably the veterans committee, along with an ambassador, and the Ambassador swore: ''This is what I understood.''

Father Haggerty said:

This was what I—I heard it, I heard the American Government say it. I heard General MacArthur say it, General Wainwright say it.

Well, I said earlier to those who were listening, we had testimony from the Army that said: We looked at General MacArthur's records. We looked at President Roosevelt's records. There was never an intent for this to be extended.

Now, what we find in the Congressional hearing in 1948 is those specific questions were asked by members, and Father Haggerty swears this was accurate, that we said this, that this was the intent of the GI bill.

And Mr. ALLEN, a member of the committee:

May I say this, Father? I know you are sincere about it. But I think you are in error. You are in error because there are three or four of us on this committee who were present when the GI bill was written, and I do not think this was ever entered into.

I am sure as we go through this, we are going to find others who come to the floor and say: Listen, I know this was the intent of Congress. It is probably the way they envisioned it today. But when you go back to the actual records of the 1940s, when you go back to the 1948 testimony, when you go back to the 1946 rescissions bill, when you go back to 1944, and Senator Hayden, this has been explored over and over and over. In every case, with different members, they came to the same conclusion. Let me read from a more recent committee hearing, the committee hearing that took place last year with Senator CRAIG, who was then ranking member of the committee, as he talked to Mr. Ron Aument.

He said:

Ron, let me take off from where the chairman has gone with a couple of questions. If the committee were to structure a pension benefit for those residing in the Philippines that had the same purchasing power that a pension recipient in the United States had, what would be the equivalent maximum pension benefit? Have you ever done any calculations based on S. 57?

Mr. Aument: Yes, we have, Senator Craig. It has not been a simple calculation because some of the economic statistics that we would be turning to are not as readily available to us. Having said that, if we take a look at what today's pension rate for an American veteran is with one dependent, we mentioned it was around $14,000 annually, and contrast that to the average household income for the most recent census statistic we had at around $46,000 annually, it is around 30 percent of the average household income.

If we were to compare that to the average household income in the Philippines of around $2,800, we are speaking around $820 annually in the form of a pension.

So last year, to bring on par with the United States, on what we do with special pensions for veterans, we made a commitment that they will not live in poverty. What Mr. Aument said was:

If we calculated today the Filipino pension, that would be identical to the U.S. pension, it would be $820. The existing Filipino pension to the Filipino veterans is $120 a month, which equates to 400 percent above poverty.

Our own witness early last year basically said that the average household income in the Philippines was $2,800, and $820 annually would put a Filipino veteran on the same par with an American veteran receiving a special benefit, a special pension.

Yet what we are here to debate over the next several days is whether the Senate is going to extend to these Filipino veterans who live in the Philippines, who have no service-connected disability, a pension, in combination with the Philippine Government, that will equal 1,400 percent above poverty, that will equal 27 percent above the median income in the Philippines.

We base this all off the belief that we made a promise we are not keeping. I gave three specific instances before, I read from the committee hearing from last year, that dispel any belief that there was ever a promise. The 1948 account I read from the House committee hearing is not the only one; it is the 1946 Rescissions Act, it is the 1944 hearing with Senator HAYDEN. All of them point to the fact that those people who were involved in crafting, writing, and passing the GI bill had no intent for this benefit to ever be extended.

I am hopeful my colleagues will see the priorities we are faced with as it relates to our own veterans, that they will look at these severely disabled soldiers and sailors and airmen and marines who are coming back from Afghanistan and Iraq today, having given their all, injured in a way we cannot replace but with an opportunity to supplement their quality of life.

We can supplement that through a number of different fashions. We can supplement that by extending and raising the housing provisions for their ability to adapt their houses to their disability, $5,000 more dollars; we can raise the grant allowance for cars so individuals such as Eric Edmundson's family is not stuck with $14,000 out-of-pocket to make sure they have a van that his wheelchair can go into, that lifts him up, and gives him the ability to have some degree of mobility.

I think that is the priority. That is the choice tomorrow that Members of this body will be given in a substitute that I will propose, that still embraces the majority of what Senator AKAKA had in his bill but eliminates one glaring thing, it eliminates the special pension for Filipino veterans who live in the Philippines, with no service-connected disability.

It replaces it with an expansion of veterans' benefits for our soldiers or our airmen, our soldiers, our marines. I am convinced this is not only the right thing to do, that we have a historical blueprint that tells us that folks before us who held our jobs have already judged that this is not a promise that is broken; that when you look at the numbers, I am not sure you can be more compassionate. We are not this compassionate to our own troops, to our own veterans.

How can anybody come to the floor and make a claim that providing a pension 1,400 percent above the poverty rate, when our veterans are at 10 percent above poverty, is equitable or fair; that there should be one taxpayer who should be asked to contribute to something that does not affect increasing the quality of life of our veterans first and foremost.

I think America would hold a different compassion if the current Philippine pension did not provide a cushion between poverty and the stipend they get of 400 percent. I think we can make the case that it is not a big enough cushion to have American veterans only 10 percent above the poverty line.

But we have an opportunity not to grow it from 400 to 1,400 and to use that extra 1,000 percent to actually affect the lives of our service personnel who are severely disabled who are coming home every single day.

It is my hope and my belief that tomorrow my colleagues will understand the importance of my substitute amendment. It does not devalue the contribution the Filipino veterans made to the United States and to the war in World War II. What it does is recognize the commitment we already made to the Philippines, to its people, recognizing the fact that the group that we are talking about was part of the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines, not the Army of the United States; that even though they were commanded by Americans, they were part of a military that existed within the Philippines, and to suggest that being part of somebody else's Army but commanded by us would suggest that most everybody who was under U.S. command in World War II in the European theaters would now be eligible if this precedent went through for a special pension, that is not the intent of this Congress, it is not the intent of past Congresses, and certainly I do not think it is the intent of the American people.

I believe the responsible thing to do is to pass this package that has over $900 million worth of benefits, $800 million under the substitute that would go to our children and our grandchildren, and 100 million that would go still to Filipino veterans who live in the United States or live in the Philippines but have service-connected disabilities.

We are not an uncompassionate country. We do not believe our taxpayers should help to drive an income level of someone else to a point that we are not willing to commit to our own. When we have our veterans at 1,400 percent of

poverty, I am willing to come to the floor and talk about putting their veterans to 1,400 percent of poverty.

But those who have held our job before us have already determined there is not a promise, there is not an obligation, there is not a piece of paper that said we were going to do this. A lot of people think there was. But there was not.

I look forward to the opportunity to debate the amendment and to debate in more depth the history of this benefit and this obligation.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SALAZAR. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be listed as a cosponsor of S. 1315.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SALAZAR. I come to the floor this evening to speak on behalf of the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act embodied in S. 1315. This legislation passed the Veterans' Affairs Committee in August of 2007. I know the work that goes on in that committee because I served on that committee with Senator AKAKA and many Members. It is an important tradition that committee has worked in a bipartisan spirit to make sure the United States honors the debt we owe to our veterans, some 25 million veterans in America and 1.4 million, 1.5 million veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. It is through that committee that legislation emerges to make sure the promise this Nation makes to its veterans is a promise we keep.

In my view, the fact that so much time has passed since S. 1315 came out of the Veterans' Affairs Committee in August 2007 until we have it today on the floor is, frankly, inexcusable. At the end of the day, the committee worked to put together legislation to better serve the Nation's veterans.

The legislation before us does some very important things. It expands eligibility for traumatic injury insurance. That is very important, especially today when we see the kind of trauma and injuries our veterans are facing coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan. We have now over 30,000 veterans who have been grievously wounded in that war. I know most of my colleagues have been to Walter Reed or to veterans hospitals where they have seen the kind of wounds our veterans are experiencing because of explosions of IEDs and other kinds of attacks made on our troops. The expansion of traumatic injury insurance is important for our men and women who serve.

The bill also extends the eligibility for specially adapted housing units to veterans with severe burns. I know in my visits to those who have been wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan, I have seen many who are in burn units who have suffered the scars of this war. This benefit for housing units that are specially adapted for those who are suffering burn injuries is a very important provision in this legislation that will be part of our efforts to make sure we are providing support to our veterans who have served.

This legislation is also important because it increases benefits for veterans pursuing apprenticeships or on-the-job training programs. Across the country and in my State of Colorado, we know there are many veterans who are unemployed. In fact, in most States, about half of the homeless population comes from the veterans ranks. So providing on-the-job training opportunity for these veterans is important. This legislation does that.

For all of the good things this legislation does, we could have taken it through this Chamber, through the House of Representatives, and to the President's desk, and we could have had that legislation already in law. We could have the framework of a law now honoring the veterans of America in the way they should be honored. Yet because of one provision of this legislation, it has been held up not 1 month, 2 months, but since August of 2007, to the point where today it is already April of 2008, and we are on the floor of the Senate trying to break a filibuster over legislation that is supposed to provide a benefit to our veterans in important ways.

The provision which some on the other side have objected to—not all of them but some of them—has to do with the treatment of Filipino veterans during World War II. I join, proudly, my colleagues—Senator INOUYE and Senator STEVENS—in support of the legislation that would restore the benefits to Filipino veterans by granting them full veterans' status for the sacrifices they made during World War II.

Over the last half century, the treatment of Filipino World War II veterans, in my view, has been a stain on our national honor.

The Philippines became a possession of the United States in 1898, when it was ceded by Spain following the Spanish-American War. During that time period, and for the following 60-some years, the United States essentially controlled the territory and the people of the Philippines.

It was in 1934, then, that the Congress enacted the Philippine Independence Act. That provided a 10-year timeframe for the independence of the Philippines. But it was during that 10-year timeframe, when the Philippines essentially were in a commonwealth status relationship to the United States of America, that the clouds of war and the horrific war of World War II beset the entire globe.

Between 1934 and 1946, the United States retained powers over the Philippines, including the right as a government to call the military forces organized by the Commonwealth Government into the services of the Armed Forces of the United States.

On July 26, 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt issued a military order calling on the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines to serve with the Armed Forces of the United States in the Far East.

The Filipinos who served were entitled to full veterans' benefits by reason of their service under the command of our Armed Forces.

Of the 470,000—that is 470,000; that is nearly half a million—Filipino veterans who volunteered, approximately 200,000 served in the Philippine Commonwealth Army, the Philippine Army Air Corps, and the Philippine Army Offshore Patrol—all under the command of the United States of America and our military.

We, I believe, in America cannot forget the sacrifice of our Filipino friends who fought side by side with American soldiers in World War II.

They constituted the vast majority of the 80,000 soldiers who defended the Bataan Peninsula against the Japanese invasion.

They constituted the vast majority—the vast majority—of the soldiers who were forced on the Bataan Death March.

They fought side by side with American soldiers to defend Corregidor in 1942.

They fought as guerrillas after the Japanese captured the Philippines.

They worked behind enemy lines to provide intelligence to the American Army. More than half the battalion that was tasked with providing intelligence from the occupied Philippines later received the Bronze Star for their heroic service.

When President Roosevelt signed a bill for the Filipinos to enlist in the U.S. Army, the Army stood up two entirely new regiments—the 1st and 2nd Filipino Infantry Regiments.

The 1st and 2nd Filipino Infantry Regiments participated in the bloody combat and mop-up operations at New Guinea, Leyte, Samar, Luzon, and other major battles in the Philippines.

Members of the 1st Regiment were also attached to the U.S. 6th Army, and they were working often behind enemy lines to help free the Allied prisoners from the death camps in 1945.

In my view, the Filipinos who served in World War II were entitled to full veterans' benefits by reason of their service with our Armed Forces. Despite all their sacrifices—despite all their sacrifices—after the war was over, after the Philippines gained officially their independence, the Congress passed the Rescissions Act of 1946, now codified in our U.S. law.

The 1946 act precluded most of the Filipino World War II veterans from receiving veterans' benefits that were available to them prior to 1946 and that are available to all other veterans of

our Armed Forces today regardless of race, national origin or citizenship status.

S. 1315, today, would restore veterans status to those World War II heroes and, in particular, it would provide pension benefits to aid Filipino veterans residing in the Philippines during their twilight years.

The pension benefits under S. 1315 would amount to less than one-third—to less than one-third—of the basic pension amount provided to veterans living in the United States of America today. The average income of persons residing in the Philippines, however, is considerably lower than their counterparts in the United States. So the pension benefits under S. 1315 would provide a decent standard of living to these veterans.

Our Nation cannot abandon those who have served under our flag and who have served under our command. We must rally in support of these proven friends of America and act to redeem our Nation's debt in honor of their service.

I urge my colleagues to support S. 1315 in its entirety, and to support granting the benefits that the Filipino veterans from World War II, in my view, have earned.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I am proud to rise in support of the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act of 2007. This bill expands much needed and long overdue benefits for the men and women in uniform who have served overseas in difficult and dangerous circumstances to keep America safe.

We must honor our U.S. soldiers who have died in the name of their country. These service men and women are America's true heroes and on this day we pay tribute to their courage and sacrifice by bringing this bill to the Senate floor. Some have given their lives for our country. All have given their time and dedication to ensure our country remains the land of the free and the home of the brave. We owe a special debt of gratitude to each and every one of them.

Our Nation has a sacred commitment to honor the promises made to soldiers when they signed up to serve our country. As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I fight hard each year to make sure promises made to our service men and women are promises kept. These promises include access to quality, affordable health care and a proper burial for our veterans.

That is why I am an enthusiastic supporter of the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act of 2007. This bill provides an increase in burial benefits for the families of our wounded or disabled veterans, which I have been fighting for since 2001. This means that service-connected burial benefits will increase by $2,100 for a total of $4,100; non service-connected burial benefits will increase by $900 for a total of $1,200; and, plot allowances will increase by $445 for a total of $745. These benefits will increase annually to keep up with inflation.

I am also proud to support this bill because it takes an important step in recognizing the sacrifices made by our men and women of the National Guard and Reserve by expanding the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, outreach program. This program provides important information about benefits and services that veterans and their spouses, children and parents may be eligible for through the VA. By expanding this program we are ensuring that our citizen soldiers and their families have the resources and help they need to make a successful transition back to civilian life after answering our Nation's call.

This bill also recognizes the sacrifices of veterans who are suffering from the physical, permanent wounds of war. It expands eligibility for traumatic injury insurance and specially adapted housing benefits to veterans with severe burns. It also restores veteran status to Filipino veterans who served under United States command in World War II.

Whether fighting to defend democracy overseas or standing sentry on the home front, America's veterans have been there for us. We have a sacred commitment to honor all of the promises made to them when they signed up to fight for us. That's why I am fighting hard today and everyday in the U.S. Senate to ensure that the federal government maintains its commitment to veterans. Promises made must be promises kept.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The majority leader is recognized.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1315 AND H.R. 2831

Mr. REID. Mr. President, here we are again not being able to go to the bill. I would hope we could go to this bill tomorrow and debate it all day. As everyone, I think, knows, we would like to have a vote tomorrow night at 6 o'clock on the reversal of the Ledbetter decision.

So I have conferred with the manager of the bill and told him I was going to ask consent that in the morning we have the opportunity to go to the bill and legislate—have people offer amendments on it tomorrow—that we would go at 6 o'clock tomorrow to the cloture vote—the motion has been filed—on the Ledbetter decision. I ask unanimous consent that be the case.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, would my friend like me to be a little more specific?

Mr. BURR. I would love for that.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Wednesday, April 23, following a period of morning business, the motion to proceed to S. 1315 be agreed to; and that the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on H.R. 2831, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, occur at 6 p.m., with the time from 5 to 6 p.m. equally divided and controlled prior to the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BURR. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. We had a unanimous vote earlier today to proceed to the bill. I believe it has been a productive day. I believe Members have learned a lot in the debate, and I think it is important to get the history of the issue on the record for all Members.

Having said that, I am prepared to begin consideration of the bill and for the amendment process to begin as well. Under the rules, my understanding is the cloture vote on Ledbetter would proceed an hour after we convene.

Now, I am not in a position to delay the Ledbetter bill, but I am in a position to agree to go immediately in the morning to consideration of S. 1315. The way the majority leader has worded his unanimous consent request would push off the rules of the Senate, requiring that the Ledbetter vote be in the morning. So, therefore, I have to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I think my friend may have misunderstood my consent request. I think it is appropriate—we would not have to have morning business in the morning. We could go directly to the bill in the morning. We could convene at 9:30, 10 o'clock—whatever would be convenient to the minority—and we would legislate on that all day tomorrow, offer amendments. My friend wants to, I am sure, offer an amendment to change the provision in the bill as it relates to Filipinos. That would be fine.

At 6 o'clock we would have a vote on a motion that has already been filed to invoke cloture on Ledbetter. That would take 20 minutes. That is all it would take. And then, if cloture, of course, is invoked, then we would be on Ledbetter. If it were not invoked, then we would be right back on S. 1315.

So again, I say to my friend, I think it is a good idea we go to the legislation in the morning. I wanted to do it Thursday night. We did not do it Thursday night. We did not do it Friday. We did not do it Monday. We have not done it today. So I would hope on Wednesday morning we could do that. That was my consent: We go to that, we take a brief pause at 6 o'clock tomorrow evening to vote on cloture on

Ledbetter. It would take, as I said, no longer than 15 minutes, maybe 20 minutes if somebody is late for the vote, but that is how long it would take.

So that seems appropriate.

Mr. BURR. May I ask a question of the majority leader?

Mr. REID. Of course.

Mr. BURR. My understanding in the unanimous consent request is that as to the rule that would require us to vote on cloture on the Ledbetter issue 1 hour after we started business tomorrow, under the unanimous consent request, the majority leader has asked that to be postponed until 6:30 tomorrow night. Am I correct?

Mr. REID. Yes. What I did ask is that the vote on Ledbetter would be at 6 o'clock tomorrow.

Mr. BURR. Six o'clock. I apologize.

Mr. REID. The reason being—and it is certainly no secret to anyone—we have a number of Senators who want to vote on that matter, and we would ask that be the schedule.

I would say no one would be inconvenienced with that. If my friends do not accept the consent request I offer, then the only alternative we have is to waste another day because we are postcloture with 30 hours. That time expires at 6 o'clock tomorrow. That is what time it expires. That is why that arbitrary 6 o'clock time was chosen.

As I repeat, Thursday we could have been on the bill. Friday we could have been on the bill. Monday we could have been on the bill. Tuesday we could have been on the bill. As I have indicated—and I am certain my friend has heard some of the statements that have been made today about our not being able to legislate—we have had to invoke cloture so many different times it is difficult to comprehend, but it is approaching 70 times. It would seem to me it would not be a fruitful use of the time not to be in session until 5 o'clock tomorrow. Because under the rules—my friend is right—cloture happens automatically an hour after we come into session. So it is going to happen at 6 o'clock no matter what.

It would seem to me, as to this important piece of legislation, we should be legislating on it from 9:30, 10 o'clock in the morning—whatever time would be convenient to come in. This request I am making is certainly not an unusual request. We almost always, with rare exception, have cloture votes by consent because, as I have indicated, the rules call for cloture votes taking place 1 hour after we come into session.

Today, we set the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to S. 1315—that was by consent. We, with rare exception, do it by consent. It is not as if we are here suddenly trying to invent the wheel.

Simply stated again, Mr. President, I am saying, at 6 o'clock tomorrow, we are going to have a vote on the Ledbetter reversal. Preceding that, we can have a very productive day and work on this veterans bill. Or we can follow the rules and be out of session all day tomorrow and come in at 5 o'clock and have an hour of debate prior to the cloture vote. So it is established we are going to have a cloture vote at 6 o'clock. The question is, should we have a productive day? We want to have a productive day. We want to legislate over here on this important issue.

I agree with my friend, the distinguished Senator from North Carolina, we have had a good debate today. I was extremely impressed with Senator INOUYE's statement. For someone who is a Medal of Honor winner, I think it means a lot coming from him that we all have a misconception of a lot of things that went on in World War II, not the least of which is the Bataan Death March.

In all the movies and everything you see about the Bataan Death March, you see a bunch of White men being driven by the Japanese, many of them to their deaths. That death march had 15,000 Americans and 60,000 Filipinos. That was very educational for me. We have had a number of good statements here today. So I would renew my consent request.

Mr. BURR. Continuing my reservation, Mr. President, as I understand the leader, it is not the minority and it is certainly not me who is suggesting that tomorrow be unproductive; it is the majority leader's desire to change the Senate rules and to move a vote on cloture on the Ledbetter issue from 1 hour after we come into session to 6 o'clock tomorrow night to accommodate people who are not in Washington, supposedly when the Senate is in session.

I think the Senator makes some great observations about the debate today. I agree with him about the heroism of Senator INOUYE and others, Senator STEVENS, who performed bravely in the Pacific in World War II, and the debate we have had today. If we have learned anything, it is that we have brave Senators, but we also have the history to look at as to whether this benefit was intended for these individuals. That is why the debate was so important that Senator REID and I discussed earlier yesterday and we continue now. But with the insistence that we change the Senate rules and delay the vote on Ledbetter, I would have to be opposed to the unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. Thank you, Mr. President. I appreciate the comments of my friend from North Carolina. The record is very clear. This is a continuation of my friends on the Republican side wanting to accomplish nothing rather than something. I understand that. I accept that. I have gotten used to it.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to now proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMEMORATION OF EARTH DAY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, Earth Day has been celebrated on April 22 every year since 1970. Much has changed since then. Americans have grown increasingly aware of importance of environmental stewardship for the wellbeing of our country. New challenges have emerged, though, that we didn't recognize in 1970. New sources of pollution threaten our air and water. In recent weeks, for instance, we have been reminded that there are chemicals and pharmaceuticals entering our waters whose effects on the environment are largely unknown.

Perhaps our most important challenge perhaps the greatest problem mankind has ever faced—is global warming. Disruptive climate change threatens our ecosystems, our national security, and our economy. Landmark laws such as the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act have done much to protect America. Now, though, our generation is being asked to step up to save our planet as a whole.

The science is unequivocal: global warming is real and manmade greenhouse gases are the root cause. The scientific debate is over, and the time for action is at hand.

Congress is taking this responsibility seriously. Several bills have been introduced in the 110th Congress that would attempt to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Among them is America's Climate Security Act, the bill crafted by Senators Lieberman and Warner.

The Lieberman-Warner bill has the potential to reduce America's total greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent by 2020 and 66 percent by 2050 compared to 2005 levels. These cuts would restore U.S. leadership in international climate change negotiations and help avoid the worst consequences of global warming.

There is no doubt. We need to start cutting greenhouse gases now. What have we heard from the White House on this? Last week, President Bush said America's goal should be to start to reduce the rate of greenhouse gas emissions by 2025. Representative EDWARD MARKEY, chairman of the House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming, described the plan this way. The President's short-term plan for global warming is: Do nothing. His intermediate plan is: Do nothing much. And his long-term plan is: Do nothing close to what is required to avoid global catastrophe.

The White House plan is not nearly good enough. As global warming progresses we can expect more coastal

flooding, more inland droughts and wildfires, more severe storms, more global water and food crises, and more stress on species and habitats that are already at risk for survival. A White House policy of ''business as usual''—of continuing to allow greenhouse gas emissions at an unchecked, accelerating pace—will sentence America to an increasing number of catastrophes—catastrophes that will be costly in terms of dollars and of human life and health.

We in Congress have another choice—the choice to honestly debate a rational plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enacting laws that protect our planet and America's future.

The founders of Earth Day created a legacy that lives with us today. Americans recognize that our well-being is founded on a clean and healthy environment. We have seen much improvement in the environmental stewardship shown by our nation's citizens and industry. Congress can be proud of the role it has played, too. Today, on this Earth Day, America is faced with a new set of environmental challenges. I look forward to working with my Senate colleagues as we do what Congresses before us have done: set aside our personal and partisan differences to do what is right for our country.

Mrs. DOLE. Mr. President, I rise today in support of Earth Day. Thirty-eight years ago, 20 million people from across our country celebrated Earth Day for the first time. This has since become an important annual tradition, not only in America, but across the globe. What started as a day to voice concerns over smog, litter and dirty rivers is now a global movement to clean our air, land, and water for future generations.

I am pleased that we have found many commonsense solutions to difficult environmental problems since the first Earth Day in 1970. For example, in 1978 we banned chlorofluorocarbons in aerosol cans because of their devastating affect on the ozone layer. In 1990 we passed the Clean Air Act Amendments to stop acid rain. And in 2003 we passed the Clear Skies legislation to reduce sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide that pollute our air. Although all of these accomplishments make sense to us today, it wasn't always easy to convince leaders and even the public that these actions were essential to protect our environment.

Some folks had concerns about the actual effects of the legislation, while others had concerns about the economic costs. Their concerns are not unlike the concerns of some in the current debate about global climate change. A number of my colleagues and I support a cap and trade system. But no matter how we deal with climate change we know that this will be a complex and vigorous debate. The discussions about the impact and costs are legitimate debates to be had. But I firmly believe that inaction is not an answer to this growing crisis.

On this Earth Day, which is celebrated by our Federal, State, and local governments; grassroots organizations; citizens of North Carolina, the United States, and the rest of the world, we set out a vision of how things can be. We can be energy independent and secure, we can de-carbonize our electric generation, and we can wean ourselves off foreign oil. We can leave the cause of this day—the Earth—cleaner and more vibrant. It will not be easy, but we as a nation can and must lead the way.

THE MATTHEW SHEPARD ACT OF 2007

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate crimes legislation that would strengthen and add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

On the night of March 7, 2008, Lance Neve was with his boyfriend at a bar in Spencerport, NY. Neve told police that a man at the bar had been yelling anti-gay slurs at him and his boyfriend and continued to harass them using derogatory comments throughout the night. The aggressor then allegedly asked to shake Neve's hand, explaining that he had never shaken hands with a gay man. When Neve refused, he says the man attacked him and continued to beat him after he had fallen to the ground, knocking him unconscious. Neve was hospitalized with a fractured skull, nose, left eye socket, and jaw as a result of the attack. Police have arrested 24-year-old Jesse D. Parsons of Spencerport, NY, and charged him with second-degree assault designated as a hate crime in connection with the attack.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. Federal laws intended to protect individuals from heinous and violent crimes motivated by hate are woefully inadequate. This legislation would better equip the Government to fulfill its most important obligation by protecting new groups of people as well as better protecting citizens already covered under deficient laws. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

MAJOR MARK E. ROSENBERG

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the life of Major Mark E. Rosenberg—a father, a husband, and a soldier. Major Rosenberg was on his second tour in Iraq when a bomb exploded near the Humvee that was carrying him through the streets of Baghdad. The explosion tore through his vehicle, killing him. He was 32 years old.

Major Rosenberg was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, out of Fort Carson. The 3rd Brigade Combat team has lost 32 soldiers in Iraq, nine since deploying in November. Major Rosenberg was the 236th Fort Carson soldier killed in Iraq.

Words cannot begin to measure the magnitude of Major Rosenberg's sacrifice, or the void left by his loss. Those who knew Mark remember him as a dedicated and dutiful soldier full of jokes and smiles. ''He was the life of the party,'' his sister recalls. ''Everybody wants to be around him.'' By all accounts, he was an extraordinary husband to his wife, Julie, and father to his two young sons, Joshua and Maxwell. Major Rosenberg was planning to come home on leave in June to celebrate Maxwell's second birthday.

Mark entered the Army in the footsteps of his father, Burton Rosenberg. He graduated from the New Mexico Military Institute in 1996 and received his commission shortly thereafter. He spent a year in Korea in 2001–2002 and a year in Iraq in 2004–2005. For his honorable service, he earned the Army Commendation Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terror Service Medal, and the Humanitarian Service Ribbon.

Mark's second deployment, which began last November, was scheduled for 15 months. His unit was tasked with training the Iraqi military, a job in which Major Rosenberg was committed to making a difference. He carried the spirit of a peacemaker and understood the humanitarian mission that a soldier could fulfill.

Major Rosenberg was the type of 'great man' who the activist and humanitarian Jane Addams described in a 1903 address to the Union League Club in Chicago. In the remarks she offered in honor of George Washington's birthday, Addams argued that ''when we come to the study of great men it is easy to think only of their great deeds, and not to think enough of their spirit. What is a great man who has made his mark upon history? Every time, if we think far enough, he is a man who has looked through the confusion of the moment and has seen the moral issue involved; he is a man who has refused to have his sense of justice distorted; he has listened to his conscience until conscience becomes a trumpet call to like-minded men, so that they gather about him and together, with mutual purpose and mutual aid, they make a new period in history.''

Major Rosenberg, as Jane Addams describes, was able to see through the ''confusion of the moment'' and understand the moral dimensions of his work. He was able to inspire and lead his soldiers, and the Iraqis whom he was training, with his vision and his heart. He worked in one of the most

dangerous places in the world, yet was able to lift those around him with his spirit and his optimism. Hope is at a premium in Iraq, and he will be sorely missed.

It is at home, of course, that Major Rosenberg's absence is most strongly felt. To Julie, Joshua, and Maxwell, to his mother Sheila, to his sister Lori, and to all his family and friends, our thoughts are with you. I know of no words that can assuage the grief and pain you feel. I pray that you will find some consolation in knowing that Mark will never be forgotten and that his country will always honor his sacrifice. He was among the noblest of our citizens—a great man committed to justice, humanity, and duty. May his legacy lift us all.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RETIREMENT OF DWIGHT WHITTAKER

• Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, today I am proud to honor an Idahoan who has devoted his adult life to helping the disabled, and the past 37 years, doing this by leading the Development Workshop Incorporated, DWI, the largest community rehabilitation program in Idaho. DWI provides work and life skills and job training to those with disabilities, and helps them move into gainful employment. When Dwight founded DWI in 1971, it served 12 individuals; now, it's grown to a company that serves 700 to 800 people with locations in five eastern Idaho counties.

Dwight's steady leadership, renowned courtesy and high integrity led DWI to success and earned him the Milton ''Milt'' Cohen Leadership Award from the National Industries for the Severely Handicapped in 2006. Dwight led efforts over the years to preserve funding and promote legislation at both the State and national level for individuals with disabilities. In his position, he has consistently sought out commonsense solutions to service and funding challenges and has surely been most rewarded by seeing DWI grow into an organization of such esteem and reputation.

The face of community rehabilitation in southeast Idaho has undergone a significant transformation over the past four decades, and the citizens of Idaho Falls and the surrounding areas have Dwight to thank. I wish him well in his retirement and am certain that he will bring the same gifts of leadership, comity and energy to whatever path he chooses to walk next.•

175TH ANNIVERSARY OF KALAMAZOO COLLEGE

• Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, it is my pleasure, along with that of my colleague from Michigan, Senator STABENOW, to recognize the 175th anniversary of Kalamazoo College. Kalamazoo College enjoys the distinction of being Michigan's oldest college and one of our Nation's 100 oldest colleges. This occasion will be marked by a series of celebrations this spring, beginning with the Founder's Convocation on April 24, 2008. It is with pride that Senator STABENOW and I bring this milestone to the attention of the Senate.

Since its inception in 1883, Kalamazoo College has made immeasurable contributions to the academic, economic, and cultural life of the Greater Kalamazoo area, the State of Michigan, and the world community. Founded by Baptists as the Michigan and Huron Institute, this institution was formally named Kalamazoo College in 1855.

Devoted to the study of liberal arts and sciences and with an enduring mission ''to prepare its graduates to better understand, live successfully within and provide enlightened leadership to a richly diverse and increasingly complex world,'' Kalamazoo College has earned a national reputation as a respected, private, 4-year coeducational college. Central to this mission is the Kalamazoo Plan, a program established in 1962 that integrates career development internships and study abroad experiences with a rigorous academic curriculum and an individualized senior project. The Kalamazoo Plan was initiated under president Weimer Hicks and seeks to create an academic community where students are engaged in leadership and connected to their global surroundings.

This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the college's study abroad program. Kalamazoo College offers over 50 study abroad programs on 6 continents, and more than 80 percent of its students participate in these programs, which is among the highest of any college in the Nation. In addition, Kalamazoo College ranks among the top 10 in the number of alumni participating in the Peace Corps. Guided by the concept of ''fellowship in learning,'' Kalamazoo College has continued to strive to meet the challenges presented by an ever changing and increasingly interdependent world.

Notably, Kalamazoo College ranks among the top 20 liberal arts colleges in the country for students receiving Fulbright awards and 19th nationally in the percentage of graduates who earn doctoral degrees. In addition, the college received the State of Michigan Governor's Service Award in 2006, with the Kalamazoo Public Schools, for the AMIGOS Program, a bilingual program for mentoring middle school students.

Kalamazoo College is an NCAA Division III school and offers eight intercollegiate sports for both men and women. An especially impressive athletic accomplishment is the tennis team's record of 69 successive MIAA championships, from 1936 to 2007, the longest streak by any athletic team at any level at any time. Kalamazoo College is also proud to have hosted the USTA Boys 18 & 16 national tennis championships since 1943.

We know our Senate colleagues will join us in congratulating the past and current faculty, staff, and students of Kalamazoo College as they celebrate the school's 175th anniversary. We wish them continued success in the years ahead.•

TRIBUTE TO PHIL BLADINE

• Mr. SMITH. Mr. President. ''To live fully,'' wrote Oliver Wendell Holmes, ''is to be engaged in the passions of one's time.'' I rise today to pay tribute to Phil Bladine, a remarkable Oregonian, who passed away last week at the age of 89. There can be no doubt that Phil Bladine lived a very full life, as he devoted much of it to making a positive difference in the issues of his time.

A native of Iowa, Phil first arrived in McMinnville, OR, as a 14-year-old, when his father purchased a community newspaper. After graduating from high school and college, Phil did as did so many others of the ''Greatest Generation''—he wore the uniform of our country. Phil joined the Navy in 1940, and eventually would become an Executive Officer of an LST, a 228-foot ship that carried U.S. Marines and landing crafts in the Pacific Theater.

After the war, Phil would return to McMinnville, where he would spend much of the next half century at the helm of the McMinnville News-Register. Under his commonsense leadership, the News-Register became a positive and respected force for progress in Yamhill County and all of Oregon.

Phil was a natural leader who lent his time and talent to countless organizations and worthy causes, including the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association, the Republican Party, St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, the McMinnville Chamber of Commerce, Associated Oregon Industries, and the Oregon Economic Development Commission. I am just one of many elected officials who, over the years, counted on Phil for advise and counsel. I always knew that instead of telling me what I wanted to hear, he would tell me what I needed to hear.

Mr. President, I extend my condolences to Phil's wife Margaret ''Meg'' Bladine; his daughter Pam; his son Jeb; and all the members of the Bladine family. May they find solace in the words of the Greek poet, Sophocles, who wrote, ''One must wait until the evening to see how splendid the day has been.'' I am confident that in the evening of his time on earth, Phil Bladine could look back at a life filled with family and friends, a life filled with making a difference for his country, his state, and his community, and he could say, ''The day has indeed been splendid.''•

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILL AND JOINT RESOLUTION SIGNED

At 12:45 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by

Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill and joint resolution:

H.R. 1119. An act to amend title 36, United States Code, to revise the congressional charter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart of the United States of America, Incorporated, to authorize associate membership in the corporation for the spouse and siblings of a recipient of the Purple Heart medal.

H. J. Res. 70. Joint resolution congratulating the Army Reserve on its centennial, which will be formally celebrated on April 23, 2008, and commemorating the historic contributions of its veterans and continuing contributions of its soldiers to the vital national security interests and homeland defense missions of the United States.

The enrolled bill and joint resolution were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–5902. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Source Rules Involving U.S. Possessions and Other Conforming Changes'' ((RIN1545–BF85)(TD 9391)) received on April 17, 2008; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–5903. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the certification of a proposed technical assistance agreement for the export of technical data in support of the A400M Military Transport Aircraft; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–5904. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the certification of a proposed license for the export of a commercial communications satellite to Russia and Kazakhstan for launch; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–5905. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the certification of the proposed transfer of eight Patriot missile systems from the Government of Germany to the Government of the Republic of Korea; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–5906. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the certification of a proposed agreement for the export of defense articles to support the Portuguese Air Force P–3C Aircraft Program; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–5907. A communication from the Acting Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2008-35—2008–43); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–5908. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Toll-Free Number for Reporting Adverse Events on Labeling for Human Drug Products'' ((RIN0910–AC35)(Docket No. 2003N–0342)) received on April 17, 2008; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–5909. A communication from the White House Liaison, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of action on a nomination for the position of Assistant Secretary for Health, received on April 17, 2008; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–5910. A communication from the Chairman, U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled, ''In Search of Highly Skilled Workers: A Study on the Hiring of Upper Level Employees from Outside the Federal Government''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5911. A communication from the White House Liaison, Community Relations Service, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of action on a nomination for the position of Director, received on April 17, 2008; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–5912. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Technology), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the steps taken by the Department to implement the Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Program; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–303. A resolution adopted by the Board of County Commissioners of Miami-Dade County of the State of Florida urging the Florida Legislature to require restaurants to post nutrition information; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

POM–304. A resolution adopted by the Board of County Commissioners of Miami-Dade County of the State of Florida urging the Florida Public Service Commission to adopt final rules that will encourage the use of consumer-owned solar and other renewable energy systems; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

POM–305. A letter from a private citizen relative to the use of funds over the next 20 years; to the Committee on Armed Services.

POM–306. A resolution adopted by the Board of County Commissioners of Miami-Dade County of the State of Florida urging the Florida Legislature to sign into law legislation reinstating a property tax exemption for solar energy systems; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

POM–307. A resolution adopted by the Board of County Commissioners of Miami-Dade County of the State of Florida urging the Florida Legislature to provide matching funds for solar and other energy saving water heater installations for low-income homeowners; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

POM–308. A collection of petitions forwarded by the Benefit Security Coalition relative to establishing a more equitable method of computing cost of living adjustments for Social Security benefits; to the Committee on Finance.

POM–309. A resolution adopted by the Board of County Commissioners of Miami-Dade County of the State of Florida urging the Florida Legislature to strengthen hate crime laws; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

POM–310. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan urging Congress to pass the Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affair.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 306

Whereas, the cascading impact of houses that are lost to foreclosure for failure to pay the mortgage is becoming increasingly evident in many locations. The impact of the foreclosures over the past year is so great that it is estimated by some that as many as one homeowner in ten now owes more on their house's mortgage than the house is worth. All homes, even those without a mortgage, lose value quickly as houses stand empty. For many neighborhoods, the prospect of vacancy is accompanied by justifiable concerns over safety; and

Whereas, Congress is considering the Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008 as a means of bringing a swift response to reverse the destructive trend of people walking away from homes because of loans they cannot possibly pay. This legislation offers a range of provisions, including allocations for foreclosure prevention counseling, expanding the capacity of governmental entities to redevelop properties, allowing housing finance agencies to help home buyers and issue refinancing bonds for owners with subprime loans, and empowering bankruptcy judges to change the terms of loans facing foreclosure. The bankruptcy adjustment provision would be consistent with the power bankruptcy judges already have for other kinds of debts, including those for vacation homes and rental properties; and

Whereas, clearly, the severity of the mortgage foreclosure crisis demands vigorous and swift action. Less comprehensive approaches and voluntary programs alone are not enough: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we memorialize the Congress of the United States pass and the President to sign the Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Office of the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation. Adopted by the House of Representatives, March 20, 2008.

POM–311. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Kentucky urging Congress to act swiftly to renew the exemption of the Delta Queen from the Safety of Life at Sea Act of 1966; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 109

A Resolution urging the United States Congress to act swiftly to renew the exemption of the Delta Queen from the Safety of Life at Sea Act of 1966.

Whereas, the Delta Queen is an integral part of the culture and character of the Ohio River valley; and

Whereas, the Delta Queen has made a lasting impression as a beloved part of the past in the hearts of passengers and crew members; and

Whereas, the Delta Queen is a part of the National Register of Historic Places, a National Historic Landmark, and a jewel of the United States's inland navigable water system; and

Whereas, the Delta Queen is the last of its kind, a sternwheel overnight passenger

steamboat like those that contributed to this nation's westward expansion; and

Whereas, the Delta Queen has been and continues to be a safe and reliable vessel; and

Whereas, the Delta Queen was constructed in 1926 to operate as a passenger vessel in northern California, during World War II was used in the United States Navy as a ferry for wounded being treated in San Francisco; and

Whereas, after being purchased in 1946 by Greene Line Steamers of Cincinnati, Ohio, the Delta Queen was carried from California, to and along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania for refurbishment in order to carry passengers on the nation's inland navigable water system; and

Whereas, the Safety of Life at Sea Act of 1966 (P.L. 89–777) mandates that all passenger vessels having berth or stateroom accommodations for 50 or more passengers obey safety requirements, particularly fire safety requirements; and

Whereas, after this act was passed, the wooden construct of the Delta Queen was treated with fire resistant materials and a modern sprinkler system, thereby making this vessel considerably more fire resistant; and

Whereas, the Delta Queen has historically been exempted from the Safety of Life at Sea Act; and

Whereas, the Delta Queen's safety records do not indicate that she is any less safe today then at any point since the passage of the act in 1966; and

Whereas, the current exemption for the Delta Queen is to expire in 2008, and the United States Congress has not acted to grant another exemption for the Delta Queen to allow her to continue operating: Now therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

Section 1. The House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Kentucky hereby urges the United States Congress to act swiftly to continue the exemption of the Delta Queen from the Safety of Life at Sea Act of 1966.

Section 2. The Clerk of the House of Representatives shall forward a copy of this Resolution to the Clerk of the United States Senate, the Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, and all of the members of Kentucky's Congressional Delegation.

POM–312. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Senate of the State of Louisiana urging Congress to review and consider eliminating provisions of federal law which reduce Social Security benefits for those receiving the benefits from government retirement or pension plans; to the Committee on Finance.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 3

To memorialize the Congress of the United States to review and consider eliminating provisions of federal law which reduce Social Security benefits for those receiving pension benefits from federal, state, or local government retirement or pension systems, plans, or funds.

Whereas, the Congress of the United States has enacted both the Government Pension Offset (GPO), reducing the spousal and survivor Social Security benefit, and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), reducing the earned Social Security benefit for any person who also receives a federal, state, or local retirement or pension benefit; and

Whereas, the intent of Congress in enacting the GPO and the WEP provisions was to address concerns that a public employee who had worked primarily in federal, state, or local government employment might receive a public pension in addition to the same Social Security benefit as a person who had worked only in employment covered by Social Security throughout his career; and

Whereas, the purpose of Congress in enacting these reduction provisions was to provide a disincentive for public employees to receive two pensions; and

Whereas, the GPO negatively affects a spouse or survivor receiving a federal, state, or local government retirement or pension benefit who would also be entitled to a Social Security benefit earned by a spouse; and

Whereas, the GPO formula reduces the spousal or survivor Social Security benefit by two-thirds of the amount of the federal, state, or local government retirement or pension benefit received by the spouse or survivor, in many cases completely eliminating the Social Security benefit; and

Whereas, the WEP applies to those persons who have earned federal, state, or local government retirement or pension benefits, in addition to working in employment covered under Social Security and paying into the Social Security system; and

Whereas, the WEP reduces the earned Social Security benefit using an averaged indexed monthly earnings formula and may reduce Social Security benefits for affected persons by as much as one-half of the retirement benefit earned as a public servant in employment not covered under Social Security; and

Whereas, because of these calculation characteristics, the GPO and the WEP have a disproportionately negative effect on employees working in lower-wage government jobs, like policemen, firefighters, teachers, and state employees; and

Whereas, because the Social Security benefit statements do not calculate the GPO and the WEP, many public employees in Louisiana are unaware that their expected Social Security benefits shown on such statements will be significantly lower or nonexistent due to the service in public employment through which they are required to be members of a Louisiana public retirement or pension system, plan, or fund; and

Whereas, these provisions also have a greater adverse effect on women than on men because of the gender differences in salary that continue to plague our nation and the longer life expectancy of women; and

Whereas, Louisiana is making every effort to improve the quality of life of her citizens and to encourage them to live here lifelong: Now therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the Congress of the United States to review the GPO and the WEP Social Security benefit reductions and to consider eliminating or reducing them; and be it further

Resolved, that a copy of this Resolution shall be transmitted to the secretary of the United States Senate and the clerk of the United States House of Representatives and to each member of the Louisiana delegation to the United States Congress.

POM–313. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Washington urging support for Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organization; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8028

To The Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United States, and to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, in Congress Assembled, and to the United States Secretary of State, and to the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services, and to the United States Representative to the World Health Assembly, and to the Director-General of the World Health Organization, and to the representative of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States:

We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully represent and petition as follows:

Whereas, Direct and unobstructed participation in international health cooperation forums and programs is crucial for all parts of the world, especially with today's greater potential for the cross-border spread of various infectious diseases such as AIDS; and

Whereas, Taiwan's achievements in the field of health care are substantial, including life expectancy levels that are some of the highest in Asia, maternal and infant mortality rates that are comparable to those of western countries, free hepatitis B vaccinations for children and the eradication of polio, cholera, smallpox, and the plague; and

Whereas, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and its Taiwanese counterpart have enjoyed close collaboration on a wide range of public health issues; and

Whereas, In recent years Taiwan has expressed a willingness to assist financially and technically the international aid and health activities supported by the World Health Organization; and

Whereas, Taiwan's population of 23 million is larger than that of 75 percent of World Health Organization member states; and

Whereas, The United States, in its 1994 Taiwan Policy Review, declared its intention to support Taiwan's participation in appropriate international Organizations; and

Whereas, Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organization could bring many benefits to the state of health not only in Taiwan but also regionally and globally: Now, therefore

Your Memorialists respectfully pray that Congress support the participation by Taiwan in a meaningful and appropriate way in the World Health Organization: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That copies of this memorial shall be immediately transmitted to the Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United States, the United States Secretary of State, the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services, the United States representative to the World Health Assembly, the Director-General of the World Health Organization, the representative of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and each member of Congress from the State of Washington.

POM–314. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the State of Kansas urging Congress to amend the No Child Left Behind Act; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 1831

A RESOLUTION urging the Congress of the United States to amend the No Child Left Behind Act so that states will be allowed to continue to work toward the goal of closing the achievement gap without overly prescriptive federal rules, unfunded mandates and the coercion of losing federal funds.

Whereas, The purpose of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which was enacted on a bipartisan basis and scheduled to be reauthorized in 2008, is to increase the academic achievement of all students in language arts, mathematics and science, and to close achievement gaps among various subgroups of students; and

Whereas, The NCLB sets expectations for all students to be 100% proficient by school

year 2013–2014; however, the specific requirements are unreasonable for students with limited English proficiency and students with disabilities, making it impossible for all schools to comply with the law; and

Whereas, The NCLB requires highly qualified teachers in core academic areas, which conflicts with the process for certifying special education teachers and overlooks the fact that many categories of teachers, including special education teachers and middle school teachers in small rural schools, often teach several subjects; and

Whereas, The NCLB coerces participation by placing punitive financial consequences on states refusing to participate; and

Whereas, The NCLB is an under-funded mandate, with actual funding falling over $70 billion short of the authorized levels, placing the burden on states and school districts to spend their own limited resources to implement the NCLB; and

Whereas, States should be allowed to use multiple measures of student achievement and school effectiveness in their state accountability plan, and to use a student-growth approach in their state accountability plan; and

Whereas, States should have the flexibility to allow school districts to design appropriate instructional interventions and incorporate differentiated interventions for any school not making adequate yearly progress so that a school that falls short in only a small number of federal criteria is not treated in the same manner as a school that falls short on all such measures, and to allow a district not making adequate yearly progress to be the supplemental educational services provider; and

Whereas, States should be given sufficient time for improvement plans to take effect before applying sanctions, and sanctions should not be applied if they undermine existing effective reform efforts, or states should be permitted to replace sanctions that do not have a consistent record of success with interventions that enable schools to make changes that result in improved student achievement; and

Whereas, States and school districts should have the flexibility to determine the appropriate standards upon which to base assessments for students with disabilities and to utilize the results from assessments based on such standards in calculating adequate yearly progress without arbitrary federal limitation on the use of such assessments; and

Whereas, States and school districts should have the flexibility to exclude assessment results of newly arrived limited-English proficient students in adequate yearly progress calculations for an appropriate number of years to ensure that such tests are measuring students' academic content knowledge and not just their English-proficiency levels; and

Whereas, Funding for supplemental educational services and school choice transportation should be funded by the federal government, and not come from diverting up to 20% of school districts Title I funds for such purposes: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas: That we memorialize the President and the United States Congress to make a serious commitment to improving the quality of the nation's public schools by substantially increasing funding for the preauthorized version of the No Child Left Behind Act; and be it further

Resolved, That we urge the Congress of the United States to amend the No Child Left Behind Act so that states will be allowed to continue working toward the goal of closing the achievement gap without overly prescriptive federal rules, under-funded mandates and the coercion of losing federal funds; and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of the Senate provide an enrolled copy of this resolution to the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives and to each member of the Kansas Congressional Delegation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. LIEBERMAN, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

S. 1046. A bill to modify pay provisions relating to certain senior-level positions in the Federal Government, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 110–328).

By Mr. KENNEDY, from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

Report to accompany S. 1551, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to making progress toward the goal of eliminating tuberculosis, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 110–329).

By Mr. INOUYE, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with amendments:

S. 1853. A bill to promote competition, to preserve the ability of local governments to provide broadband capability and services, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 110–330).

By Mr. LIEBERMAN, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment and with a preamble:

H. Con. Res. 307. A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that Members' Congressional papers should be properly maintained and encouraging Members to take all necessary measures to manage and preserve these papers.

S. Res. 497. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that public servants should be commended for their dedication and continued service to the Nation during Public Service Recognition Week, May 5 through 11, 2008.

By Mr. LEAHY, from the Committee on the Judiciary, with amendments:

S. 431. A bill to require convicted sex offenders to register online identifiers, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. BIDEN for the Committee on Foreign Relations.

*Mark Kimmitt, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Political-Military Affairs).

*Patricia M. Haslach, of Oregon, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, for the rank of Ambassador during her tenure of service as United States Senior Coordinator for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum.

*Joxel Garcia, of Connecticut, to be Representative of the United States on the Executive Board of the World Health Organization.

*Samuel W. Speck, of Ohio, to be a Commissioner on the part of the United States on the International Joint Commission, United States and Canada.

*Scot A. Marciel, of California, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Affairs.

*Yousif Boutrous Ghafari, of Michigan, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Slovenia.

Nominee: Yousif B. Ghafari.

Post: Ambassador to the Republic of Slovenia.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self: 2007—2,300.00, Team Sununu; 6,800.00, Robert A. Ficano Committee; 300.00, John B. O'Reilly Jr. Committee; 200.00, Committee to Elect Notte; 150.00, Committee to Elect Alan Lambert; 4,600.00, Mitt Romney for President; 80.00, Friends of Nancy A. Hubbard; 125.00, Diamond PAC/Jewel Ware; 250.00, Committee to Elect Mark Steenbergh; 65.00, Gary Woronchak for County Commissioner; 125.00, Laura Cox for Wayne County Commissioner; 100.00, Friends of Suzanne Sareini; 250.00, Health PAC; 2,500.00, Friends of Wayne State PAC; 150.00, Friends of Maureen Brosnan; 6,900.00, Mitt Romney for President; 1,000.00, McConnell Senate Committee; 4,600.00, Friends of Carl Levin; 150.00, Friends of Kevin McNamara; 250.00, Committee to Re-elect Donald Fracassi; 1,000.00, Friends of Michael Bouchard.

2006—1,000.00, Mike DeWine for US Senate; 100.00, Gary Woronchak for County Comm.; 200.00, Citizens for Jewel Ware; 125.00, Laura Cox for Wayne County Comm.; 1,000.00, Dave Camp for Congress; 250.00, Candice Miller for Congress; 500.00, Health PAC; 1,000.00, IMP–PAC; 200.00, Citizens for Sam Salamey; 150.00, The Committee to Re-elect Edward A. Boike, Jr.; 2,500.00, Friends of Wayne State PAC; 500.00, Kilpatrick for US Congress; 6,800.00, DeVos for Governor; 5,000.00, Robert A. Ficano PAC; 750.00, Michael A. Guido Committee; 2,100.00, C. Wakim for Congress; 100.00, Gary Woronchak for County Comm.; 1,000.00, Team Sununu; 250.00, Friends of Kevin McNamara; 1,000.00, Knollenberg for Congress; 5,000.00, Michigan Republican Party; 100.00, Charles Chambers for OCC Board of Trustees; 2,000.00, Santorum 2006; 2,100.00, Jeff Lamberti for Congress.

2005—6,800.00, DeVos for Governor; 1,000.00, Friends of Michael Bouchard; 150.00, Committee to Elect Alan Lambert; 200.00, Friends of Mark Steenbergh; 1,040.00, Michael A. Guido Committee; 750.00, Freman Hendrix for Mayor Committee; 100.00, The Committee to Elect Arthur F. Wright; 150.00, Committee to Elect Gregory Pitonialk; 7,300.00, Robert A. Ficano Committee; 70.00, Friends of Nancy A. Hubbard; 70.00, Friends of Suzanne Sareini; 250.00, Friends of Brenda Lawrence; 100.00, Sue Hall for Mayor; 300.00 Committee to Elect Joyce Hayes Giles; 150.00, Committee to re-Elect Edward A. Boike, Jr.; 100.00, Laura Cox for Wayne County Commiss.; 50,250.00, Republican National Committee; 25,000.00, Joint Candidate Committee; 1,000.00, Michigan Republican Party; 200.00, Committee to re-Elect Donald F. Fracassi; 100.00, Committee to Elect Notte; 8,400.00, Bouchard for US Senate.

2004—25,000.00, Michigan Republican Party; 1,000.00, Marc Barron for District Judge; 1,500.00, Robert A. Ficano Committee; 2,500.00, Friends of L. Brooks Patterson; 1,500.00, Knollenberg for Congress Committee; 75.00, Committee to Re-elect Edward A. Boike, Jr.; 150.00, Spring event 2004; 1,000.00, Committee to Elect Myrah Kirkwood; 140.00, Friends of Nancy A. Hubbard; 250.00, Citizens to Elect Cheryl Matthews; 150.00, Gorcyca for Justice Fund; 40,000.00, Republican National Committee; 10,000.00, Republican National Committee; (8,000.00),

Republican National Committee; 250.00, Friends for Bill Vollenweider; 140.00, Committee to Elect Alan Lambert; 1,000.00, Committee to Elect David Farhat; 1,000.00, Nancy Danhof for State Board; 500.00, Stephen Markman for Justice; 26,000.00, Joint Candidate Committee; 27,000.00, Joint State Victory Committee; 1,000.00, Terri Lynn Land for Secretary of State; 250.00, McCotter Congressional Committee; 200.00, Committee to Elect Notte; 500.00, Committee to re-elect Judge Wm. Whitbeck; 250.00, Melanie Foster for MSU Trustee; 500.00, Senate Republican Campaign Com; 5,000.00, IRL PAC; 125.00, Fall Event 2004; 2,500.00, Cox 5200 Club; 250.00, Rogers for Congress.

2003—200.00, Committee to Elect Notte; 150.00, Gorcyca for Prosecutor; 150.00, Spring Event 2003; 475.00, Michael A. Gudio Committee; 125.00, Sue Hall for Mayor Committee; 100.00, Committee to Elect Gil Hill; 140.00, Friends of Nancy A. Hubbard; 1,500.00, John D. Dingell for Congress; 100.00, Friends of Suzanne Sareini; 2,000.00, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; 1,000.00, Rogers for Congress; 2,000.00, Ros-Lehtinen for Congress; 500.00, Robert A. Ficano Committee; 200.00, Bankes for Livonia Mayor; 250.00, McCotter Congressional Committee; 25,000.00, Republican National Committee; 250.00, Committee to Keep Michael Duggan; 2,000.00, Engel for Congress.

Ghafari Family Members Political Contributions: Aida Ghafari, 2,300.00, 9/25/07, Mitt Romney; 1,000.00, 3/30/06, Michael J. Bouchard; Almaza Ghafari, 1,000.00, 9/11/07, Mitt Romney; 2,000.00, 6/30/03, George Bush; Georges Ghafari, 2,000.00, 3/31/06, Michael J. Bouchard; Louis Ghafari, 500.00, 6/27/06, Eliot Engel; 1,000.00, 3/21/06, Michael J. Bouchard; Sejaan Ghafari, 500.00, 6/27/06, Eliot Engel; 1,000.00, 4/7/06, Michael J. Bouchard; Vera Kalnins, 2,000.00, 12/4/03, George W. Bush.

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*Kurt Douglas Volker, of Pennsylvania, a Career Foreign Service Officer of Class One, to be United States Permanent Representative on the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

Nominee: Kurt D. Volker.

Post: US–NATO.

Nominated: Ambassador.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self, none.
2. Spouse: Karen Volker, none.
3. Children and Spouses: Sonja Volker, none; Katja Volker, none.
4. Parents: Thelma Jane, $25, 8/01/2004, RNC; Volker, $16, 9/18/2004, RNC.
5. Grandparents.
6. Brothers and Spouses: Mark and Volker, $250, 9/29/2006, RNC; $250, 8/02/2004, Bush/Cheney; $250, 9/10/2004, RNC; and Craig and Volker, none.
7. Sisters and Spouses: N/A.

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*D. Kathleen Stephens, of Montana, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Korea.

Nominee: Doris Kathleen Stephens.

Post: Seoul, Korea.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self, none.
2. Spouse: N/A.
3. Children and Spouses: James Whong, none.
4. Parents: Doris R. Stephens, none; Kenneth L. Stephens (deceased).
5. Grandparents: Henry and Mabel Richburg; Harvey and Annie Pearl Stephens, all deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: Kenneth Stephens, none; Jeffrey W. Stephens, none; Margaret Stephens, none.
7. Sisters and Spouses: N/A.

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*Robert J. Callahan, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Nicaragua.

Nominee: Robert J. Callahan.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee.

1. Self, none.
2. Spouse, none.
3. Children and Spouses: Andrew M. Callahan, none; Emmett B. Callahan, none.
4. Parents, deceased.
5. Grandparents, deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: Thomas D. Callahan (spouse deceased), none; James M. Callahan, none.
7. Sisters and Spouses: John and Patricia Schultz, none; Robert and Kathleen Martin, none; John and Maureen Moore, none; James and Nancy Lamb, none.

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*Heather M. Hodges, of Ohio, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Ecuador.

Nominee: Heather M. Hodges.

Post: Ambassador to Ecuador.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self, none.
2. Spouse: N/A.
3. Children and Spouses: N/A.
4. Parents: Aiden & Frances Hodges—Deceased.
5. Grandparents: Joseph & Effy Hodges—Deceased; Herman & Susana Ruppelt—Deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: Allan J. Hodges, none.
7. Sisters and Spouses: N/A.

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*Barbara J. Stephenson, of Florida, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Panama.

Nominee: Barbara Stephenson.

Post: Ambassador to Panama.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self: Barbara Stephenson, none.
2. Spouse: Matthew Furbush, none.
3. Children: Claire Furbush, none; Matthew Brewster Furbush, none.
4. Parents: Father, Robert Vernon Stephenson—deceased; Mother, Jacqueline Jean Stephenson, none.
5. Grandparents: All deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: Gary Lamar Stephenson, divorced, none.
7. Sisters and Spouses: N/A.

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*William Edward Todd, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Executive Service, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Brunei Darussalam.

Nominee: William Todd.

Post: Chief of Mission Brunei.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self, none.
2. Wife; Patricia Buckingham, none.
3. Children: William Todd II, none; Christopher Todd, none, John Todd, none, Caitlyn Todd, none.
4. Parents: John Todd, none; Marie Todd, none.
5. Grandparents: Deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: John and Margaret Todd, $1000, 2004, Republican Party; Douglas and Leigh Anne Todd, none.
7. Sisters and Spouses: Jean Todd, none.

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*Hugo Llorens, of Florida, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Honduras.

Nominee: Hugo Llorens.

Post: Honduras.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self, none.
2. Spouse, none.
3. Children and Spouses: Son, Andrew Lee Llorens, none; Son, Dirk Alan Llorens, none.
4. Parents: Father, Fulvio Llorens, none; Mother, Hildelisa Llorens, none.
5. Grandparents: Efebo Llorens, (deceased); Francisca Garcia Llorens, (deceased); Amelio Acosta, (deceased); Obdulia Rodriguez Acosta, (deceased).
6. Brothers and Spouses: Jorge Llorens, none; Kim Llorens (spouse), none.
7. Sisters and Spouses: Elda Llorens (unmarried), none.

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*Nancy E. McEldowney, of Florida, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Bulgaria.

Nominee: Nancy Eileen McEldowney.

Post: Sofia, Bulgaria.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self, none.

2. Spouse, none.

3. Children and Spouses: Jessica Kim Hayes, none; Alyssa Mai Hayes, none.

4. Parents: Patricia Schamber, none; Clarence McEldowney, deceased.

5. Grandparents: Anita Salyer, deceased; Clarence Salyer, deceased; Ruth McEldowney, deceased; Alva McEldowney, deceased.

6. Brothers and Spouses: Michael McEldowney, none; Charlotte Phillips, none; John McEldowney, none; Catherine Miller, none.

7. Sisters and Spouses: Ann McEldowney, none; Richard Hertle, none; Jane McEldowney, none; William Cannon, none.

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*Stephen George McFarland, of Texas, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Guatemala.

Nominee: Stephen George McFarland.

Post: COM Guatemala.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self, none.

2. Spouse, none.

3. Children and Spouses: Christopher E. McFarland, none; Alexander G. McFarland, none; Andrew S. McFarland, none; Kevin S. McFarland, none.

4. Parents: George A. McFarland, $100, fall 2003, Cong. Sam Johnson; $100, fall 2004, Sen. John Kerry; Peggy N. Nash, $150, fall 2006, Van Johnson.

5. Grandparents: deceased.

6. Brothers and spouses: John F. McFarland, none; Yvonne McFarland, none.

7. Sisters and spouses: Anne M. Meyer, none; John Meyer, none; Maria McFarland, none; Christopher A. Smith, none.

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*Peter E. Cianchette, of Maine, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Costa Rica.

Nominee: Peter E. Cianchette.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self, 500.00, 6/11/2007, Collins for Senator; 250.00, 11/6/2006, Snowe for Senate; 250.00, 7/18/2006, Maine Republican Party; 250.00, 6/30/2006, Curley for Congress; 75.00, 4/10/2006, Maine Republican Party; 25.00, 5/5/2006, Maine Republican Party; 500.00, 8/6/2004, Bush-Cheney '04; 100.00, 4/1/2004, Summers for Congress; 100.00, 4/6/2004, Brian Hamel for Congress; 80.00, 5/19/2004; Maine Republican Party; 100.00, 7/3/2003, Maine Republican Party.

2. Spouse: 250.00, 8/26/2006, Craig for Congress.

3. Children and spouses: Evan Cianchette, none; Maria Cianchette, none.

4. Parents: Ival Cianchette, 1000.00, 3/31/2007, Associated General Co Contractors of America PAC (AGC PAC); 1000.00, 05/31/2007, Collins for Senator; 1000.00, 2/28/2006, AGC PAC; 1000.00, 5/26/2005, Snowe for Senate; 1000.00, 9/1/2005, Snowe for Senate; 1000.00, 3/29/2005, AGC PAC; 1000.00, 3/15/2004, AGC PAC; 200.00, 8/10/2004, Summers for Congress; 800.00, 9/28/2004, Summers for Congress; 200.00, 10/23/2004, Summers for Congress; 250.00, 8/24/2004, Maine Republican Party; 500.00, 2/18/2004, Summers for Congress; 500.00, 6/29/2004, Summers for Congress; 1500.00, 11/17/2003, Bush-Cheney '04; 1000.00, 9/22/2003, AGC PAC; Priscilla Cianchette, 1500.00, 11/17/2003, Bush-Cheney '04.

5. Grandparents: Ralph Cianchette, deceased; Edna Cianchette, deceased, Earle Winslow, deceased, Mary Winslow, deceased.

6. Brothers and spouses: Thomas Cianchette, none; Bonita Cianchette, none; Earle Cianchette, 250.00, 8/3/2007, Maine Republican Party; Mary Ellen Cianchette, none; Mark Cianchette, none.

7. Sisters and spouses: Susan Koch, 250.00, 8/1/2007, Maine Republican Party; Joseph Koch, deceased, none.

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*Frank Charles Urbancic, Jr., of Indiana, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Cyprus.

Nominee: Frank C. Urbancic Jr.

Post: Cyprus

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, Donee:

1. Frank C. Urbancic, Jr., none.

2. Michelle M. Urbancic, none.

3. Frank C. Urbancic III, none; Arlette Nadine Urbancic, none.

4. Norma Jean Urbancic, none; Frank C. Urbancic Sr., none.

5. Grandparents: deceased.

6. Brothers and spouses: none; John Vincent Urbancic, none; Louis H. Urbancic, Marjorie Urbancic, none.

7. Sisters and spouses: Sherryl Cromer, none.

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*Barbara McConnell Barrett, of Arizona, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Finland.

Nominee: Barbara McConnell Barrett.

Post: Ambassador to Finland.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Donee, Date, Amount:

1. Self: John Shadegg's Friends, 12/18/2007, $4600; 8/24/2006, $4200; Huffman for Congress, 7/27/2006, $2100; Jon Kyl for U.S. Senate, 6/2/2006, $1350; 6/2/2006, $2100; 4/22/2005, $750; Ros-Lehtinen for Congress, 11/5/2007, $1000; 5/4/2006, $1000; Kolbe for Congress, 7/18/2005, $2000; 4/23/2006, $575; Jeff Flake for Congress, 3/16/2007, $2300; 3/16/2007, $2300; 3/15/2005, $4200; Heather Wilson for Congress, 8/15/2007, $200; 8/15/2007, $2300; 3/14/2007, $2100, 2/1/2005, $4000; 2004 Joint Candidate Committee, 10/8/2004, $20,000; Pete Coors for U.S. Senate, 10/7/2004, $2000; The Wish List, 5/12/2006, $1000; 8/1/2005, $1000; 7/26/2004, $1000; John Shadegg for Congress, 5/19/2004, $500; Hatch Election Committee, 5/15/2006, $2100; Bush, George W. (Bush-Cheney '04 Compliance Committee), 10/20/2004, $2000; Romney for President, 7/30/2007, $2300, 1/10/2008, $2300; Mitch McConnell Senate Committee '08, 9/05/2007, $2300; J.D. Hayworth for Congress, 10/17/2006, $2100; Jill Vogel for Senate, 8/7/2007, $25.

2. Spouse: Craig Radford Barrett, John Shadegg's Friends, 12/18/2007, $4600, 8/24/2006, $3200, 12/7/2005, $1000, 4/26/2004, $500; Huffman for Congress, 7/27/2006, $2100; Ros-Lehtinen for Congress, 5/4/2006, $1000; Jeff Flake for Congress, 3/16/2007, $4600, 3/15/2005, $4200, 3/3/2004, $2000; Heather Wilson for Congress, 8/15/2007, $200, 8/15/2007, $2300, 3/14/2007, $2100, 2/14/2005, $2000, 2/14/2005, $2000; 2004 Joint Candidate Committee, 10/8/2004, $4,000; Maria Cantwell, 3/3/2004, $1000; People for Pete Domenici, 5/25/2007, $1000, 6/3/2005, $1000; Hatch Election Committee, 5/15/2006, $4200, 5/15/2006, $2100; Mitch McConnell Senate Committee '08, 9/05/2007, $2300; Jon Kyl for US Senate, 9/26/2006, $1700; 6/5/2006, $350; 6/5/2006, $400; 1/9/2006, $1000; 4/28/2005, $750; David Dreier for Congress Committee, 8/8/2005, $1000; 2/6/2004, $2000; Friends of George Allen, 7/12/2006, $1000; 7/21/2005, $1000; Bush-Cheney '04 Compliance Committee, 10/20/2004, $2000; Friends of Gordon Smith, 11/9/2005, $1000; Nethercutt for Congress, 10/15/2004, $2000; Santorum 2006, 8/31/2004, $2000; Lisa Murkowski for Senate, 9/27/2004, $2000; Citizens for Hope, Responsibility, Independence and Service (ChrisPac), 4/20/2005, $2500; Romney for President, 1/10/2008, $2300; Intel Corporation Political Action Committee, 1/15/2004, $208.00; 1/30/2004, $208.00; 2/13/2004, $208.00; 2/27/2004, $208.00; 3/15/2004, $208.00; 3/31/2004, $208.00; 4/15/2004, $208.00; 4/30/2004, $208.00; 5/14/2004, $208.00; 5/28/2004, $208.00; 6/15/2004, $208.00; 6/30/2004, $208.00; 7/15/2004, $208.00; 7/30/2004, $208.00; 8/13/2004, $208.00; 8/27/2004, $208.00; 9/15/2004, $208.00; 9/30/2004, $208.00; 10/15/2004, $208.00; 10/29/2004, $208.00; 11/15/2004, $208.00; 11/30/2004, $208.00; 12/15/2004, $208.00; 12/31/2004, $208.00; 1/14/2005, $208.00; 1/31/2005, $208.00; 2/15/2005, $208.00; 2/28/2005, $208.00; 3/15/2005, $208.00; 3/31/2005, $208.00; 4/15/2005, $208.00; 4/29/2005, $208.00; 5/13/2005, $208.00; 5/31/2005, $208.00; 6/15/2005, $208.00; 6/30/2005, $208.00; 7/15/2005, $208.00; 7/29/2005, $208.00; 8/15/2005, $208.00; 8/31/2005, $208.00; 9/15/2005, $208.00; 9/30/2005, $208.00; 10/14/2005, $208.00; 10/31/2005, $208.00; 11/15/2005, $208.00; 11/30/2005, $208.00; 12/15/2005, $208.00; 12/30/2005, $208.00; 1/13/2006, $208.00; 1/31/2006, $208.00; 2/15/2006, $208.00; 2/28/2006, $208.00; 3/15/2006, $208.00; 3/31/2006, $208.00; 4/14/2006, $208.00; 4/28/2006, $208.00; 5/15/2006, $208.00; 5/31/2006, $208.00; 6/15/2006, $208.00; 6/30/2006, $208.00; 7/14/2006, $208.00; 7/31/2006, $208.00; 8/15/2006, $208.00; 8/31/2006, $208.00; 9/15/2006, $208.00; 9/29/2006, $208.00; 10/13/2006, $208.00; 10/31/2006, $208.00, 11/15/2006, $208.00, 11/30/2006, $208.00, 12/15/2006, $208.00, 12/29/2006, $208.00, 1/15/2007, $208.00, 1/31/2007, $208.00, 2/15/2007, $208.00, 2/28/2007, $208.00, 3/15/2007, $208.00, 3/30/2007, $208.00, 4/13/2007, $208.00, 4/30/2007, $208.00, 5/15/2007, $208.00, 5/31/2007, $208.00, 6/15/2007, $208.00, 6/29/2007, $208.00, 7/13/2007, $208.00, 7/31/2007, $208.00, 8/15/2007, $208.00, 8/31/2007, $208.00, 9/14/2007, $208.00, 9/28/2007, $208.00, 10/15/2007, $208.00, 10/31/2007, $208.00, 11/15/2007, $208.00, 11/30/2007 $208.00, 12/14/2007, $208.00, 12/28/2007, $208.00.

3. Children and spouses: No children.

4. Parents: Robert Harvey McConnell, (deceased); Betty Lou Dornheim McConnell, Heather Wilson for Congress, 10/28/2007, $25, 9/8/2007, $25, 7/9/2007, $20, 2/11/2007, $25, 3/24/2006, $25; Republican National Committee 12/10/2007, $25, 5/22/2007, $30, 4/11/2007, $25; National Republican Women 3/8/2007, $30, Pennsylvania GOP, 8/15/2007, $25; Republican Women, 10/31/2006, $25.

5. Grandparents: William Dornheim, deceased; Solamea Ambil Dornheim, deceased; William Day McConnell, deceased; Della McFeaters McConnell, deceased.

6. Brothers and spouses: Robert Harvey McConnell Jr., deceased; William Ansley McConnell and Leslie Hipp McConnell, Pat Toomey 1/13/2004, $100; John David McConnell and Lori McConnell McConnell, Heather Wilson,12/20/2007, $500.

7. Sisters and spouses: Jill Kathlene Kazmierczak: none; Patricia Lynn Minter and Richard G. Minter, none.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, for the Committee on Foreign Relations I report favorably the following nomination list which was printed in the RECORD on the date indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that this nomination lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Foreign Service nominations beginning with Andrew Townsend Wiener and ending with Troy A. Lindquist, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on March 5, 2008.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. REID (for himself and Mr. ENSIGN):

S. 2898. A bill to provide for the release of certain land from the Sunrise Mountain Instant Study Area in the State of Nevada; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 2899. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study on suicides among veterans; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BROWN:

S. 2900. A bill to provide States with the incentives, flexibility and resources to develop child welfare services that focus on improving circumstances for children, whether in foster care or in their own homes; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. KERRY (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. VITTER, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. DOLE, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. THUNE, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. ENZI, Mr. BAYH, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. LEVIN, and Mr. TESTER):

S. Res. 524. A resolution honoring the entrepreneurial spirit of the owners of small business concerns in the United States during National Small Business Week, beginning April 21, 2008; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. BIDEN (for himself and Mr. LUGAR):

S. Res. 525. A resolution recognizing the progress made by States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention on the occasion of the Second Review Conference; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. STEVENS):

S. Res. 526. A resolution designating April 20 through 26, 2008, as ''National Community Health Aide, Community Health Practitioner, and Dental Health Aide Week''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. WEBB (for himself and Mr. WARNER):

S. Res. 527. A resolution designating April 23, 2008, as ''National Adopt a Library Day''; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. BAYH, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BURR, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. COLEMAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. DODD, Mrs. DOLE, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. GREGG, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KERRY, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. STEVENS, and Mr. TESTER):

S. Res. 528. A resolution designating April 25, 2008, as ''Global Youth Service Day''; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 335

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 335, a bill to prohibit the Internal Revenue Service from using private debt collection companies, and for other purposes.

S. 358

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 358, a bill to prohibit discrimination on the basis of genetic information with respect to health insurance and employment.

S. 773

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 773, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow Federal civilian and military retirees to pay health insurance premiums on a pretax basis and to allow a deduction for TRICARE supplemental premiums.

S. 819

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 819, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand tax-free distributions from individual retirement accounts for charitable purposes.

S. 903

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER), the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WEBB), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CONRAD), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUYE) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) were added as cosponsors of S. 903, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Dr. Muhammad Yunus, in recognition of his contributions to the fight against global poverty.

S. 1310

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1310, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for an extension of increased payments for ground ambulance services under the Medicare program.

S. 1315

At the request of Mr. SALAZAR, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1315, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 1437

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1437, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the semicentennial of the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

S. 1576

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1576, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to improve the health and healthcare of racial and ethnic minority groups.

S. 1715

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1715, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to eliminate discriminatory copayment rates for outpatient psychiatric services under the Medicare program.

S. 1738

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mrs. HUTCHISON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1738, a bill to establish a Special Counsel for Child Exploitation Prevention and Interdiction within the Office of the Deputy Attorney General, to improve the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, to increase resources for regional computer forensic labs, and to make other improvements to increase the ability of law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute predators.

S. 1760

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1760, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to the Healthy Start Initiative.

S. 1817

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1817, a bill to ensure proper administration of the discharge of members of the Armed Forces for personality disorder, and for other purposes.

S. 1843

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUYE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1843, a bill to amend title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 to clarify that an unlawful practice occurs each time compensation is paid pursuant to a discriminatory compensation decision or other practice, and for other purposes.

S. 2058

At the request of Mr. LEVIN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2058, a bill to amend the Commodity Exchange Act to close the Enron loophole, prevent price manipulation and excessive speculation in the trading of energy commodities, and for other purposes.

S. 2130

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WEBB) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2130, a bill to express the sense of the Senate on the need for a comprehensive diplomatic offensive to help broker national reconciliation efforts in Iraq and lay the foundation for the eventual redeployment of United States combat forces.

S. 2197

At the request of Mr. AKAKA, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2197, a bill to establish the Federal Labor-Management Partnership Council.

S. 2279

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2279, a bill to combat international violence against women and girls.

S. 2320

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2320, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide continued entitlement to coverage for immunosuppressive drugs furnished to beneficiaries under the Medicare Program that have received a kidney transplant and whose entitlement to coverage would otherwise expire, and for other purposes.

S. 2401

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2401, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a refund of motor fuel excise taxes for the actual off-highway use of certain mobile machinery vehicles.

S. 2426

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2426, a bill to provide for congressional oversight of United States agreements with the Government of Iraq.

S. 2585

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2585, a bill to provide for the enhancement of the suicide prevention programs of the Department of Defense, and for other purposes.

S. 2630

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2630, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a Federal grant program to provide increased health care coverage to and access for uninsured and underinsured workers and families in the commercial fishing industry, and for other purposes.

S. 2632

At the request of Mr. BOND, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mrs. HUTCHISON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2632, a bill to ensure that the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act is applied retroactively.

S. 2640

At the request of Mr. BURR, the names of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2640, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance and improve insurance, housing, labor and education, and other benefits for veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 2666

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. ENSIGN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2666, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to encourage investment in affordable housing, and for other purposes.

S. 2667

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT) were added as cosponsors of S. 2667, a bill to direct the Attorney General to make an annual grant to the A Child Is Missing Alert and Recovery Center to assist law enforcement agencies in the rapid recovery of missing children, and for other purposes.

S. 2668

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2668, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to remove cell phones from listed property under section 280F.

S. 2672

At the request of Mr. CONRAD, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. KOHL) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2672, a bill to provide incentives to physicians to practice in rural and medically underserved communities.

S. 2681

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2681, a bill to require the issuance of medals to recognize the dedication and valor of Native American code talkers.

S. 2684

At the request of Mr. DODD, the names of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2684, a bill to reform the housing choice voucher program under section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937.

S. 2756

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. ENSIGN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2756, a bill to amend the National Child Protection Act of 1993 to establish a permanent background check system.

S. 2766

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2766, a bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to address certain discharges incidental to the normal operation of a recreational vessel.

S. 2783

At the request of Mr. ENSIGN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2783, a bill to allow for additional flights beyond the perimeter restriction applicable to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.

S. 2819

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the names of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) were added as cosponsors of S. 2819, a bill to preserve access to Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program during an economic downturn, and for other purposes.

S. 2844

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2844, a bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to modify provisions relating to beach monitoring, and for other purposes.

S. 2848

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2848, a bill to provide for health care benefits for certain nuclear facility workers.

S. 2858

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2858, a bill to establish the Social Work Reinvestment Commission to provide independent counsel to Congress and the Secretary of Health and Human Services on policy issues associated with recruitment, retention, research, and reinvestment in the profession of social work, and for other purposes.

S. 2875

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. BAUCUS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2875, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide grants to designated States and tribes to carry out programs to reduce the risk of livestock loss due to predation by gray wolves and other predator species or to compensate landowners for livestock loss due to predation.

S. 2886

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2886, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to amend certain expiring provisions.

S. 2888

At the request of Mr. KOHL, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2888, a bill to protect the property and security of homeowners who are subject to foreclosure proceedings, and for other purposes.

S. 2892

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2892, a bill to promote the prosecution and enforcement of frauds against the United States by suspending the statute of limitations during times when Congress has authorized the use of military force.

S. 2893

At the request of Mr. SALAZAR, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. ALLARD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2893, a bill to designate the Ludlow Massacre National Historic Landmark in the State of Colorado, and for other purposes.

S. 2895

At the request of Mr. DODD, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2895, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to maintain eligibility, for Federal PLUS loans, of borrowers who are 90 or more days delinquent on mortgage loan payments, or for whom foreclosure proceedings have been initiated, with respect to their primary residence.

S. RES. 506

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 506, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that funding provided by the United States to the Government of Iraq in the future for reconstruction and training for security forces be provided as a loan to the Government of Iraq.

S. RES. 515

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 515, a resolution commemorating the life and work of Dith Pran.

S. RES. 518

At the request of Mr. DODD, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER), the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) and the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 518, a resolution designating the third week of April 2008 as ''National Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week''.

S. RES. 520

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 520, a resolution designating May 16, 2008, as ''Endangered Species Day''.

S. RES. 523

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 523, a resolution expressing the strong support of the Senate for the declaration of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization at the Bucharest Summit that Ukraine and Georgia will become members of the alliance.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. REID (for himself and Mr. ENSIGN):

S. 2898. A bill to provide for the release of certain land from the Sunrise Mountain Instant Study Area in the State of Nevada; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Orchard Detention Basin Flood Control Act for myself and Senator ENSIGN. This Act will release approximately 65 acres of land managed by the Bureau of Land Management in Clark County, NV, from the Sunrise Mountain Instant Study Area. The release will allow for the construction of an important flood control project.

The Orchard Detention Basin project is part of the Clark County Regional Flood Control District's Master Plan to protect the Las Vegas Valley. This comprehensive floodplain management program is designed to protect private and public lands from flood damage and to save lives in this rapidly growing metropolitan area. When completed, the Orchard Detention Basin project will protect approximately 1,200 acres of urban development from flooding, including 2,500 homes and three schools. The project will also reduce the magnitude of flooding further downstream.

The boundary change executed by this legislation is needed because a portion of the detention basin project lies within the boundaries of the Sunrise Mountain Instant Study Area. An ''instant study area'' designation places development restrictions on public lands similar to those on wilderness study areas. This designation currently prevents the construction of this important flood control project, leaving the land and residents living downstream vulnerable to flood damage.

Even though the Las Vegas Valley is a desert, flash flooding is an all too common problem affecting the people in Las Vegas. In just the last decade, Las Vegas Valley has been hit with five 100-year storm events. A severe thunderstorm in 1999 dropped over 3 inches of rain in 1½ hours, resulting in a disaster declaration. Along with property damage and deaths related to flooding, Clark County residents experience inconvenience resulting from impassable roads during flooding events. Support services such as police, fire and ambulance can also be delayed, creating life-threatening incidents.

The House of Representatives has already taken up and passed this legislation during the current Congress. The version that I am introducing today reflects the amendments that were adopted in the House. I look forward to working with the Energy Committee and my other distinguished friends to move this bill in a timely manner during the current session.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2898

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Orchard Detention Basin Flood Control Act''.

SEC. 2. RELEASE OF CERTAIN LAND IN THE SUNRISE MOUNTAIN INSTANT STUDY AREA.

(a) FINDING.—Congress finds that the land described in subsection (c) has been adequately studied for wilderness designation under section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1782).

(b) RELEASE.—The land described in subsection (c)—

(1) is no longer subject to section 603(c) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1782(c)); and

(2) shall be managed in accordance with—

(A) land management plans adopted under section 202 of that Act (43 U.S.C. 1712); and

(B) cooperative conservation agreements in existence on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) DESCRIPTION OF LAND.—The land referred to in subsections (a) and (b) is the approximately 65 acres of land in the Sunrise Mountain Instant Study Area of Clark County, Nevada, that is—

(1) known as the ''Orchard Detention Basin''; and

(2) designated for release on the map titled ''Orchard Detention Basin'' and dated March 18, 2005.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 524—HONORING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT OF THE OWNERS OF SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS IN THE UNITED STATES DURING NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK, BEGINNING APRIL 21, 2008

Mr. KERRY (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. VITTER, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. DOLE, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. THUNE, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. ENZI, Mr. BAYH, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. LEVIN, and Mr. TESTER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship:

S. RES. 524

Whereas the 26,800,000 small business concerns in the United States are the driving force behind the Nation's economy, creating more than ⅔ of all net new jobs and generating more than 50 percent of the Nation's nonfarm gross domestic product;

Whereas small business concerns represent 99.7 percent of all businesses and employ 50 percent of the Nation's workforce;

Whereas small business concerns represent 97 percent of all exporters and produce 28.6 percent of exported goods;

Whereas small business concerns are the Nation's innovators, advancing technology and productivity;

Whereas the resilience, vitality, and growth of small business concerns are critical to the Nation's competitiveness during a time of economic downturn;

Whereas Congress established the Small Business Administration in 1953, to aid, counsel, assist, and protect the interests of small business concerns in order to preserve free competitive enterprise, to ensure that a fair proportion of the total purchases and contracts or subcontracts for property and services for the Federal Government be placed with small business concerns, to ensure that a fair proportion of the total sales of Government property be made to such small business concerns, and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of the Nation;

Whereas for over 50 years, the Small Business Administration has provided aid and assistance to millions of entrepreneurs who have succeeded in achieving the American dream of owning a small business concern, and thus has played a key role in fostering economic growth; and

Whereas the President has designated the week beginning April 21, 2008, as National Small Business Week: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors the entrepreneurial spirit of the owners of small business concerns in the United States during National Small Business Week, beginning April 21, 2008;

(2) honors the efforts and achievements of the owners and employees of small business concerns, whose hard work, commitment to excellence, and willingness to take a risk, have made them a crucial part of the Nation's economy;

(3) recognizes that small business concerns are essential to restoring the Nation's economic health;

(4) recognizes the vital role of the programs of the Small Business Administration and the work of its employees and its resource partners in providing assistance to entrepreneurs and the owners of small business concerns;

(5) strongly urges the President to take steps to ensure that—

(A) reasonable rules relating to the procurement program for women-owned small business concerns under section 8(m) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(m)) are expeditiously implemented to give women business owners a fair opportunity to compete for Federal contracts;

(B) small business concerns have access to quality affordable health insurance;

(C) the needs of veterans and reservists who own their own businesses, who work for small business concerns, or want to start their own businesses, are met during deployment and upon their return from duty;

(D) proper measures are enacted to provide a stimulus for business lending during this economic downturn;

(E) the tax burdens of small business concerns are reduced, and that there is a reduction in regulatory and bureaucratic barriers;

(F) small minority owned businesses are supported in their efforts to access the Federal marketplace and gain access to capital;

(G) small business concerns have the tools to become more energy efficient to survive rising costs of energy, increase profits, and reduce the Nation's reliance on foreign oil;

(H) all Federal agencies adhere to the contracting goals for small business concerns, including the goals for small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans, small business concerns owned and controlled by women, small business concerns owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals, and HUBZone small business concerns;

(I) venture capital and small business loans, including microloans and guaranteed loans that are delivered through private lenders, for start-up firms and growing small business concerns are available to all qualified small business concerns; and

(J) the management assistance programs delivered by resource partners on behalf of the Small Business Administration, such as small business development centers, women's business centers, and the Service Corps of Retired Executives, are provided with the Federal resources necessary to do their jobs; and

(6) urges that the Administrator of the Small Business Administration have an active role as a member of the President's Cabinet.

Mr. KERRY. I am pleased to take this opportunity during National Small Business Week to introduce a bipartisan Senate resolution honoring the entrepreneurial spirit of small business owners and urging the federal government to continue to improve upon its efforts to provide the guidance and assistance that has proven so valuable to small businesses across the nation. As Chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I am privileged to have as my Ranking Member Senator OLYMPIA SNOWE from Maine, and other Committee members who provide a voice for small business concerns and who advocate for the efficient and effective implementation of small business programs.

Almost 27 million small businesses power this Nation's economy, representing 99.7 percent of all businesses, creating more than ⅔ of all new jobs, and producing more than a quarter of our exports. Additionally, America's entrepreneurs are the minds responsible for innovations and advancing technologies that make this country resilient and competitive in the global economy and keep us on the cutting edge of technology.

The marketplace can be a daunting arena for entrepreneurs to wade into, and, though they rise to the challenge with great ideas, inventive products, and thorough business plans, there remains a great deal of financial risk and uncertainty in running a small business. The support, guidance, and financial assistance offered by Small Business Administration programs have been of incredible importance to small businesses working to succeed.

Mr. Robert Delhome from Wilmington, Massachusetts, is being honored by the Small Business Administration as the Massachusetts 2008 Small Business Person of the Year for his work as President of Charter Environmental, Inc. This civil and environmental contracting firm is not only at the forefront of the emerging green collar industry, but is also an example of a tremendously successful business that was able to take advantage of the SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program and transform $300 in seed capital into a $30 million a year business. What began with two determined employees and a good idea has become a business of over 100 employees providing vital services and solutions to confront challenging environmental problems. The 8(a) program offers assistance to socially and economically disadvantaged small business owners competing for Federal contracts, and Robert is but one of many entrepreneurs to have benefitted from this program.

As we celebrate Earth Day today and discuss the necessity of acting quickly to find workable solutions to our environmental problems, Robert's business is both an inspiration and an indication of the economic and environmental success this industry promises. As we consider the gravity of our environmental challenges, I will continue to promote the essential role that small businesses must play in the process of turning America green, moving us away from our dependence on foreign oil, and creating the innovative industry that will help strengthen our economy. Already our Nation's entrepreneurs are leading the way to economically smart and environmentally sound business practices, and we need to ensure that the tools to become energy efficient are accessible to every

small business in the country. Our rapidly rising energy costs only serve to underscore the urgency with which we must address these environmental challenges.

I also continue to be concerned about the lack of small business inclusion in Federal contracts. In an effort to level the playing field, Congress set forth specific procurement goals in law, including goals for women, veteran, and minority owned businesses, but the Bush administration has proven unwilling to work quickly to meet these goals. The Women's Procurement Program is a troublesome example of a larger trend. In 2000, this program was created to ensure the Federal Government sets aside at least 5 percent of all procurement opportunities for women-owned businesses. More than 7 years later, only 3.4 percent of Federal contracts are reaching those businesses.

Janet Ceddia, president of a security and fencing company in Hudson, Massachusetts, is just the type of business owner who would benefit if the Federal Government improved its efforts at reaching out to all types of small businesses.

A small, disadvantaged, 8(a) certified, woman-owned company, Security Construction Services, Inc. in Hudson, Massachusetts, has grown enormously in recent years, doubling its workforce and expanding its services as the company has received $15 million in government contracts. Today, Janet's business has completed contracts for the Air Force, Army Reserve, Coast Guard, and Veterans Administration, among other agencies, and Janet was honored as the 2008 Region I Prime Contractor of the Year for her success. As Janet has proven, when given the chance, small businesses prove to be excellent partners in Federal projects.

I would also like to highlight the work of Maria Gooch-Smith, who is being honored for her work as the Executive Director of the South Eastern Economic Development, SEED, Corporation in Taunton, Massachusetts. Over the last eight years, SEED has made an average of 150 loans each year, and has operated as the largest SBA 504 and Micro Lender in Massachusetts. Last year alone, SEED granted or leveraged over $105 million, which directly contributed to the creation of 637 new jobs, and, in doing so, demonstrated the vast capability of SBA 504 Certified Development Companies. It is imperative that these small business loan programs receive the necessary resources for them to maintain quality, effective programs and services to support small businesses and our local communities in a positive way.

I am proud of all of the hardworking Americans who face the challenges of opening and running a small business, and I encourage us all to take this week of special recognition to reflect on the possibilities for further improving the operating climate for small business owners and to reaffirm our resolve to fight for the necessary resources to assist small businesses. I applaud the dedication, innovation, and achievements of America's entrepreneurs, and I pledge to continue to advocate on their behalf.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, as we celebrate National Small Business Week, which runs April 21 through April 25, 2008, I rise in support of a Senate Resolution—which I introduced along with Chairman KERRY, and other members of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship—that honors the entrepreneurial spirit of our Nation's nearly 27 million small businesses and the tremendous contributions they make to our economy.

Small businesses are the driving force behind our nation's economic growth and job creation. Representing 99 percent of all employers, small businesses create nearly ⅗ of all net new jobs and generate more than 50 percent of the Nation's nonfarm gross domestic product. They are the foundation, the engine, the core of our economy. Clearly, the greatest source of jobs in this country are the small businesses that are constantly responding to new challenges with innovations and creativity.

As Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I have made it one of my top priorities to be an advocate for small businesses, and to help raise the needs and concerns of our countries' job creators. With more than 600,000 small businesses having opened in 2006, this is clearly a sector that deserves our accolades, recognition, and support.

Indeed, hope embodies the spirit of the 26.8 million small business owners. They are willing to take risks that others don't, they transform their ideas and dreams into realities, their hobbies become their professions, and their entrepreneurial spirit can be seen in the products and services that make up America. Frankly, this week as we celebrate our Nation's entrepreneurs, we will undoubtedly fall short of fully recognizing what our country's small businesses truly add to our economy.

Given the sluggish state of our economy, it is all the more imperative that we fully equip our small businesses, our true job generators, and provide them with the tools—not just to mitigate and stem this crisis—but to be a catalyst for helping to address and ultimately solve it. We must take advantage of the opportunities to help our small businesses thrive. We in Congress should reduce their tax burdens, ensure they receive the business counseling they deserve, and that they have affordable and reliable health insurance options for their employees.

One of our most valuable assets for ensuring the success of small businesses is the Small Business Administration, SBA. The SBA is pivotal in overseeing the delivery of financial and business development tools for millions of aspiring entrepreneurs and existing small businesses across the United States. With the SBA being the only Federal agency with the mandate to foster small business growth, we must work to provide the agency with the resources needed to help our nation's entrepreneurs right this economy.

So as we celebrate our Nation's small businesses, we must be mindful of Congress's responsibility to ensure that each business has the opportunity to flourish. When accounting for inflation the SBA has seen its core lending and business development program budget cut by 28 percent since 2001, and this trend must simply be reversed. While the SBA touts its ''doing more with less,'' the agency's resources, programs, and employees are stretched too thin, which in the end negatively impacts our Nation's small business and the economy as a whole. As we look ahead, rest assured, I will not hesitate to take action and ensure that this vital sector continues to have the valuable resources it deserves.

The SBA has been, and will continue to be, a critical partner to millions of small enterprises as well as aspiring entrepreneurs as they embark on the path to prosperity and job creation. The least we can do is strengthen, not erode, the SBA's core loan and technical assistance programs that have proven time and again to be the keystone in aiding the efforts and dreams of America's entrepreneurs.

Today we celebrate our Nation's entrepreneurs and honor America's small businesses. I urge my colleagues to show their support for the small businesses in their states and support this resolution. We must remember that this country's future will be determined by today's small businesses, and the faster we can help them create more jobs, the quicker the economy will rebound, and the stronger its foundation will be.

SENATE RESOLUTION 525—RECOGNIZING THE PROGRESS MADE BY STATES PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION ON THE OCCASION OF THE SECOND REVIEW CONFERENCE

Mr. BIDEN (for himself and Mr. LUGAR) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 525

Whereas, on April 24, 1997, the Senate gave its advice and consent to the ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, with Annexes, done at Paris January 13, 1993 (commonly known as the ''Chemical Weapons Convention'' and the ''CWC'') (T. Doc. 103–21);

Whereas, the Chemical Weapons Convention entered into force on April 29, 1997;

Whereas, since the Chemical Weapons Convention entered into force, more than 27,000 metric tons of chemical weapons have been destroyed, representing over 35 percent of the declared chemical weapon stockpiles worldwide;

Whereas 11 chemical weapons destruction facilities are currently in operation in 5 countries;

Whereas none of the 65 chemical weapons production facilities declared by 12 States Parties are producing chemical weapons, and all but 4 of the facilities have been either verifiably destroyed or converted for peaceful purposes in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention;

Whereas, on July 11, 2007, Albania became the first State Party to completely eliminate its entire stockpile of chemical weapons, with assistance from the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program;

Whereas membership in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons now stands at 183 states, encompassing 98 percent of the world's population, up from 87 States Parties when the Chemical Weapons Convention entered into force;

Whereas the First Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention was opened on April 28, 2003, and 113 States Parties participated in the First Review Conference; and

Whereas the Second Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention opened on April 7, 2008, in The Hague, Netherlands: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms its support for the purposes, operations, and undertakings of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which have served the interests of international peace and security and the national security interests of the United States;

(2) notes the progress that has been made by States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention toward the elimination of stockpiles of deadly chemical weapons in possessor states, and urges continued progress toward that goal;

(3) calls on all States Parties—

(A) to continue their compliance with their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention to permit the monitoring and verification of the inactivation, and later destruction or conversion, of all chemical weapons production facilities, as well as the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles;

(B) to submit and allow verification of the consistency of industrial chemical declarations; and

(C) to allow the effective monitoring of the non-diversion of chemicals for activities prohibited under the Chemical Weapons Convention; and

(4) calls on all States Parties to adopt the necessary laws, regulations, and enforcement practices to ban chemical weapons activities, pursuant to Article VIII of the Chemical Weapons Convention and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004), and to afford appropriate legal and regulatory assistance to other countries so as to achieve full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, 11 years ago this month, the Senate gave its advice and consent to U.S. ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention, or CWC. Those of us who were here then remember all too well how contentious and difficult a task that was.

Eleven years later, I have no doubt in my mind that the Senate did the right thing. The CWC clearly serves the national security interests of the U.S. It continues to enhance international peace and security.

Since the CWC entered into force, 183 States have signed on to the treaty's commitment to forgo poison gas forever, and have subjected themselves to the treaty's verification procedures. States Parties to the CWC have destroyed over 27,000 tons of chemical weapons—over a third of the world's declared stockpiles—and 11 destruction facilities around the world are working to destroy even more. Sixty-five chemical weapons production facilities that, without a Chemical Weapons Convention, could have churned out still more poison gas are no longer carrying out that horrible work, and all but 4 of those former weapons production facilities have been verifiably destroyed or converted to peaceful purposes. Most importantly, there has been no use of chemical weapons by any country in the last 11 years, and no international support for the use of such weapons by terrorist groups.

Under the able leadership of its Director-General, Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter, the Organization for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons runs a tight ship. It works with all States Parties to improve national declarations, to mount effective inspections, and to secure the adoption of effective national laws, regulations and procedures that criminalize and guard against the production or stockpiling of chemical weapons.

The States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention are gathering over the next 2 weeks in The Netherlands for the Convention's Second Review Conference. Senator LUGAR and I have introduced this resolution during the Review Conference in order to reaffirm the Senate's commitment to the goals of the CWC. We are proud of the progress that has been made so far, and we call upon all States Parties to continue to meet their commitments under the CWC and to do all they can to further the noble aims of the Convention.

I urge all my colleagues to support this resolution.

SENATE RESOLUTION 526—DESIGNATING APRIL 20 THROUGH 26, 2008, AS ''NATIONAL COMMUNITY HEALTH AIDE, COMMUNITY HEALTH PRACTITIONER, AND DENTAL HEALTH AIDE WEEK''

Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. STEVENS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 526

Whereas Alaska experienced one of the most extreme tuberculosis epidemics in recorded history in the 1950s;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program in Alaska was created during the 1950s, in response to the unique health care needs of remote Alaskan communities;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program, which currently consists of 550 Community Health Aides and Community Health Practitioners and 40 Dental Health Aides, serves 178 isolated Alaskan communities to provide emergency, primary health care, and oral health care;

Whereas Community Health Aides, Community Health Practitioners, and Dental Health Aides have proven their dedication to serving Alaskans and their ability to work in some of the most challenging and diverse settings in the world;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program is the only program of its kind in the United States, and other countries have modeled their delivery of rural health care after this program;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program has proven to be effective, efficient, and essential in improving the health of the inhabitants of rural Alaska;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program is a patient's first contact within the network of health care professionals in the Alaska Tribal Health Care System and is one of the most effective means of delivering health care services to Alaskan communities;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program was created with a focus on tuberculosis, meningitis, and other infectious diseases, but now successfully cares for other common diseases such as diabetes and heart disease;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program also serves the oral health needs of Alaskans, and is in the process of adding services to address the behavioral health needs of rural Alaska; and

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program has successfully adapted over the last 50 years to the ever-evolving health care landscape of Alaskan communities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate designates April 20 through 26, 2008, as ''National Community Health Aide, Community Health Practitioner, and Dental Health Aide Week''.

SENATE RESOLUTION 527—DESIGNATING APRIL 23, 2008, AS ''NATIONAL ADOPT A LIBRARY DAY''

Mr. WEBB (for himself and Mr. WARNER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 527

Whereas libraries are an essential part of our communities and our national system of education;

Whereas the citizens of the United States benefit significantly from libraries that serve as an open place for people of all ages and backgrounds to make use of books and other resources that offer pathways to learning, self-discovery, and the pursuit of knowledge;

Whereas the libraries of the United States depend on the generous donations and support of individuals and groups to ensure that those who are unable to purchase books still have access to a wide variety of resources;

Whereas certain nonprofit organizations facilitate donations of books to schools and libraries across the country to extend the joys of reading to millions of people in the United States and prevent used books from being thrown away; and

Whereas several States and Commonwealths that recognize the importance of libraries and reading have adopted resolutions commemorating April 23 as ''Adopt A Library Day'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 23, 2008, as ''National Adopt A Library Day'';

(2) honors organizations that help facilitate donations to schools and libraries;

(3) urges all people in the United States who own unused books to donate those books to local libraries;

(4) strongly supports children and families who take advantage of the resources provided by schools and libraries; and

(5) encourages the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 528—DESIGNATING APRIL 25, 2008, AS ''GLOBAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY''

Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. BAYH, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BURR, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. COLEMAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. DODD, Mrs. DOLE, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. GREGG, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KERRY, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. STEVENS, and Mr. TESTER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 528

Whereas Global Youth Service Day is an annual public awareness and education campaign that highlights the valuable contributions that young people make to their communities;

Whereas the goals of Global Youth Service Day are to—(1) mobilize the youth of the United States to identify and address the needs of their communities through service and service-learning; (2) support young people in embarking on a lifelong path of service and civic engagement; and (3) educate the public, the media, and policymakers about contributions made by young people as community leaders throughout the year;

Whereas Global Youth Service Day, a program of Youth Service America, is the largest service event in the world and in 2008 is being observed for the 20th consecutive year in the United States and for the 9th year globally in more than 100 countries;

Whereas young people in the United States and in many other countries are volunteering more than in any other generation in history;

Whereas children and youth not only represent the future of the world, but also are leaders and assets today;

Whereas children and youth should be valued for the idealism, energy, creativity, and unique perspectives that they use when addressing critical global issues such as poverty, hunger, illiteracy, education, gang activity, natural disasters, climate change, and myriad others;

Whereas a fundamental and conclusive correlation exists between youth service, lifelong adult volunteering, and philanthropy;

Whereas service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with mastery of academic curricula by helping young people make important connections between what they are studying and the challenges that they see in their communities;

Whereas several private foundations and corporations in the United States support service-learning as a means for young people to build character and develop the leadership and career-preparedness skills that are necessary for the United States to be competitive in the 21st century, including time management, decision-making, teamwork, and problem solving;

Whereas a report by Civic Enterprises found that 47 percent of high school dropouts reported boredom as a primary reason for dropping out;

Whereas high quality, semester-long service-learning has been found to increase students' academic engagement and achievement, motivation to learn, school attendance, civic participation, character development, and career aspirations;

Whereas Global Youth Service Day engages millions of young people worldwide with the support of 75 lead agencies, 45 international organizations, and 120 national partners;

Whereas a growing number of Global Youth Service Day projects involve youth working collaboratively across national and geographic boundaries, increasing intercultural understanding and promoting the sense that they are global citizens; and

Whereas both young people and their communities will benefit greatly from expanded opportunities for youth to engage in volunteer service and service-learning: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes and commends the significant contributions of the youth of the United States and encourages the cultivation of a civic bond among young people dedicated to serving their neighbors, their communities, and the Nation;

(2) designates April 25, 2008, as ''Global Youth Service Day''; and

(3) calls on the citizens of the United States to—

(A) observe the day by encouraging youth to participate in civic and community service projects and by joining them in such projects;

(B) recognize the volunteer efforts of the young people of the United States throughout the year; and

(C) support the volunteer efforts of young people and engage them in meaningful learning and decision-making opportunities today as an investment in the future of the United States.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 4559. Mr. FEINGOLD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4560. Mr. BAUCUS (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. LUGAR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4561. Mr. MENENDEZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4562. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4563. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4564. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4565. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4566. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4567. Mr. THUNE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4568. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4569. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 4559. Mr. FEINGOLD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 78, after line 4, add the following:

SEC. 808. AUTHORITIES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR ENHANCEMENT OF OUTREACH OF ACTIVITIES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 5 is amended by adding at the end the following new subchapter:

''SUBCHAPTER IV—OUTREACH

''§ 561. Outreach activities: funding

''(a) SEPARATE ACCOUNT FOR OUTREACH ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary shall establish a separate account for the funding of the outreach activities of the Department, and shall establish within such account a separate subaccount for the funding of the outreach activities of each element of the Department specified in subsection (c).

''(b) BUDGET REQUIREMENTS.—In the budget justification materials submitted to Congress in support of the Department budget for any fiscal year (as submitted with the budget of the President under section 1105(a) of title 31), the Secretary shall include a separate statement of the amount requested for such fiscal year for activities as follows:

''(1) For outreach activities of the Department in aggregate.

''(2) For outreach activities of each element of the Department specified in subsection (c).

''(c) COVERED ELEMENTS.—The elements of the Department specified in this subsection are as follows:

''(1) The Veterans Health Administration.

''(2) The Veterans Benefits Administration.

''(3) The National Cemetery Administration.

''§ 562. Outreach activities: coordination of activities within Department

''(a) PROCEDURES FOR EFFECTIVE COORDINATION.—The Secretary shall establish and maintain procedures for ensuring the effective coordination of the outreach activities of the Department between and among the following:

''(1) The Office of the Secretary.

''(2) The Office of Public Affairs.

''(3) The Veterans Health Administration.

''(4) The Veterans Benefits Administration.

''(5) The National Cemetery Administration.

''(b) REVIEW AND MODIFICATION.—The Secretary shall—

''(1) periodically review the procedures maintained under subsection (a) for the purpose of ensuring that such procedures meet the requirement in that subsection; and

''(2) make such modifications to such procedures as the Secretary considers appropriate in light of such review in order to better achieve that purpose.

''§ 563. Outreach activities: cooperative activities with States; grants to States for improvement of outreach

''(a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to assist States in carrying out programs that offer a high probability of improving outreach and assistance to veterans,

and to the spouses, children, and parents of veterans who may be eligible to receive veterans' or veterans'-related benefits, to ensure that such individuals are fully informed about, and assisted in applying for, any veterans' and veterans'-related benefits and programs (including under State veterans' programs).

''(b) LOCATION OF PROVISION OF OUTREACH.—The Secretary shall ensure that outreach and assistance is provided under programs referred to in subsection (a) in locations proximate to populations of veterans and other individuals referred to in that subsection, as determined utilizing criteria for determining the proximity of such populations to veterans health care services.

''(c) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH STATES.—The Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements and arrangements with veterans agencies of the States in order to carry out, coordinate, improve, or otherwise enhance outreach by the Department and the States (including outreach with respect to State veterans' programs).

''(d) GRANTS.—(1) The Secretary may award grants to veterans agencies of States in order to achieve purposes as follows:

''(A) To carry out, coordinate, improve, or otherwise enhance outreach, including activities pursuant to cooperative agreements and arrangements under subsection (c).

''(B) To carry out, coordinate, improve, or otherwise enhance activities to assist in the development and submittal of claims for veterans' and veterans'-related benefits, including activities pursuant to cooperative agreements and arrangements under subsection (c).

''(2) A veterans agency of a State receiving a grant under this subsection—

''(A) may, except as provided in subparagraph (B)—

''(i) use the grant amount for purposes described in paragraph (1); and

''(ii) award all or any portion of such grant amount to nonprofit organizations of such State, for such purposes; and

''(B) if such State has a county or local government with a veterans agency, shall award all or any portion of such grant amount to not less than one veterans agency of a county or local government of such State, for such purposes.

''(e) FUNDING.—Amounts available for the Department for outreach in the account under section 561 of this title shall be available for activities under this section, including grants under subsection (d).''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 5 is amended by adding at the end the following new items:

''SUBCHAPTER IV—OUTREACH

''561. Outreach activities: funding.
''562. Outreach activities: coordination of activities within Department.
''563. Outreach activities: cooperative activities with States; grants to States for improvement of outreach.''.

SA 4560. Mr. BAUCUS (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. LUGAR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title VI, add the following:

SEC. 604. REPORTS ON PROGRESS OF THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IN ADDRESSING CAUSES FOR VARIANCES IN COMPENSATION PAYMENTS FOR VETERANS FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES.

(a) REPORTS REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every year thereafter through 2012, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the congressional veterans affairs committees a report describing the progress of the Secretary in addressing the causes of variances in compensation payments for veterans for service-connected disabilities.

(b) ELEMENTS.—Each report under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) A description of the efforts of the Veterans Benefits Administration to coordinate with the Veterans Health Administration to improve the quality of examinations of veterans with service-connected disabilities that are performed by the Veterans Health Administration and contract clinicians, including efforts relating to the use of approved templates for such examinations and of reports on such examinations that are based on such templates prepared in an easily-readable format.

(2) An assessment of the current personnel requirements of the Veterans Benefits Administration, including an assessment of the adequacy of the number of personnel assigned to each regional office of the Administration for each type of claim adjudication position.

(3) A description of the differences, if any, in current patterns of submittal rate of claims to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs regarding service-connected disabilities among various populations of veterans, including veterans living in rural and highly rural areas, minority veterans, veterans who served in the National Guard or Reserve, and veterans who are retired from the Armed Forces military retirees, and a description and assessment of efforts undertaken to eliminate such differences.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term ''congressional veterans affairs committees'' means—

(A) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

(2) HIGHLY RURAL.—The term ''highly rural'', in the case of an area, means that the area consists of a county or counties having a population of less than seven persons per square mile.

SA 4561. Mr. MENENDEZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title VII, add the following:

SEC. 703. PLOT ALLOWANCE FOR SPOUSES AND CHILDREN OF CERTAIN VETERANS WHO ARE BURIED IN STATE CEMETERIES.

(a) PLOT ALLOWANCE.—Section 2303 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(c)(1) In the case of an individual described in paragraph (2) who is buried in a cemetery that is owned by a State or by an agency or political subdivision of a State, the Secretary shall pay to such State, agency, or political subdivision the sum of $300 as a plot or interment allowance for such individual.

''(2) An individual described in this paragraph is a spouse, surviving spouse (which for purposes of this chapter includes a surviving spouse who had a subsequent remarriage), minor child (which for purposes of this chapter includes a child under 21 years of age, or under 23 years of age if pursuing a course of instruction at an approved educational institution), or, in the discretion of the Secretary, unmarried adult child of any of person described in paragraph (1), (2), (3), (4), or (7) of section 2402 of this title.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subsection (c) of section 2303 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall apply with respect to an individual who dies on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 4562. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title VI, add the following:

SEC. 604. PAYMENT OF AMOUNTS OF ROUND DOWN OF RATES OF DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION ROUNDED DOWN DURING COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENTS BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) PAYMENT OF AMOUNTS OF ROUND DOWN.—In any month in which a rate of disability compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation specified in subsection (b) that is payable to an individual under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs is rounded down to the next lower whole dollar amount by reason of an Act requiring such a rounding down in the course of a cost-of-living adjustment to such rate by the Secretary authorized by such Act, the individual shall be paid for such month an additional amount equal to the rounded down amount of such rate.

(b) COVERED RATES OF COMPENSATION.—The rates of compensation specified in this subsection are the rates of compensation and other allowances as follows:

(1) COMPENSATION.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under section 1114 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR DEPENDENTS.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under section 1115(1) of such title.

(3) CLOTHING ALLOWANCE.—The dollar amount in effect under section 1162 of such title.

(4) NEW DIC RATES.—The dollar amounts in effect under paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 1311(a) of such title.

(5) OLD DIC RATES.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under section 1311(a)(3) of such title.

(6) ADDITIONAL DIC FOR DISABILITY.—The dollar mounts in effect under section 1311(c) and 1311(d) of such title.

(7) DIC FOR DEPENDENT CHILDREN.—The dollar amounts in effect under section 1313(a) and 1314 of such title.

(c) TREATMENT AS COMPENSATION.—Any amount paid an individual under subsection (a) shall be treated as disability compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation, as applicable, for all purposes.

SA 4563. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Strike section 802 and insert the following:

SEC. 802. AUTOMOBILE ASSISTANCE ALLOWANCE.

(a) INCREASE IN AMOUNT OF ALLOWANCE.—Subsection (a) of section 3902 is amended by striking ''$11,000'' and inserting ''$22,500 (as adjusted from time to time under subsection (e))''.

(b) ANNUAL ADJUSTMENT.—Such section is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(e)(1) Effective on October 1 of each year (beginning in 2009), the Secretary shall increase the dollar amount in effect under subsection (a) to an amount equal to 80 percent of the average retail cost of new automobiles for the preceding calendar year.

''(2) The Secretary shall establish the method for determining the average retail cost of new automobiles for purposes of this subsection. The Secretary may use data developed in the private sector if the Secretary determines the data is appropriate for purposes of this subsection.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on October 1, 2008.

SA 4564. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Strike section 205 and insert the following:

SEC. 205. INCREASE IN SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING BENEFITS FOR DISABLED VETERANS.

Section 2102 is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(2), by striking ''$10,000'' and inserting ''$12,000'';

(2) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''$50,000'' and inserting ''$60,000''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''$10,000'' and inserting ''$12,000''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(e)(1) Effective on October 1 of each year (beginning in 2009), the Secretary shall increase the amounts described in subsection (b)(2) and paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (d) in accordance with this subsection.

''(2) The increase in amounts under paragraph (1) to take effect on October 1 of a year shall be by an amount of such amounts equal to the percentage by which—

''(A) the residential home cost-of-construction index for the preceding calendar year, exceeds

''(B) the residential home cost-of-construction index for the year preceding the year described in subparagraph (A).

''(3) The Secretary shall establish a residential home cost-of-construction index for the purposes of this subsection. The index shall reflect a uniform, national average change in the cost of residential home construction, determined on a calendar year basis. The Secretary may use an index developed in the private sector that the Secretary determines is appropriate for purposes of this subsection.''.

SA 4565. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Strike section 701 and insert the following:

SEC. 701. FUNERAL AND BURIAL EXPENSES.

(a) DEATHS FROM SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY.—Section 2307 is amended—

(1) by inserting ''(a) FUNERAL AND BURIAL EXPENSES.—'' before ''In any case'';

(2) in paragraph (1) of subsection (a), as designated by paragraph (1) of this subsection, by striking ''$2,000'' and inserting ''$4,100 (as adjusted from time to time under subsection (b))''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(b) COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT.—With respect to any fiscal year, the Secretary shall provide a percentage increase (rounded to the nearest dollar) in the amount of benefits payable under subsection (a)(1) equal to the percentage by which—

''(1) the Consumer Price Index (all items, United States city average) for the 12-month period ending on the June 30 preceding the beginning of the fiscal year for which the increase is made, exceeds

''(2) such Consumer Price Index for the 12-month period preceding the 12-month period described in paragraph (1).''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act, and shall apply with respect to deaths occurring on or after that date.

(2) NO COLA ADJUSTMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009.—The percentage increase required by subsection (b) of section 2307 of title 38, United States Code (as added by subsection (a) of this section), for fiscal year 2009 shall not be made.

SA 4566. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Strike section 702 and insert the following:

SEC. 702. PLOT ALLOWANCES.

(a) INCREASE IN PLOT ALLOWANCE.—Section 2303 is amended by striking ''$300'' each place it appears and inserting ''$745 (as adjusted from time to time under subsection (c))''.

(b) EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY.—Subsection (b)(2) of such section is amended by striking ''such veteran is eligible'' and all that follows through '', and''.

(c) ANNUAL COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT.—Such section is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(c) With respect to any fiscal year, the Secretary shall provide a percentage increase (rounded to the nearest dollar) in each maximum amount of the plot allowance payable under this section equal to the percentage by which—

''(1) the Consumer Price Index (all items, United States city average) for the 12-month period ending on the June 30 preceding the beginning of the fiscal year for which the increase is made, exceeds

''(2) such Consumer Price Index for the 12-month period preceding the 12-month period described in paragraph (1).''.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on October 1, 2008, and shall apply with respect to deaths occurring on or after that date.

(2) NO COLA ADJUSTMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009.—The percentage increase required by subsection (c) of section 2303 of title 38, United States Code (as added by subsection (c) of this section), for fiscal year 2009 shall not be made.

SA 4567. Mr. THUNE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 52, after line 21, add the following:

SEC. 604. AUTOMATIC ANNUAL INCREASE IN RATES OF DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION.

(a) INDEXING TO SOCIAL SECURITY INCREASES.—Section 5312 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(d)(1) Whenever there is an increase in benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) as a result of a determination made under section 215(i) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)), the Secretary shall, effective on the date of such increase in benefit amounts, increase the dollar amounts in effect for the payment of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation by the Secretary, as specified in paragraph (2), as such amounts were in effect immediately before the date of such increase in benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act, by the same percentage as the percentage by which such benefit amounts are increased.

''(2) The dollar amounts to be increased pursuant to paragraph (1) are the following:

''(A) COMPENSATION.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under section 1114 of this title.

''(B) ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR DEPENDENTS.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under section 1115(1) of this title.

''(C) CLOTHING ALLOWANCE.—The dollar amount in effect under section 1162 of this title.

''(D) NEW DIC RATES.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 1311(a) of this title.

''(E) OLD DIC RATES.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under section 1311(a)(3) of this title.

''(F) ADDITIONAL DIC FOR SURVIVING SPOUSES WITH MINOR CHILDREN.—The dollar amount in effect under section 1311(b) of this title.

''(G) ADDITIONAL DIC FOR DISABILITY.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under sections 1311(c) and 1311(d) of this title.

''(H) DIC FOR DEPENDENT CHILDREN.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under sections 1313(a) and 1314 of this title.

''(3) Whenever there is an increase under paragraph (1) in amounts in effect for the payment of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation, the Secretary shall publish such amounts, as increased pursuant to such paragraph, in the Federal Register at the same time as the material required by section 215(i)(2)(D) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)(2)(D)) is published by reason of a determination under section 215(i) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)).''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subsection (d) of section 5312 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a) of this section, shall take effect on the first day of the first calendar year that begins after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 4568. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title VIII, add the following:

SEC. 808. MILITARY SALUTE FOR THE FLAG DURING THE NATIONAL ANTHEM BY MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES NOT IN UNIFORM AND BY VETERANS.

Section 301(b)(1) of title 36, United States Code, is amended by striking subparagraphs (A) through (C) and inserting the following new subparagraphs:

''(A) individuals in uniform should give the military salute at the first note of the anthem and maintain that position until the last note;

''(B) members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute in the manner provided for individuals in uniform; and

''(C) all other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart, and men not in uniform, if applicable, should remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart; and''.

SA 4569. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title VIII, add the following:

SEC. 808. CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN THE MITIGATION, TREATMENT, AND REHABILITATION OF TRAUMATIC EXTREMITY INJURIES AND AMPUTATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense shall jointly establish a center of excellence in the mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of traumatic extremity injuries and amputations.

(b) PARTNERSHIPS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense shall jointly ensure that the center collaborates with the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, institutions of higher education, and other appropriate public and private entities (including international entities) to carry out the responsibilities specified in subsection (c).

(c) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The center shall have the responsibilities as follows:

(1) To implement a comprehensive plan and strategy for the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense for the mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of traumatic extremity injuries and amputations.

(2) To carry out such other activities to improve and enhance the efforts of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense for the mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of traumatic extremity injuries and amputations as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense consider appropriate.

(d) REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense shall jointly submit to Congress a report on the activities of the center.

(2) ELEMENTS.—Each report under this subsection shall include the following:

(A) In the case of the first report under this subsection, a description of the implementation of the requirements of this Act.

(B) A description and assessment of the activities of the center during the one-year period ending on the date of such report, including an assessment of the role of such activities in improving and enhancing the efforts of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense for the mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of traumatic extremity injuries and amputations.

NOTICES OF HEARINGS

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I would like to announce that the Committee on Indian Affairs will meet on Thursday, April 24, at 9 a.m. in Room 562 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

Those wishing additional information may contact the Indian Affairs Committee at 224–2251.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information of the Senate and the public that a hearing has been scheduled before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. The hearing will be held on Thursday, May 1, 2008, at 9:30 a.m., in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The purpose of the hearing is to examine the adequacy of State and Federal regulatory structures for governing electric utility holding companies in light of the repeal of the Public Utility Holding Company Act in the Energy Policy Act of 2005, with particular attention to the report issued by the Government Accountability Office–GAO–08–289, Utility Oversight: Recent Changes in Law Call for Improved Vigilance by FERC.

Because of the limited time available for the hearing, witnesses may testify by invitation only. However, those wishing to submit written testimony for the hearing record may do so by sending it to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510–6150, or by e-mail to Gina_Weinstock@energy.senate.gov.

For further information, please contact Leon Lowery at (202) 224–2209 or Gina Weinstock at (202) 224–5684.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the Session of the Senate on April 22, 2008, at 10 a.m., to conduct a Committee Hearing entitled ''Turmoil in U.S. Credit Markets: The Rule of Credit Rating Agencies.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 22, 2008, at 10 a.m., in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 22, 2008, at 2:30 p.m., in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 22, 2008, at 10:30 a.m. to hold a hearing on international deforestation and climate change.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 22, 2008, at 2:15 p.m. to hold a business meeting.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 22, 2008, at 4:30 p.m. to hold a briefing on U.S.-Turkey nuclear cooperation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 22, 2008, at 2:30 p.m. to hold a closed hearing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS AND FORESTS

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests, be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate to conduct a hearing on Tuesday, April 22, 2008, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator KENNEDY, I ask unanimous consent that Laura Kwinn, a fellow in his office, be granted the privileges of the floor for the remainder of the legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. INOUYE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that two members of my staff, Nina Fallenbaum and Petti Matila, be granted the privileges of the floor during the consideration of S. 1315.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. First, I ask unanimous consent that Jerry Acosta, a military legislative fellow in my office, be granted the privilege of the floor during the remainder of today's session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNIZING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE MODERN STATE OF ISRAEL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 522.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 522) recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senators have until tomorrow at 5 o'clock to add their names as cosponsors of this resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution and preamble be agreed to en bloc, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc, and any statements relating to this matter be printed in the RECORD as if given.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 522) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 522

Whereas on November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly voted to partition the British Mandate of Palestine and create a Jewish state;

Whereas on May 14, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel, and the United States Government established full diplomatic relations with Israel;

Whereas the desire of the Jewish people to establish an independent modern State of Israel is an outgrowth of the existence of the historic kingdom of Israel established in the Land of Israel 3,000 years ago, with the city of Jerusalem as its capital;

Whereas for over 2,000 years, there has been continuous Jewish presence and residence in the land comprising the modern State of Israel;

Whereas the establishment of the modern State of Israel as a homeland for the Jewish people followed the slaughter of more than 6,000,000 European Jews during the Holocaust;

Whereas since its establishment 60 years ago, the modern State of Israel has rebuilt a nation, forged a new and dynamic democratic society, and created a thriving economic, political, cultural, and intellectual life despite the heavy costs of war, terrorism, and unjustified diplomatic and economic boycotts against the people of Israel;

Whereas the people of Israel have established a vibrant, pluralistic, democratic political system, including freedom of speech, association, and religion; a vigorously free press; free, fair and open elections; the rule of law; a fully independent judiciary; and other democratic principles and practices;

Whereas Israel has developed some of the leading universities in the world, and 8 Israeli citizens have been awarded the Nobel Prize;

Whereas Israel has developed an advanced, entrepreneurial economy, is among the world's leaders in the high-tech industry, and is at the forefront of research and development in the field of renewable energy sources;

Whereas Israel regularly sends humanitarian aid, search-and-rescue teams, mobile hospitals, and other emergency supplies, to help victims of disasters around the world, including the 1994 Rwandan civil war, the 1998 bombing of the United States Embassy in Kenya, the 1999 earthquakes in Turkey, the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the 2005 hurricanes along the southern coast of the United States, and the 2007 fires in Greece;

Whereas Israel has absorbed millions of Jews from countries throughout the world and fully integrated them into Israeli society;

Whereas Israel has bravely defended itself from repeated terrorist and military attacks since its independence;

Whereas successive leaders of Israel have sought to achieve peace with Israel's Arab neighbors;

Whereas Israel has established peaceful bilateral relations with neighboring Egypt and Jordan and has made its desire to establish peaceful relations with all Arab states abundantly clear;

Whereas for 6 decades, the United States and Israel have maintained a special relationship based on mutually shared democratic values, common strategic interests, and moral bonds of friendship and mutual respect;

Whereas the American people feel a strong affinity for the Israeli people based on common values and shared cultural heritage; and

Whereas the United States continues to regard Israel as a strong and trusted ally and an important strategic partner: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the historic significance of the 60th anniversary of the reestablishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel as a homeland for the Jewish people;

(2) reaffirms the bonds of friendship and cooperation which have existed between the United States and Israel for the past 60 years, and commits to strengthening those bonds;

(3) commends the people of Israel for their remarkable achievements in building a new state and a pluralistic, democratic society in the face of terrorism, as well as hostility, ostracism, and belligerence from many of their neighbors;

(4) reaffirms its support for Israel's right to defend itself against threats to its security and existence;

(5) reaffirms its enduring support for Israel as Israel pursues peace with its neighbors; and

(6) extends the warmest congratulations and best wishes to the State of Israel and the Israeli people for a peaceful, prosperous, and successful future.

NATIONAL COMMUNITY HEALTH AIDE, COMMUNITY HEALTH PRACTITIONER, AND DENTAL HEALTH AIDE WEEK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 526.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 526) designating April 20 through 26, 2008, as ''National Community Health Aide, Community Health Practitioner, and Dental Health Aide Week.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 526) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 526

Whereas Alaska experienced one of the most extreme tuberculosis epidemics in recorded history in the 1950s;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program in Alaska was created during the 1950s, in response to the unique health care needs of remote Alaskan communities;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program, which currently consists of 550 Community Health Aides and Community Health Practitioners and 40 Dental Health Aides, serves 178 isolated Alaskan communities to provide emergency, primary health care, and oral health care;

Whereas Community Health Aides, Community Health Practitioners, and Dental Health Aides have proven their dedication to serving Alaskans and their ability to work in some of the most challenging and diverse settings in the world;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program is the only program of its kind in the United States, and other countries have modeled their delivery of rural health care after this program;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program has proven to be effective, efficient, and essential in improving the health of the inhabitants of rural Alaska;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program is a patient's first contact within the network of health care professionals in the Alaska Tribal Health Care System and is one of the most effective means of delivering health care services to Alaskan communities;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program was created with a focus on tuberculosis, meningitis, and other infectious diseases, but now successfully cares for other common diseases such as diabetes and heart disease;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program also serves the oral health needs of Alaskans, and is in the process of adding services to address the behavioral health needs of rural Alaska; and

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program has successfully adapted over the last 50 years to the ever-evolving health care landscape of Alaskan communities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate designates April 20 through 26, 2008, as ''National Community Health Aide, Community Health Practitioner, and Dental Health Aide Week''.

NATIONAL ADOPT A LIBRARY DAY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to S. Res. 527.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 527) designating April 23, 2008, as National Adopt a Library Day.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, that the preamble be agreed to, that the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; and that any statements relating to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 527) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 527

Whereas libraries are an essential part of our communities and our national system of education;

Whereas the citizens of the United States benefit significantly from libraries that serve as an open place for people of all ages and backgrounds to make use of books and other resources that offer pathways to learning, self-discovery, and the pursuit of knowledge;

Whereas the libraries of the United States depend on the generous donations and support of individuals and groups to ensure that those who are unable to purchase books still have access to a wide variety of resources;

Whereas certain nonprofit organizations facilitate donations of books to schools and libraries across the country to extend the joys of reading to millions of people in the United States and prevent used books from being thrown away; and

Whereas several States and Commonwealths that recognize the importance of libraries and reading have adopted resolutions commemorating April 23 as ''Adopt A Library Day'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 23, 2008, as ''National Adopt A Library Day'';

(2) honors organizations that help facilitate donations to schools and libraries;

(3) urges all people in the United States who own unused books to donate those books to local libraries;

(4) strongly supports children and families who take advantage of the resources provided by schools and libraries; and

(5) encourages the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

GLOBAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 528.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 528) designating April 25, 2008, as ''Global Youth Service Day.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise in support of a resolution designating April 25, 2008, as ''Global Youth Service Day.'' This resolution recognizes and commends the significant community service efforts that youth are making in communities across the country and around the world on April 25 and every day. This resolution also encourages the citizens of the United States to acknowledge and support these volunteer efforts.

Over the weekend beginning this Friday, April 25, youth from across the United States and around the world will carry out community service projects in areas ranging from hunger to literacy to the environment. Through this service, many will embark on a lifelong path of service and civic engagement in more than 100 countries around the world.

This event is not isolated to one weekend a year. Global Youth Service Day is an annual public awareness and education campaign that highlights the valuable contributions that young people make to their communities throughout the year.

Mr. President, the participation of youth in community service is not just a ''nice idea'' for a way to spend a Saturday afternoon. Youth who are engaged in volunteer service and service-learning activities do better in school than their classmates who do not volunteer. Youth who engage in volunteering and other positive activities are also more likely to avoid risky behaviors, such as drug and alcohol use, crime, and promiscuity. Service within the community also contributes positively to young people's character development, civic participation, and better understanding of the needs of their neighbors.

A recent survey by Civic Enterprises found that 47 percent of high school dropouts reported that boredom in school was a primary reason why they dropped out. High quality service-learning activities can, however, help young people make important connections between the curriculum and the challenges they see in their communities.

It is important, therefore, that the United States Senate encourage youth to engage in community service and to congratulate them for the service they provide.

In an effort to recognize and support youth volunteers in my State, I am proud to acknowledge some of the activities that will occur this year in Alaska in observance of National and Global Youth Service Day:

1. Anchorage's Promise, which works to mobilize all sectors of the community to build the character and competence of Anchorage's children and youth, is again sponsoring the annual Kids' Day three-day events in Anchorage this year. Youth will provide significant service to their peers and to adults who attend Kids' Day activities: Students from King Career Center will serve as volunteer safety patrols. Students from the University of Alaska Anchorage will serve as greeters. Members of the West High School Junior ROTC will provide security. The youth members of the American Co-Ed Pageants will serve as entertainment directors. Students at Chugiak High School will help their younger peers with bicycle and seatbelt safety demonstrations. Youth volunteers at the Imaginiarium will help with displays and lead groups of visitors through the hands-on experiments. Youth docents at the Anchorage Museum will help youth visitors explore the museum. Youth will also organize a Book Give-Away and provide entertainment through song, dance, gymnastics, and karate.

In addition to the Kids' Day events, young people from every region of Alaska will serve their communities in the following ways:

2. Young members of the Kiwanis Key Club will, through the RYLA Youth Leadership program, perform various service projects from March through May.

3. Alaska Youth for Environmental Action will sponsor A Week Without Plastics activities in Anchorage, Palmer, Fairbanks, Juneau, Homer, Yakutat, and Sitka. Youth organizers will help educate their communities, through various outreach activities, on the effects of plastics on our environment.

4. Youth in the Anchorage School District will host a dance to raise funds for economically disadvantaged students who do not qualify for a free or reduced price school lunch; make daily checks for recyclable items, and hold a fundraiser for lymphoma and leukemia research.

5. In partnership with the Anchorage Municipal Libraries, youth will help organize the city's summer reading program and materials.

6. In partnership with Covenant House and Congregation Beth Shalom, young people in Anchorage will involve their peers in transforming old T-shirts into reusable grocery bags.

7. 4–H and other youth volunteers, in partnership with the Alaska Zoo in Anchorage, will provide plastics education information and participate in the planting of trees for Earth Day.

8. In Ketchikan, the Boys and Girls Club will sponsor a city-wide clean-up involving many elementary, middle schools and high school students.

9. From January through May, young people whose parents are stationed at

Elmendorf Air Force Base have been involved in monthly service projects.

10. Members of Camp Fire at Highland Tech will sponsor a student contest between the advisory teams within the school to see who can bring in the most plastic to recycle. Each student who participates will receive a reusable shopping bag from Fred Meyer. Students will also hold a Safety Fair.

11. In Nome, Alaska, the student council will sponsor the annual food drive, open the local food bank, and go house to house to gather food for the needy in the community.

12. The Nome Junior ROTC will gather seeds for the school's greenhouse and prepare plantings in the old gold dredges around town.

13. In Juneau, youth members of the Ethics and Leadership program will make ceramic bowls that will be donated to the Glory Hole, Juneau's homeless shelter and soup kitchen.

14. From January through May, members of the Mayor's Youth Commission in Anchorage select a volunteer project that will impact the Municipality for the One Good Deed program.

15. Youth members of the Cook Inlet Tribal Council in Anchorage reach out to the community at large through the Native Games Community Outreach project.

16. The Mediak Video, Radio, and Magazine Clubs of Anchorage will sponsor a Spring Quarter Movie Night, create Public Service Announcements for radio station KNBA, and complete the 8th edition of Alaska Aloud, the only magazine written by and for Alaska Native students in the Anchorage area.

I am so proud of all of these young people. I value their idealism, energy, creativity, and unique perspectives as they volunteer to make their communities better and assist those in need.

Many similarly wonderful activities will be taking place all across the Nation. I encourage all of my colleagues to visit the Youth Service America Web site—www.ysa.org—to find out about the selfless and creative youth who are contributing in their own States this year.

I thank my colleagues—Senators AKAKA, BAYH, BOXER, BROWN, BURR, CANTWELL, CARDIN, CASEY, CLINTON, COCHRAN, COLEMAN, COLLINS, CRAIG, DODD, DOLE, DURBIN, FEINGOLD, FEINSTEIN, GREGG, INOUYE, ISAKSON, KENNEDY, KERRY, LANDRIEU, LAUTENBERG, LEVIN, LIEBERMAN, LINCOLN, MARTINEZ, MENENDEZ, MIKULSKI, MURRAY, BEN NELSON, BILL NELSON, OBAMA, SPECTER, STEVENS, and TESTER—for standing with me as original co-sponsors of this worthwhile legislation, which will ensure that youth across the country and the world know that all of their hard work is greatly appreciated.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid on the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 528) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 528

Whereas Global Youth Service Day is an annual public awareness and education campaign that highlights the valuable contributions that young people make to their communities;

Whereas the goals of Global Youth Service Day are to—(1) mobilize the youth of the United States to identify and address the needs of their communities through service and service-learning; (2) support young people in embarking on a lifelong path of service and civic engagement; and (3) educate the public, the media, and policymakers about contributions made by young people as community leaders throughout the year;

Whereas Global Youth Service Day, a program of Youth Service America, is the largest service event in the world and in 2008 is being observed for the 20th consecutive year in the United States and for the 9th year globally in more than 100 countries;

Whereas young people in the United States and in many other countries are volunteering more than in any other generation in history;

Whereas children and youth not only represent the future of the world, but also are leaders and assets today;

Whereas children and youth should be valued for the idealism, energy, creativity, and unique perspectives that they use when addressing critical global issues such as poverty, hunger, illiteracy, education, gang activity, natural disasters, climate change, and myriad others;

Whereas a fundamental and conclusive correlation exists between youth service, lifelong adult volunteering, and philanthropy;

Whereas service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with mastery of academic curricula by helping young people make important connections between what they are studying and the challenges that they see in their communities;

Whereas several private foundations and corporations in the United States support service-learning as a means for young people to build character and develop the leadership and career-preparedness skills that are necessary for the United States to be competitive in the 21st century, including time management, decision-making, teamwork, and problem solving;

Whereas a report by Civic Enterprises found that 47 percent of high school dropouts reported boredom as a primary reason for dropping out;

Whereas high quality, semester-long service-learning has been found to increase students' academic engagement and achievement, motivation to learn, school attendance, civic participation, character development, and career aspirations;

Whereas Global Youth Service Day engages millions of young people worldwide with the support of 75 lead agencies, 45 international organizations, and 120 national partners;

Whereas a growing number of Global Youth Service Day projects involve youth working collaboratively across national and geographic boundaries, increasing intercultural understanding and promoting the sense that they are global citizens; and

Whereas both young people and their communities will benefit greatly from expanded opportunities for youth to engage in volunteer service and service-learning: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes and commends the significant contributions of the youth of the United States and encourages the cultivation of a civic bond among young people dedicated to serving their neighbors, their communities, and the Nation;

(2) designates April 25, 2008, as ''Global Youth Service Day''; and

(3) calls on the citizens of the United States to—

(A) observe the day by encouraging youth to participate in civic and community service projects and by joining them in such projects;

(B) recognize the volunteer efforts of the young people of the United States throughout the year; and

(C) support the volunteer efforts of young people and engage them in meaningful learning and decision-making opportunities today as an investment in the future of the United States.

THE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following items en bloc: Calendar Nos. 681 through 695, and two bills, which are at the desk, H.R. 5472 and H.R. 5489.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bills be read the third time and passed en bloc; that the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; and that any statements related to the measures be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senate proceeded to consider the bills.

E. ARTHUR GRAY POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 3196) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 20 Sussex Street in Port Jervis, New York, as the ''E. Arthur Gray Post Office Building,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

DR. CLIFFORD BELL JONES, SR. POST OFFICE

The bill (H.R. 3468) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1704 Weeksville Road in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, as the ''Dr. Clifford Bell Jones, Sr. Post Office,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

PRIVATE JOHNATHON MILLICAN LULA POST OFFICE

The bill (H.R. 3532) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 5815 McLeod Street in Lula, Georgia, as the ''Private Johnathon Millican Lula Post Office,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

ARMY PFC JUAN ALONSO COVARRUBIAS POST OFFICE

The bill (H.R. 3720) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 424 Clay Avenue in Waco, Texas, as the ''Army PFC Juan Alonso Covarrubias Post Office Building,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

JOHN HENRY WOOTEN, SR. POST OFFICE

The bill (H.R. 3803) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3100 Cashwell Drive in Goldsboro, North Carolina, as the ''John Henry Wooten, Sr. Post Office Building,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

SGT. JASON HARKINS POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 3936) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 116 Helen Highway in Cleveland, Georgia, as the ''Sgt. Jason Harkins Post Office Building,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

MASTER SERGEANT KENNETH N. MACK POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 3988) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3701 Altamesa Boulevard in Fort Worth, Texas, as the ''Master Sergeant Kenneth N. Mack Post Office Building,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

STEVE W. ALLEE CARRIER ANNEX

The bill (H.R. 4166) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 701 East Copeland Drive in Lebanon, Missouri, as the ''Steve W. Allee Carrier Annex,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

SPECIALIST JAMAAL RASHARD ADDISON POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 4203) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3035 Stone Mountain Street in Lithonia, Georgia, as the ''Specialist Jamaal RaShard Addison Post Office Building'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

JUDGE RICHARD B. ALLSBROOK POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 4211) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 725 Roanoke Avenue in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, as the ''Judge Richard B. Allsbrook Post Office,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

FELIX SPARKS POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 4240) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 10799 West Alameda Avenue in Lakewood, Colorado, as the ''Felix Sparks Post Office Building,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN FALLEN MILITARY HEROES OF LOUISVILLE MEMORIAL POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 4454) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3050 Hunsinger Lane in Louisville, Kentucky, as the ''Iraq and Afghanistan Fallen Military Heroes of Louisville Memorial Post Office Building'' in honor of the servicemen and women from Louisville, Kentucky, who died in service during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

SERGEANT JAMIE O. MAUGANS POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 5135) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 201 West Greenway Street in Derby, Kansas, as the ''Sergeant Jamie O. Maugans Post Office Building,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

MAJOR ARTHUR CHIN POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 5220) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3800 SW. 185th Avenue in Beaverton, Oregon, as the ''Major Arthur Chin Post Office Building'', was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

SGT. MICHAEL M. KASHKOUSH POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 5400) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 160 East Washington Street in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, as the ''Sgt. Michael M. Kashkoush Post Office Building,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

JULIA M. CARSON POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 5472) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2650 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street, Indianapolis, Indiana, as the ''Julia M. Carson Post Office Building,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

CONGRESSWOMAN JO ANN S. DAVIS POST OFFICE

The bill (H.R. 5489) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 6892 Main Street in Gloucester, Virginia, as the ''Congresswoman Jo Ann S. Davis Post Office,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, on October 6, 2007, the people of Virginia's First Congressional District lost one of its most respected and admired leaders, a dedicated Member of Congress and loyal friend, Representative Jo Ann Davis.

Today, as a small tribute to her, the Senate passed H.R. 5489, which designated the United States Post Office at 6892 Main Street in Gloucester, VA, as the ''Congresswoman Jo Ann S. Davis Post Office.'' Last year, Senator WEBB and I introduced a companion bill, S. 2725.

Following a successful real estate career, Mrs. Davis decided to run for public office in 1997. After serving as a Delegate in the Virginia General Assembly for 4 years, Jo Ann Davis became the first Republican woman to serve Virginia in the U.S. Congress after winning her election in 2000.

From her first day in office, Congresswoman Davis was a relentless champion for the needs of the First District. It was my privilege to work with her on many matters, ranging from national defense to the environment. I always admired Representative Davis for her strong convictions and the tenacity that she brought to bear in acting on them. She fought a courageous struggle against cancer, and I will certainly miss her insights and her friendship in our Virginia Congressional Delegation.

Given her commendable public service at the Federal and State levels, I was pleased to offer this small token of recognition and gratitude for someone who had given so much to the Commonwealth and her country.

I join with my colleagues from the Commonwealth and from the entire U.S. Congress in expressing my deepest sympathies to her husband, her two sons, and her extended family. They continue to remain in our thoughts and prayers.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2008

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 5 p.m. tomorrow, Wednesday, April 23; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that the time until 6 p.m. be equally divided and controlled between the majority and Republican leaders or their designees; that at 6 p.m., the motion to proceed to S. 1315 be adopted, and the Senate then proceed to a rollcall vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 2831; further, that all time during any adjournment, recess,

or morning business count against cloture.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as I have indicated, it is too bad we will not be working tomorrow until late in the evening. Let the record be clear as to why that is happening. I ask Senators, though, to be aware that there will be a rollcall vote at 6 o'clock tomorrow on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 2831, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 5 P.M. TOMORROW

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:24 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, April 23, 2008, at 5 p.m.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING KELSEY TEMPLE

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. MARCHANT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Kelsey Temple on achieving the Girl Scout Gold Award. Receiving the Gold Award is a testament to Miss Temple's leadership, citizenship, and service to her community.

For her Gold Award project, Kelsey Temple educated elementary aged children about bicycle safety. Miss Temple stressed the importance of wearing a helmet, learning and obeying traffic rules regarding cyclists, and bicycle maintenance.

The Girl Scouts of America promotes a positive influence for young women of today. I am honored to represent Kelsey Temple in earning the highest award bestowed in Girl Scouts. I commend her commitment and dedication for the betterment of her life, her community, and her country.

KAILEY FORD

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Kailey Ford who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Kailey Ford is a student at Drake Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Kailey Ford is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Kailey Ford for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character to all her future accomplishments.

HAZEL BUCKLEY

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Hazel Buckley, of Tarkio, Missouri. On April 8, 2008, after 20 years of service, Hazel retired as the Tarkio City Collector.

Hazel began her city collector position when the city had just started doing taxes on the computer instead of on paper. Through the 20 years that Hazel has been the city collector, she has worked under four mayors. Hazel is also the treasurer of the Tarkio Business and Professional Women, and is a member of the Atchison County Health Board and the Tarkio Community Garden Club.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in recognizing Hazel Buckley, whose service to the Tarkio community has been truly exceptional. I wish Hazel the best in her retirement and it is an honor to serve her in the United States Congress.

TRIBUTE TO DAN LONG

HON. BILL SALI

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. SALI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dan Long of Boise, Idaho. Dan will be representing Idaho in the 2008 National Small Businessman of the Year competition.

The Small Business person of the Year Award is given annually by the United States Small Business Administration, SBA. Any individual who owns and operates or who bears principal responsibility for operating a small business may be nominated. A winner from each State has been selected and they will gather in Washington, DC, this week for the announcement of National Small Business Person of the Year. This event coincides with National Small Business Week.

Criteria for selecting the Small Business Persons of the Year include substantiated history as an established business, growth in the number of employees, increase in sales and response to adversity, among other factors.

Dan is an ideal candidate to represent Idaho for this award. He started A–1 Plumbing Service, Inc., in 1984 with one truck and one employee, himself. Dan had a vision of adding one truck per year for the first 10 years and using them to deliver exceptional service,

Dan's vision has become reality. A–1 Plumbing has grown from one truck and one employee to offices in Boise and Nampa, 25 trucks and 36 employees. In addition, the company has enjoyed a booming rate in sales and profits of 10 to 20 percent annually since its inception. Particularly impressive is the repeat customer percentage of 87 percent.

I also commend Dan for his practice of donating a minimum of one percent of revenues to local charities. His actions are exemplary. He is much deserving of the title National Small Businessman of the Year.

Thank you, Dan, for your quality work. It is my honor to recognize you today.

HONORING YVONNE BRATHWAITE BURKE

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues to honor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, who served as a Representative of California's 37th Congressional District from 1973 to 1979, and is retiring at the end of this year, after an impressive five-decade career as a public servant in the State of California.

On the occasion of Mrs. Burke's retirement from public office, we wish to extend to her, sincere congratulations for the decades of dedicated service that she has given to her Nation, her State, and her county, most recently as chair of the county of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, the largest county in the Nation with a population of over 10 million. For the past 15 years, she has served with distinction as the supervisor of the second district, representing nearly 2.5 million residents.

During her tenure, Mrs. Burke has focused on improving the lives of children, encouraging economic development, and improving transportation throughout Los Angeles, as well as promoting public social services, health care for the uninsured, and affirmative action for women and the economically disadvantaged.

While Mrs. Burke has innumerable accomplishments over the past 15 years, these are some significant highlights of her service in the Second Supervisorial District of Los Angeles County:

Currently chairs the Los Angeles County Children's Planning Council that is regarded as the most influential forum for advocating reform of children's service systems in a major metropolitan area.

Helped to establish the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services "Family to Family" program, which advocates the placement of foster children in homes near their original communities.

Established the Second District Education and Policy Foundation that awards scholarships to deserving local students.

Encouraged private businesses and organizations to make computer laboratories available in areas such as public housing, and encouraged constituents to make use of computer research facilities in the county library system.

Promoted the establishment of businesses in areas of the county that have been underserved, providing on-going services to small businesses and establishing the county's website that lists available contracts for small businesses.

Pushed for the establishment of a multimodal public transportation system, as a member of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board, and continues to labor for the development of the Crenshaw Corridor and for a light and heavy rail system.

Served as Past President and currently serves as a Board member of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), where she focused on major regional concerns, including the establishment of a multi-modal public transportation system for the Los Angeles area.

Implemented the La Brea Green Belt as a major transportation artery in Los Angeles, as well as providing fire, flood, and landslide abatement.

Led on many environmental issues, including joining the City of San Francisco, calling on residents to turn off lights for an hour to conserve energy; urged the use of paper, rather than plastic bags; and pushed for the observance of America Recycle Day in Los Angeles County.

Spearheaded an effort in the County that resulted in a voluntary program for restaurants to eliminate trans fat.

On behalf of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, the State of California, and the County of Los Angeles, I want to thank Yvonne Brathwaite Burke for sharing her tremendous gifts with us for so many years. We believe Mrs. Burke is an impeccable inspiration to all young women who aspire to posts of leadership and public service. We offer our sincere gratitude to Mrs. Burke for her countless contributions throughout her phenomenal career. We join with her many co-workers, family, friends, and associates in wishing her health, happiness, and continued good fortune.

HONORING LENAPE MIDDLE SCHOOL

HON. PATRICK J. MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker. I rise today to honor the 50th anniversary of Lenape Middle School in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. This school has a long and notable history of educating Bucks County's youth as well as helping the greater community.

Lenape Middle School began its service to Bucks County when it opened on September 4, 1957. Originally serving all of Central Bucks School District, Lenape Middle School now educates students living in Doylestown, Doylestown Township, and parts of New Britain Township. Despite being the smallest of the Central Bucks School District's middle schools, Lenape Middle School is proudly one of the most diverse schools in the district.

Lenape Middle School is also home to several important scholastic programs. Lenape serves as the regional school for various district special education programs as well as serving as the host school for all English as a Second Language students. In honor of its notable academic work, Lenape Middle School was named a ''School to Watch'' by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform in April 2007.

In addition, Lenape Middle School boasts distinguished participation in community service and outreach. Lenape is deeply involved in the 40 Assets project. This program seeks to recognize students for making a difference in the lives of one of their peers, teachers, or neighbors. Also, Lenape students actively participate in various community service organizations such as Ponds for Kids, the Relay for Life, and Recycle 4 Relay Campaign.

Lenape Middle School is an exceptional example of an outstanding academic institution. The outstanding work of both Lenape's students and teachers significantly improves the Bucks County community. Madam Speaker, I am proud to represent Lenape Middle School and grateful for the opportunity to recognize Lenape's 50th anniversary.

RECOGNIZING SYDNEY SHRUM

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. MARCHANT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sydney Shrum on achieving the Girl Scout Gold Award. Receiving the Gold Award is a testament to Miss Shrum's leadership, citizenship, and service to her community.

For her Gold Award project, Sydney Shrum designed and painted a map of the United State of America on the sidewalk of Rockenbaugh Elementary School in Southlake, Texas.

The Girl Scouts of America promotes a positive influence for young women of today. I am honored to represent Sydney Shrum in earning the highest award bestowed in Girl Scouts. I commend her commitment and dedication for the betterment of her life, her community, and her country.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING THE HARLEM COMMONWEALTH COUNCIL AS THEY CELEBRATE 41 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE HARLEM COMMUNITY

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker:

Whereas, Since 1967, The Harlem Commonwealth Council has been dedicated to empowering the Harlem community through job creation and ownership of local commerce, industry and real estate. From the time of its humble beginnings, they have embarked in a mission to stimulate the overall economic development of Harlem through the creation of enterprises, generation of jobs, and improvement of services; and

Whereas, Today, The Harlem Commonwealth Council has continued to hold firm on its pledge to serve the Harlem community by implementing successful ventures and programs through the years that promote self-sufficiency amongst its citizenry and create stability in Harlem through economic development projects, academic empowerment, and entrepreneurial support; and

Whereas, Harlem Commonwealth Council has the distinction of having made historically significant contributions to its vibrant multicultural community in many instances without the financial support of governmental agencies or outside entities. Through a team of Harlem professionals, community and business leaders, it continues to engineer new initiatives that will foster and sustain economic prosperity to Harlem's residents and businesses; and

Whereas, Leading the way towards the future of the Harlem Commonwealth Council is none other than the distinguished Harlem veterinarian Dr. Joseph L. Tait. While pursuing Veterinary goals, he became a Director in the Commonwealth Holding Company, Inc. Board. Through hard work and perseverance he gained the confidence of his peers who elevated him to the position of Chairman of The Council and ultimately the President and CEO. As President, Dr. Tait has shifted the focus to include reaching out to the young people of our community to offer opportunities for growth professionally and educationally; and

Whereas, As the Harlem Commonwealth Council celebrates forty-one years of service to the Harlem community, it is important to note that when the world had given up on Harlem and urban communities like it nationwide, HCC and other community based organizations, business owners and residents did not. They continue to serve as a shining example of what people can accomplish when they are dedicated to a vision and work together to realize it; and

Resolved, That along with all the residents in the 15th Congressional District of New York, I congratulate The Harlem Commonwealth Council on their forty-first anniversary. Through their unwavering efforts to secure the future of the Harlem community, The Harlem Commonwealth Council has contributed to the effervescent Harlem of today.

TRIBUTE TO ANZELLA K. NELMS

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues here in the House of Representatives to join me as I rise to recognize and honor a dedicated public servant, Anzella K. Nelms who is retiring from the position of State District Deputy Superintendent of the Newark Public Schools. Ms. Nelms' journey to this post encompassed many levels including classroom teacher, vice principal and principal. As a result of these experiences. Ms. Nelms was definitely in a position to make a difference in the lives of our most precious resources, our children.

An accomplished student herself, having attended school in her native Raleigh, North Carolina, Anzella Nelms sought to ensure that Newark's school children received a quality education. Her dramatic influence can be seen at Camden Middle School where she served as principal from 1979 to 1989 and helped to develop a national model for school effectiveness. It can also be seen in the 16 ''Theme Schools'' she began within her School Leadership Team while serving as Assistant Superintendent. Fortunately, for those who had the opportunity to work with her, Ms. Nelms was generous with sharing her knowledge and her significant leadership skills.

As Ms. Nelms retires, she will be remembered for her belief in the needs of the total child along with her other accomplishments. She started a tennis program and encouraged fine arts within the schools. She is an excellent role model as well as the consummate professional. Her elegance and charm are as integral to her being as her love for learning. Ms. Nelms has touched the lives of countless students, parents and administrators.

Quite appropriately, Ms. Nelms has received many awards, accolades and honors for her work in the Newark Public School System. I am truly grateful that she chose Newark as her system of choice because I know she had other options. As a former teacher, I know that to be in an educational environment is to serve with one's heart. Ms. Anzella Nelms has served with her heart since 1964 and in the process has created a memorable legacy.

Madam Speaker, I am sure my colleagues agree that Ms. Anzella Nelms deserves to be feted at a party in her honor on Friday, April 18, 2008, for her many years of dedicated service to the Newark community. I am proud to have had her in my Congressional district and wish her never-ending success in her future endeavors.

HONORING CHRISTIAN ALBERT McGRAIN

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. ANDREWS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Christian Albert McGrain, the first baby born in New Jersey in 2008. Christian was born 26 seconds after midnight on January 1, 2008 at St. Peters University Hospital in New Brunswick. NJ to proud parents Jacqueline Dempsey McGrain and Michael McGrain. Christian is the pride and joy of his grandparents Albert and Carol McGrain, Thomas K. and Gail Dempsey, and great-grandparents, Tom and Phyllis Dempsey.

Madam Speaker, the birth of Christian Albert McGrain, mere seconds after midnight on New Year's Day, is a cause for celebration. With Christian's timely birth, this is a year his family will always remember. I wish Christian and his family the very best in 2008.

RECOGNIZING SHANNON MICHAEL

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. MARCHANT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Shannon Michael on achieving the Girl Scout Gold Award. Receiving the Gold Award is a testament to Miss Michael's leadership, citizenship, and service to her community.

For her Gold Award project, Shannon Michael organized volunteers from her church, Girl Scouts, and a senior center to donate baby supplies and materials to make baby blankets. Miss Michael then taught younger girls how to sew and knit the blankets which were given to Metrocrest Social Services to distribute to needy families with babies.

The Girl Scouts of America promotes a positive influence for young women of today. I am honored to represent Shannon Michael in earning the highest award bestowed in Girl Scouts. I commend her commitment and dedication for the betterment of her life, her community, and her country.

JARED BRYAN

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Jared Bryan who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Jared Bryan is a student at North Arvada Middle School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Jared Bryan is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Jared Bryan for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character to all his future accomplishments.

HONORING TARAN RAY WINNIE

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Taran Ray Winnie of Kearney, Missouri. Taran is 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 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.

TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT MICHAEL T. LILLY

HON. BILL SALI

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. SALI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sergeant Michael T. Lilly of Boise, Idaho. Sergeant Lilly was killed on April 7, 2008 in Sadr City, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom when a rocket propelled grenade caused an explosion near Sergeant Lilly's position.

While serving the United States, Sergeant Lilly distinguished himself amongst fellow soldiers as an enthusiastic, patriotic soldier, passionately dedicated to serving his country and defending freedom abroad. Sgt. Lilly embodied high caliber leadership in keeping with the highest traditions and customs of the United States Army, and his guidance will be sorely missed by all of those with whom he served.

Sgt. Lilly was a graduate of Borah High School, a "Borah Lion." At the memorial service held in his honor, one of the speakers, former Boise Airport police chief and Borah grad Mike Johnson said, "Lilly had the heart of a Lion. Tonight, the Lion sleeps." There can be no finer tribute to this sterling young man.

I extend to his wonderful family my most sincere condolences and express my heartfelt appreciation for the brave men and women like Sgt. Lilly who have borne the hardships of battle and perished in the line of fire.

EQUAL PAY DAY

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, I rise to call attention to Equal Pay Day.

This is the day when the average wages of a female worker catch up to the average wages of a male worker during the previous year.

That's right, the Equal Pay Act was signed into law by President Kennedy in 1963, yet here we are in 2008 and women still earn only 77 cents to every dollar a man earns.

When women earn less, their entire family suffers. When we allow women to be paid unequal wages for equal work, we as a society are tolerating discrimination. That is why we must take action to close the wage gap, and treat all workers equally.

Further compounding the difficulties that are faced by women and their families due to pay inequity, is the Supreme Court decision last year in Ledbetter v. Goodyear. The Court rules that a worker must file a charge of pay discrimination within 180 days of an employer's initial decision to pay someone less for discriminatory reasons. This clearly went against the intent of the Civil Rights Act and I was so proud that the House acted quickly to pass the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which provides more effective remedies to women who are not being paid equal wages for doing equal work.

This week, the Senate will consider this important legislation—how fitting that it occurs during the same week as Equal Pay Day?

I urge my colleagues in the Senate to pass the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act immediately and urge the President to sign it into law.

HONORING THE NOTTINGHAM FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. PATRICK J. MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the 50th anniversary of the Nottingham Fire Department in Bensalem, Pennsylvania. This fire department has a long and notable history of protecting the residents of Bucks County.

In 1956, sensing the need for another fire company in Bensalem Township, a group of concerned Bensalem residents filed an application with the Bucks County Courthouse to establish an additional fire department. Despite facing strong opposition, the Nottingham Fire Department was formally established on April 25, 1958, following a lengthy legal battle. The original members of the Nottingham Fire Department were instrumental in setting up the company and creating the framework the department still maintains today. At personal cost and sacrifice, the founding members established the department's first station, purchased its first tanker, and elected officers to run the company's business.

Since its beginning, the Nottingham Fire Department has used cutting edge technology and practices to improve its service to the community. The fire department was the first in the county to initiate pre-designated fire fighter bucket assignments. To accommodate the growing demands on its firefighters, the department also took the initiative to start an organized bunk-in-program, a live-in-program and duty crew nights. In addition, the fire department was the first to establish formal Standard Operating Procedures and have them compiled into a training manual, and the first in the area to institute a first responders unit.

The Nottingham Fire Department is proof that a group of concerned citizens can truly make a difference in the lives of those in their community. Madam Speaker, I am proud to represent the Nottingham Fire Department and grateful for the opportunity to recognize their significant 50th anniversary.

CONGRATULATING COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Columbia University on its newly announced initiatives to restructure their financial aid policies, in order to provide those students from lower- and middle-income families with an affordable solution to skyrocketing tuition costs.

Columbia University has long held the reputation of inclusion, attracting the most socioeconomically diverse undergraduate student populations among Ivy League universities. The University has recently gone a step further announcing that the College will replace loans for students qualifying for financial aid with University grants. The University is expected to spend upwards of $1 million annually to ensure that income disparities do not prevent capable students from attending a top university. As the price of college increases more and more every year, Columbia's actions display their understanding of the importance of a good education to underprivileged children in escaping poverty and opening the door to opportunities in life.

It is my sincere hope that other colleges and universities across the Nation will join Columbia in providing those students from lower- and middle-income families with a feasible way to pay for college.

A TRIBUTE TO THE LEADERSHIP OF DR. LYN BEHRENS OF LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY AND MEDICAL CENTER

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. LEWIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my good friend Dr. B. Lyn Behrens, who is retiring after nearly two decades of guiding Loma Linda University Medical Center into a regional, national and international role in modern medical technology, trauma care and cancer research.

An innovator and pioneer throughout her career, Dr. Behrens became the first pediatric resident at Loma Linda University Medical Center in 1966, just 2 years after completing her medical degree at the Sydney University School of Medicine. She became the first female dean of the medical school in 1986, and in 1990 she became the university's first female president.

Over the next 10 years, Dr. Behrens became the CEO of Adventist Health System, and then president of Loma Linda University Medical Center, making her the top leader of all of the institutions affiliated with the university in San Bernardino County. Loma Linda now has a staff of 13,000, with 4,000 students from 80 countries.

I first became closely acquainted with Dr. Behrens when we joined Dr. James Slater of Loma Linda in the quest to create the Nation's first proton beam treatment center in the late 1980s. That facility, which has treated more than 12,000 cancer patients, has become a model for Federal/local cooperation in research and medical technology. Although Dr. Slater was the driving force behind this medical breakthrough, Dr. Behrens marshaled the resources and staff of the medical center to provide crucial support for the effort.

Following her first love of pediatrics, Dr. Behrens led the creation of the Loma Linda University Children's Hospital, the only dedicated children's hospital in the Inland Empire—one of the fastest growing major urban areas in the United States. As with all of Loma Linda's institutions, this is a true teaching hospital, and will soon have a state-of-the-art pediatric and maternal health sciences campus.

As an outgrowth of the children's hospital, Dr. Behrens led Loma Linda in creating the Rehabilitation, Orthopedic and Neurosciences Institute, which provides innovative rehabilitation for those who have lost limps, and is an international leader in research on the development of longer lasting artificial joints. The institute includes a park and playground with 26 different play features designed for interaction between able-bodied children and disabled children.

Growing in many other ways under Dr. Behrens' leadership, the university has added a Behavioral Medicine Center, a school of pharmacy and a school of science and technology. The university and medical school have reached out to the community and region in many ways, creating clinics to serve low-income patients and counseling programs for after-school children and at-risk teenagers.

Loma Linda has also established an international reputation for excellence under Dr. Behrens' leadership. Adventist Health International provides administrative support to hospitals and clinics in 12 developing nations, and provides medical support in 48 other countries. The most prominent efforts are in Kabul, Afghanistan, where Loma Linda provides direct support for that nation's only teaching hospital, and in Hangzhou. China, where the Sir Run Run Shaw Hospital is the first in China to receive endorsement of quality care by the Joint Commission for International Accreditation.

It goes without saying that Dr. Behrens has taken a leadership role in many medical societies in California and across the nation. Her accomplishments have recently been recognized by the California Hospital Association. which awarded her the Ritz E. Heerman Memorial Award for outstanding contribution in the improvement of patient care in California.

Madam Speaker, after more than 40 years as a leader in medicine and health education, Dr. Behrens is retiring next month. Please join me in thanking her for a lifetime of public service and congratulating her on the many accomplishments that have helped make Loma Linda University Medical Center one of the nation's finest institutions of medical research and education.

ENERGY CONSERVATION THROUGH TREES ACT

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Ms. MATSUI. Madam Speaker, today I am proud to introduce the Energy Conservation through Trees Act. On this Earth Day in 2008, my legislation builds on an innovative program developed in my hometown of Sacramento that will help Americans lower their energy bills while increasing energy conservation and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Through the targeted and strategic planting of specific species of shade trees around residences, homeowners and utilities can conserve significant amounts of energy.

Planting shade trees in strategic locations is a proven method to help homeowners manage the amount of electricity they need to run their air conditioners and heaters. For more than a decade, the Sacramento Municipal Utility District has partnered with the Sacramento Tree Foundation to offer their customers free shade trees to help reduce energy consumption.

This program has succeeded in planting more than 400,000 trees, which will help conserve enough energy to cool 9,000 homes in Sacramento. In addition, these trees will contribute to the fight against global warming by

absorbing an estimated 2 billion pounds of carbon dioxide. They will absorb 5 billion gallons of rainwater as well, and will eliminate or avoid the production of about 61 million pounds of air pollutants. Most important, they will save my constituents millions of dollars in energy costs, and will relieve SMUD from having to purchase expensive and dirty power during periods when demand is at its peak.

Madam Speaker, the benefits of strategically planted trees to the environment, to energy conservation, and even to public health are many, and the Federal Government certainly has a role to play in helping to encourage more utilities to utilize them. With this in mind, the Energy Conservation through Trees Act creates a grant program at the Department of Energy to help residential power providers institute targeted tree-planting initiatives dedicated to reducing residential energy consumption.

In order to qualify for financial assistance under this legislation, utilities must partner with local tree-planting organizations to serve as experts in the siting, planting, and care of the shade trees provided to homeowners. These tree-planting organizations must employ science-based guidelines to ensure that planted trees do not interfere with pre-existing solar panels, wind turbines, septic systems, building foundations, and other essential infrastructure. These guidelines are also meant to ensure that ecologically appropriate trees are distributed to homeowners.

Madam Speaker, the American people are concerned about our Nation's energy policy. They want us to take action to combat global warming. They are demanding relief from energy bills that continually rise year after year. Utilizing strategic planting of trees to increase energy conservation is a proven and reliable way for Congress to take action to address these concerns. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Energy Conservation through Trees Act. Doing so will send a strong signal to our constituents that we are taking steps today to create a more affordable and energy-conscious future for them.

RECOGNIZING SARAI INGRAM

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. MARCHANT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sarai Ingram on achieving the Girl Scout Gold Award. Receiving the Gold Award is a testament to Miss Ingram's leadership, citizenship, and service to her community.

For her Gold Award project, Sarai Ingram designed and provided a library of books for the Children's Room at the Battered Women's Foundation in Hurst, Texas. In addition, Miss Ingram helped care for the children while their mothers were receiving support at the center for themselves and their families.

The Girl Scouts of America promotes a positive influence for young women of today. I am honored to represent Sarai Ingram in earning the highest award bestowed in Girl Scouts. I commend her commitment and dedication for the betterment of her life, her community, and her country.

MADDIE HOLMES

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Maddie Holmes who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Maddie Holmes is a senior at Jefferson High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Maddie Holmes is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Maddie Holmes for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication she has shown in her high school career to her college career and future accomplishments.

HONORING ANDREW FORTIN

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Andrew Fortin of Kansas City, Missouri. Andrew is 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 260, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Andrew has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Andrew 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 Andrew Fortin for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

RECOGNIZING THE EFFORTS OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF GARDEN CITY

HON. JERRY MORAN

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to share an inspirational story about a community coming together in a time of need. Like Americans across the country, Kansas families are burdened with the rising cost of fuel, healthcare, and other basic needs.

The Bible Christian Church of Garden City raised funds to help reduce the pain many Kansas families are facing at the pump by lowering the price $0.40 a gallon at a local Shell gas station. They allowed as many residents to participate in the event in 1 hour as possible. The turnout was so great that the hour was extended for those who waited in line throughout the hour and didn't make it through.

In addition to giving a discount on gas, Bible Christian Church held its third annual Community Day of Service. Many free services were provided in the church's Family Life Center, such as hair cuts for children; hearing, dental, and vision screenings; cancer screenings and bone marrow registry, along with free clothing.

I would like to recognize members of the Bible Christian Church, community physicians, and local residents for their time and efforts in their act of services to the Garden City community.

While Washington remains divided on ways to help the needy, it is small acts of generosity like this that our Nation can be proud of and encourage. Even the smallest deeds are a step in the right direction.

HONORING NORMAN MOORHEAD

HON. PATRICK J. MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary achievements of Mr. Norman Moorhead. Mr. Moorhead is being recognized by the Newtown Township Police Department, honoring his retirement from the force after 40 years of hard work and dedication to his community.

A longtime resident of Bucks County, Mr. Moorhead began his exceptional service to others in 1963. After graduating from Council Rock High School, Mr. Moorhead enlisted in the Air Force and began basic training that following September. During his time in the United States Air Force. Mr. Moorhead was trained as a Power Production Specialist. He used his specialized skills and knowledge and served for 18 months as part of a Vietnam support base in Okinawa, Japan.

Mr. Moorhead was honorably discharged from the Air Force in 1967. After, he returned to Bucks County he continued his work on behalf of our community. Mr. Moorhead joined the Newtown Township Police Department in 1968, beginning his decades-long commitment to improving the safety of Bucks County. Over the years, Mr. Moorhead established himself as an outstanding public servant, undertaking various special tasks necessary to keep the police department running.

Years later, as a sergeant for the Newtown Township Police, lie worked to establish the Newtown Youth Aid Panel. The Youth Aid Panel is a volunteer organization established to help police officers with juvenile offenders and other related problems. In 1989, Mr. Moorhead was promoted to Captain and, in addition to his other responsibilities, he undertook the duties of planning various special events in Newtown, such as First Night. First Fourth, and local parades.

As his outstanding work and achievements show. Norman Moorhead dedicated his life to helping those in his community and beyond. Through his extensive efforts. Mr. Moorhead

has worked hard to make Bucks County a safer place. Madam Speaker, I am proud to recognize Mr. Moorhead for his extraordinary accomplishments and outstanding service to his community.

HONORING OUR NATION'S IMMIGRANTS WITH MORE THAN JUST WORDS

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, this week New York City does what many in our country should be doing everyday. Across 7 days and more than 100 events, the Big Apple celebrates the culture and achievements of the countless numbers of immigrants—past and present—who have come to our great country.

They come from numerous continents, and countries, in a variety of hues, each with their own distinct histories, descendants of cultures that pre-date our society sometimes four or five times over. Despite the obstacles, they manage to quickly prove themselves and contribute to their communities in a number of ways. They and their children, their lives now woven into the fabric of this Nation, find success and across a number of fields including academia, business, law, music, sports and politics.

Contrary to the hateful and divisive anti-immigration rhetoric that so open poisons our public discussion of the issue, the vast majority of immigrants are not a drain on our government or on our economy. They are in our military, in the reserves and on the battlefront, some even paying the ultimate price for their sacrifice of service. They more than hold their own weight economically by paying, according to the non-partisan Immigration Policy Center (IPC), more than 300 billion in federal, state and local taxes. They fuel our economy as both laborers and employers, locally generating more than 229 billion in New York State alone. That is a figure that represents more than 22 percent of the State's overall GDP, even though they represent a small percentage of the overall population.

I see it every time I walk in my district, every day I am visiting another town or city in our vast land. That their contributions have and continue to positively shape our lives should not come as a surprise. What should are the ways that we continue to treat them, many of them like second-class citizens.

Congress must lead the way in honoring this country's immigrant history by rewarding their hard efforts and their faith in the American Dream. The fact that it can take up to 20 years for a mother to see her brother or her child of more than 21 years is shameful. It's disrespectful to the generations who laid the foundation for American democracy at home and abroad that you could have more than a quarter million people shut out from voting this November, despite increased fees and promises of improved service. And it's an outrage that those who work hard to provide a stepping stone for their children to succeed can be easily deported because notices to appear in court get lost in the mail or because of a long ago misdemeanor that wouldn't even land a citizen behind bars.

The debate over the millions of undocumented immigrants who reside here should not confuse our support of those that we have agreed to welcome with open arms. If we can't do right by those who follow the current broken system, what expectation should we have that anyone would or should follow a reformed one, no matter how liberal or conservative a plan that is devised?

Soaring food prices, unattainable affordable housing, stagnant job opportunities, substandard and unaffordable education—these are issues that every family living in this Nation is facing. Whether they have been here for five generations or one, whether they speak one language or two, or whether it was man's cruelty or economic misfortune that forced them here in the first place.

There are no easy answers or perfect solutions. Yet, if we can remember our past and remember the values that bind us all together, we can overcome these challenges and position this Nation for renewed success. The strength of any nation lies not just in the might of its military, but in the spirit and ingenuity of its people. All of its people.

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SMITHTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, I am delighted to rise in honor of a proud and long-serving institution of my district—on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Smithtown Fire Department.

I am privileged to represent the Town of Smithtown, along the western part of New York's first congressional district. Since 1908, this historic town was home to a small but very effective fire department, ''The Smithtown Volunteer Hook and Ladder Company''. Toward the end of its first year in service, it acquired two fire trucks, a chemical engine, and a hook and ladder truck. This began a century of protecting the people of Smithtown during which their outstanding service record has been defined time and again by bravery and efficiency.

From those humble beginnings grew a proud volunteer fire department that has expanded to its current 168 committed members. The single old firehouse on Bellemeade Avenue has expanded to a much larger main fire station headquarters on Elm Avenue and two satellite stations located on Plymouth Boulevard and Plaisted Avenue that respond to emergencies and keep the township safe.

During the fire department's century of service, Long Island's booming population has intensified the demands on the Smithtown Fire Department members. Still, they remain an all-volunteer and highly skilled force which frequently proves itself capable of heroism and selfless dedication to our community.

Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join me once again in thanking those firefighters who continue to protect our families and communities and to extend our deepest gratitude to volunteers, like those intrepid men and women of the Smithtown Fire Department, on its 100th anniversary.

HONORING MR. DALE JIEH

HON. THOMAS G. TANCREDO

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. TANCREDO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Dale Jieh the Congressional affairs chief at Taiwan's Embassy here in Washington.

Dale, like so many others at Taiwan's missions around the world, is among the hardest working diplomats in the world. Given Taiwan's unique position in the international community and the relentless efforts of China to shrink Taipei's diplomatic space, Taiwan's public officials face challenges that their counterparts from other countries do not, making their jobs more difficult.

Dale has been serving his country for nearly 20 years. His service has taken him to Belgium, Thailand, Chicago, and here to Washington, DC. And he will be leaving Washington soon for Taiwan's consulate in Kansas City.

Madam Speaker, I wish Dale and his family the best of luck in Kansas City.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE BLUE SHOE PROJECT UPON ITS GRAMMY AWARD

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. MARCHANT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Blue Shoe Project, which recently won the best traditional blues album at the 50th Annual Grammy Awards Ceremony held on February 10, 2008. The Blue Shoe Project, dedicated to the preservation and advocacy of jazz music in the schools, deserves our congratulations for the Grammy Award and also for passing on the rich history of blues music to future generations.

A Colleyville, Texas based non-profit; the Blue Shoe Project was founded in 2005 by Jeff Dyson and his son, Michael Dyson. The Dyson's shared credit for recording the winning Grammy record, Last of the Great Mississippi Delta Bluesman: Live in Dallas, performed by four legendary blues musicians: Henry James Townsend, Joe Willie ''Pinetop'' Perkins, Robert Lockwood, Jr. and David ''Honeyboy'' Edwards. The album was distributed by the Blue Shoe Project and Jeff and Michael served as executive producers.

The Blue Shoe Project helps spread the history, message and enjoyment of jazz to the schools and community at large. Jeff and Michael have dedicated themselves to the distribution of this uniquely American art form. To date, more than 20,000 students have experienced Blue Shoe Project presentations thus gaining countless followers of jazz music.

Madam Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor and recognition of the Blue Shoe Project. It is with great pride I offer my congratulations to the Blue Shoe Project for its deserved award and preservation of our nation's heritage and culture.

AMBER JOHNSON

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Amber Johnson who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Amber Johnson is a senior at Arvada High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Amber Johnson is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Amber Johnson for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication she has shown in her high school career to her college career and future accomplishments.

HONORING ZACHARY WEBSTER GLAZER

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Zachary Webster Glazer of Kansas City, Missouri. Zachary is 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 260, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Zachary has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Zachary 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 Zachary Webster Glazer for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

IN RECOGNITION OF T.C. MARSH MIDDLE SCHOOL'S JUNIOR RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS AND DAVID BATES

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate T.C. Marsh Middle School's Army Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) and Corporal David Bates on their winning the title of National Champions for the second consecutive year.

Led by teacher David Bates, the students competed against units from all over the country on March 29, 2008 at Forrester Field in Dallas, Texas. These students' hard work and dedication was evident in the skill and precision they demonstrated in order to capture the national championship. Under Bates leadership and guidance, the members of the JROTC have developed a strong sense of teamwork and their coordination shows in their drills.

Members of the JROTC include Hayden Adair, Abigail Aguilar, Rocio Aguilera, Maridenia Ambrocio, Yomira Cardenas, Adrian Casados, Madeline Cedilla, Victor Celestino, Manuel Cervantez, Austin Christensen, Truy Duelm, Karen Fonseca, Juliana Garcia, Luis Garcia, Yessica Garcia, Domini Gomez, Juan Guevara, Christopher Hernandez, Jennifer Hernandez, James Herrada, Haley Hubler, Karen Irigoyen, Yoni Luviano, Miles Mcnutt, Marvin Melendez, Lilian Moz, Mayra Moz, Arely Oaxaca, Jesus Otero, Artura Perez, David Perez, Randy Portillo, Antonio Ramirez, Andres Reyes, Jose Reyes, Ruben Rios, Ulysses Rodriguez, Andrew Royalty, Evelyn Sanchez, Brenda Segovia, Ashley Valle, Jose Vallejo, Colin Wagner, and Austin Wortham.

Madam Speaker, I ask my esteemed colleagues to join me in recognizing the well deserved victory of the members of the JROTC and David Bates.

BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF LIVERPOOL, PENNSYLVANIA

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. SHUSTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the bicentennial celebration of the town of Liverpool, Pennsylvania. Founded in 1808, Liverpool is a beautiful town which resides along the Susquehanna River and possesses a rich and colorful history.

In 1808, Mr. John Staily warranted the plot of land upon which the foundation of Liverpool was originally set. The land was later deeded to John Huggins, who surveyed, plotted and extended Liverpool over time. On May 4, 1832 through acts of legislature, Liverpool became incorporated, and soon flourished into a bustling, vibrant town. An 1894 Liverpool Business Directory, supplied by the Liverpool Historians, holds a description of a town of thirty-seven businesses which supplied the bustling towns along the canal route. Liverpool continued to thrive over the past hundred years and continues to be an important place of commerce and community for the people of western and central Pennsylvania.

A celebration in honor of the town's history will be held between May 16, 2008 through May 18, 2008. The events will begin with a banquet at the Liverpool Legion Banquet Hall. Saturday morning the lively history of Liverpool will be retold by historic reenactors. There will be a multitude of arts and crafts, along with a presentation given by the 47th Regiment Band. It is a celebration which is certain to bring the strong community of Liverpool together. Led by dedicated elected officials, including President Walter S. Teats III, Vice President Stephen Drew, and Mayor John Mark, and the Liverpool Historians, adults and children who have made their homes in Liverpool are eager to celebrate the birth of the community which has supported and uplifted them throughout their lives. It is a town which is always willing to offer as much as they can to their community and whose community in turn gives back.

The town of Liverpool, Pennsylvania has provided a trustworthy atmosphere which has worked to help generations of men, women, and children throughout its history. I look forward to celebrating the 200th anniversary of such a wonderful town, as it has brought a greater appreciation to our area and has surely been an asset to the state of Pennsylvania. I would like to wish all residents of Liverpool all the best in their future endeavors.

IN HONOR OF DR. AND MRS. THOMAS AND KAREN LOOME'S WORK WITH THE CATHOLIC WORKER MOVEMENT OF STILLWATER

HON. MICHELE BACHMANN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mrs. BACHMANN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. and Mrs. Thomas and Karen Loome of Stillwater, Minnesota for their steadfast and selfless sacrifices in honoring the God-given dignity of every human person. Through their work with the Catholic Worker Movement, Dr. and Mrs. Loome are symbols of Christ's love and devotion for all of God's children.

Founded in 1933 by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, the Catholic Worker Movement is rooted in a firm commitment to nonviolence, voluntary poverty, prayer, and hospitality for the downtrodden. In seeing Christ's face in all human beings, Catholic Worker communities value lives above all else by serving Christ through works of mercy.

Working as a Catholic theologian and antiquarian bookseller, Dr. Loome is co-founder of the Stillwater Catholic Worker Community, with three ''houses of hospitality'' for women and children. Along with his wife, Karen, who works as a nurse manager of Stillwater's crisis pregnancy center, the Loomes' faith in Christ is exemplified best through their righteous service and countless good deeds.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. and Mrs. Thomas and Karen Loome's unwavering faith in service of Christ and constant commitment to their fellow man. To quote Charles Dickens, ''Ours is the old firm, going about business with the old way.'' The Catholic Worker Movement is a steady hand in a society swept up in selfishness, and Dr. and Mrs. Loome provide great inspiration to us all by asking for nothing in return.

CONGRATULATING THE DILLARD HIGH SCHOOL BOY'S BASKETBALL TEAM FOR WINNING THE CLASS 5A FLORIDA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to congratulate the Dillard High School Boy's Basketball Team for winning the Class 5A Florida State Championship. The Panthers won a hard fought victory against St. Petersburg's Lakewood High School. I would like to call the attention of my distinguished colleagues to this historic win for Fort Lauderdale's Dillard High School, located in my Congressional District.

Few would have expected the championship game to be won easily. But with determination and grit, Dillard prevailed. With the score tied 26–26 at the half, it really was anyone's game. Dillard fell behind in the third quarter. In the fourth quarter, through the leadership of their coach, Darryl Burrows, they were able to stage a comeback to win the game 61–55.

No one can deny the accomplishments of these young men, and they should not go unnoticed. It is a testament to their character that they were able to overcome such stiff competition. Only through countless hours of practice, both on and off the court, could they have gained such a victory. Prior to Dillard's State Championship win, no Broward County high school had won a class 5A state title since 2001.

Certainly, the Panthers can be proud of the prestige they brought to their high school. Similarly, Dillard High School can be proud that it produced such outstanding young men. The school's faculty helped cultivate and instill within the players the values of determination and sportsmanship that sharpened their skills. The names of the players, coaches, assistants, and administrators are: Kore White, Nigel Spikes, Xiandger Reliford, Ben Dinkins, Fred Landers, Javier Frazier, Sherman Gammage, Alen Hardy, Robert Burger, Rubyne Burrows, Courtney Ojeda, Jabari Caldwell, Jarrett Dieudonne, Eric Francis, Derek Foster, John Jackson, Clarence Doe, Darryl Burrows, Kanshea Jackson, Jamal DuBose, Junior Wade, DeAna'e DeSadier, Dwayne Nelson, Louis Wright, William Heastie, Marty Seidlin, Fred Battle, Juan Urbina, Zeb Wright, Quinton Williams, Tracie Latimer, Mr. Harrison, and Willie Kelly.

At this time of the year when America's basketball frenzy is at a fever pitch, it is easy to focus only on the accomplishments of college and professional players. However, we must remember the contributions of young people to our society. Certainly, as the Panthers' victory proves, young people can, and often do, accomplish great things. This victory belongs not only to the players, but also to their coaches, family, and friends. We need to continue to invest in our local communities to support the institutions that improve the lives of our Nation's youth. In doing this, we will see winning results that will lead our young people to accomplish great things.

Madam Speaker, we in Congress can learn a lot from the young men of Dillard High School. We need only recall their state championship victory to remind us of the value of investing in our Nation's educational system and youth programs. The Panther's commitment should be honored within the halls of Congress, and these young men should know how much pride their victory has given to their school, Florida's 23rd Congressional District, and this institution.

RECOGNIZING MOLLY JARREL

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. MARCHANT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Molly Jarrell on achieving the Girl Scout Gold Award. Receiving the Gold Award is a testament to Miss Jarrell's leadership, citizenship, and service to her community.

For her Gold Award project, Molly Jarrell made 30 fleece blankets for the Project Linus Foundation to distribute to sick and traumatized children. These blankets give children comfort and help them cope with difficult situations.

The Girl Scouts of America promotes a positive influence for young women of today. I am honored to represent Molly Jarrell in earning the highest award bestowed in Girl Scouts. I commend her commitment and dedication for the betterment of her life, her community, and her country.

MISHA TRUJILLO

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Misha Trujillo who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Misha Trujillo is a senior at Arvada High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Misha Trujillo is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Misha Trujillo for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication she has shown in her high school career to her college career and future accomplishments.

HONORING DERICK BONNER

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Derick Ray Bonner of Kearney, Missouri. Derick is 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 earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Derick has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Derick 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 Derick Ray Bonner for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

TRIBUTE TO LES CLARK

HON. KEVIN McCARTHY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. McCARTHY of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Les Clark, a resident and community leader from Kern County, California, for his exemplary leadership and commitment to the oil patch in Kern County and on receiving the 2008 Ray Bradley/Tom Woodward Lifetime Achievement Award from the Independent Oil Producers' Agency, IOPA.

Les has been a resident of Taft, California, which I represent, for most of his life. He attended local schools and then graduated from Fresno State University. While at Fresno State, he worked for the Atlantic Richfield Oil Company and Petrotherm, Inc., which provided Les his first experience working in the oil industry. After graduating from college, he worked at Belridge Oil Company and Shell Oil Company, thereby continuing his lifelong commitment to the oil patch. Today, Les is the Executive Vice President at IOPA, which is an association comprised of independent oil companies that operate mainly in the San Joaquin Valley. At IOPA, with his industry knowledge and depth of experience, Les is responsible for analyzing all regulatory issues impacting San Joaquin independent oil producers, as well as being their principal contact with various government officials and regulators in the Valley. Les served as vice president of IOPA from 1980 to 1999 prior to serving there in his current capacity.

Active on the state and national level, Les is a board member on the American Petroleum Institute API, and has been honored with API's 2004 Oil Baron Award, the Desk & Derrick 1994 Oil Man of the Year Award, and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's Annual 1991 State Director's Award—Oil & Gas Program. Les has also been inducted into the Hall of Fame for the Kern County Officials Association in 1993.

Les also is a leading proponent and catalyst for oil industry innovation, spurring technological advances. In addition, recognizing the importance of keeping our environment clean for future generations to enjoy, he has devoted much time and taken leadership roles on many important environmental issues, particularly air quality; Les always takes a compelling and all-inclusive approach to addressing environmental issues. To that end, he has

been active in various Cal-EPA and San Joaquin Valley air pollution control initiatives.

In addition to his service in the Kern oil patch, Les is an active member of the communities in Bakersfield, Taft, and Kern County. To mention just a few of his endeavors, Les is a past president of the Taft Chamber of Commerce, past trustee of the Taft Union High School District, and a past chairman of the Water Association of Kern County and the West Side District Hospital Foundation. He is currently a member of the Board of Directors of the Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce and the Petroleum Club of Bakersfield, a trustee of the Kern County Museum Foundation, and a member of the Greater Valley Center/Regional Economic Alliance for Leadership, the San Joaquin Valley Air Study Policy Committee, and of Governor Schwarzenegger's California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley.

Les and his wife, June, have been married for 41 years and have raised two daughters, Tessa and Kerrie, and one son, Les III. They have nine grandchildren: Tanisha, Ayana, Darius, Arizona, Keelan, Sierra, Logun, Willow and Cash.

Receiving the IOPA 2008 Ray Bradley/Tom Woodward Lifetime Achievement Award is a fitting recognition of Les' lifelong commitment to advancing innovation and environmental issues among oil producers. With his dedication and larger-than-life personality, I know that Les will continue to be an effective leader in the Kern oil patch and a prominent community leader in my district. I commend his leadership and hope that Kern County continues to benefit from his experience and wisdom.

HONORING LYDIA PORUBSKY AND PORUBSKY GROCERY AND MEATS

HON. JERRY MORAN

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I rise before you today in remembrance of the late Lydia Porubsky who passed away February 11th at the age of 83. Mrs. Porubsky was known across Topeka, Kansas, for a chili recipe and her 6-day-a-week presence at Porubsky's Grocery and Meats.

Lydia, alongside her husband of 49 years, Charles, Sr., operated Porubsky's until Charles' death in 1998. Lydia, however, continued to be a fixture in the deli. She was the person every customer remembered thanks to her positions behind the counter and at the cash register. An amazing thing about Lydia is that she remembered you as well. The conversations and the small-talk she would engage in only enhanced the experience of eating at Porubsky's.

Porubsky's is also known for their great food. Not the least of which is the chili. Porubsky's developed a reputation over the years as having some of the most delicious chili in the area. According The Topeka Capital-Journal, Porubsky's was featured in Gourmet Magazine. This publication's editors discovered what the people of Kansas had been enjoying for over 60 years. Gourmet Magazine summed it up as well as anyone when it stated, "Porubsky's is not just a place to eat. It is a destination in itself." While the magazine was referring specifically to the food, people familiar with Porubsky's knew that Lydia was also a star attraction.

My personal experience with the Porubskys dates back to my time in the Kansas legislature. Several of my fellow legislators and I would make the trip to Porubsky's during our breaks. Meeting from January through June meant that we had at least 3 full months to truly enjoy Porubsky's hot chili and spicy pickles. With meat and cheese trays displayed, the restaurant was a warm respite from the cold and a welcome break from our political and governmental dealings.

But in a city with many dining options, it was Lydia's genuine interest in us that kept us coming back. Even today, as I travel Kansas, I will alter my plans so that I can have a ham salad sandwich at Porubsky's and enjoy this family's warm welcome and hospitality.

While Porubsky's and many family-owned establishments like it lack the bells and whistles of nationwide chains, the underlying quality that truly matters is the collection of people it takes to make it work. Charles Sr. and Lydia provided us with a model of small business ownership. My home State of Kansas is no stranger to family-owned and -operated undertakings. Our economy was built by people like the Porubskys, who knew that if they did not work for it, it was not going to be given to them. Their love of family and the city of Topeka will never be forgotten.

This staple of Topeka enterprise will continue through the efforts of the Porubskys' sons, Matthew, Charlie, Jr., Mark, alongside the Porubsky's daughters Cecelia Pierson and Teresa Thomas who have all made their homes in Topeka. This restaurant, this way of life must be remembered and admired, Madam Speaker. We all know a "Lydia Porubsky" in our lives. Every one of us has someone who reminds us of what is really important as our lives and our jobs continue to speed up. I am sorry that my Lydia Porubsky has passed on. I am thankful for having had the chance to know her and her family. This woman, this business, will remain a part of our greater Kansas community and will enjoy a special place in my heart.

Madam Speaker, please join me in celebrating the life of Lydia Porubsky, offering our sympathy to her family, and praying for the continued success of Porubsky's Grocery and Meats.

IN SUPPORT OF EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK

HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, in 1963, when the Equal Pay Act was signed into law to grant the right to equal pay to women who worked full-time, year-round, women made 59 cents on average for every dollar earned by men doing the same level of work. In 2006, women earned 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. While that is progress, it is slow progress and it means that the wage gap between men and women has narrowed by less than half a cent per year since passage of that law. At the same time, African-American women today earn only 63 cents and Hispanic women bring home just 52 cents for each dollar earned by men.

In my State of Wisconsin, women with a college degree still make considerably less than men with the same amount of education. With rising gas prices, higher health insurance, and a disproportionate amount of single-family homes headed by women, it is of the utmost importance that workers receive fair and equal pay for equal work. This is not just a civil rights issue: it's a survival issue for women workers providing for their family's food, rent, and heat.

But a right to equal pay is no right at all unless it can be enforced.

Madam Speaker, I am a proud cosponsor of H.R. 1338, the Paycheck Fairness Act, which would strengthen the Equal Pay Act of 1963 by providing more effective remedies to women who are not being paid equal wages for doing equal work. For example women would be able to seek full compensatory and punitive damages because the bill would put gender-based discrimination on an equal footing with wage discrimination based on race or ethnicity for which full compensation is already available. The bill would also prohibit employers from retaliating against employees who share salary information with their coworkers, require the Department of Labor to enhance outreach and training efforts to work with employers to eliminate pay disparities, and create a new grant program to help strengthen the negotiation skills of girls and women.

This week, in honor of Equal Pay Day, the Senate plans to consider another bill, H.R. 2831, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which is necessary to ensure that victims of workforce discrimination can seek effective remedies. A recent Supreme Court decision last spring made it extremely difficult for workers who suffer from workplace wage discrimination to seek justice in court. Instead of allowing workers who suffer wage discrimination to bring a case within 180 days of the last time they were illegally underpaid, the Supreme Court decision would require that the case be brought within 180 days of the first time that an employer first started to discriminate by paying lower wages.

This decision overturned precedent and made it much more difficult for workers to pursue pay discrimination claims. H.R. 2831 would simply restore the longstanding interpretation of title VII and other discrimination statutes, thereby protecting women and other workers.

Madam Speaker, equal work deserves equal pay, no matter your gender, skin color, national origin, age or disability. That's the law of the land. But we need to make sure that we have the measures in place to ensure that these rights can be strongly enforced.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CREDIT UNIONS

HON. YVETTE D. CLARKE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Ms. CLARKE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the importance of credit unions. As a member of a credit union, I am a true believer that people should help people; which are the credit unions' mission. Members know that during the economic downturn that we are currently facing right now, credit unions will always be there to serve their members to the best of their ability.

Members who have accounts in a credit union are owners of the financial institution and they elect the board of directors in a one person-one vote system regardless of the amount of money invested in the institution. That means that credit unions are in fact an economic democracy; every customer is both a member and a shareholder.

While this Nation is painfully suffering the current mortgage crisis, credit unions have displayed an outstanding record of service to both minority and low- to moderate-income mortgage applicants and have a long history of responsible mortgage lending. What is impressive to me, Madam Speaker, is that in 2006, credit unions approved an overwhelming 71 percent of applications from low- to moderate-income mortgage applicants.

Furthermore, as a member of the House Committee on Small Business, these nonprofit, member-owned banking alternatives are attractive to many entrepreneurs because of the great lending rates and services they provide to them. For individual members, credit unions generally pay higher interest rates on deposits and charge lower interest rates on loans than banks while offering the same services such as savings accounts, checking accounts, credit cards, certificates of deposits, and online banking. So the fact that they provide competitive interest rates, fewer or no fees, and convenience makes so many members hold credit unions in such a high regard.

Madam Speaker, credit unions are extremely vital to my hometown, New York City. Credit unions serve more New Yorkers living in low-income and underserved areas that are continually being abandoned by big corporate banks. I must point out that there are about 43,697 credit union members living in my district. In fact, there are 6 credit unions in the New York 11th Congressional District, which has 3,662 members and an asset value totaling more then $13 million dollars.

Madan Speaker, I must note that what many people do not know is that more than ⅓ of all credit union CEOs nationwide are women.

Therefore Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the tremendous contributions credit unions provide to so many communities throughout the country and provide any continued support to these financial institutions.

RECOGNIZING ALEXA POLASKI

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. MARCHANT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Alexa Polaski on achieving the Girl Scout Gold Award. Receiving the Gold Award is a testament to Miss Polaski's leadership, citizenship, and service to her community.

For her Gold Award project, Alexa Polaski cleared and redesigned a garden courtyard at the Mimosa Manor Nursing Home in Keller, Texas. Miss Polaski secured donations from various companies, individuals and garden clubs so she could plant new perennials, annuals and trees. She also provided benches, bird feeders, and garden art. This transformation now allows the nursing home residents an outdoor area to enjoy.

The Girl Scouts of America promotes a positive influence for young women of today. I am honored to represent Alexa Polaski in earning the highest award bestowed in Girl Scouts. I commend her commitment and dedication for the betterment of her life, her community, and her country.

SASHA VANHEESCH

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Sasha VanHeesch, who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award. Sasha VanHeesch is a senior at Arvada West High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Sasha VanHeesch is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication she has shown in her high school career to her college career and future accomplishments.

HONORING IAN MICAH WRIGHT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Ian Micah Wright of Kearney, Missouri. Ian is 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 earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Ian has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Ian 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 Ian Micah Wright for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

HONORING BRENDA VERNATTI

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a heroic educator who saved the life of one of her students a few weeks ago.

In the blink of an eye, a moment of levity and fun became a moment of terror, as fifth grader Kelci Ottwell, who had been at the lunch table, laughing at a friend's joke, suddenly found herself choking and unable to breathe. Gasping for air, Kelci moved toward her principal, Brenda Vernatti for help. Unable to speak, Kelci reached out for Ms. Vernatti's arm to get her attention.

Immediately sensing Kelci's distress, Ms. Vernatti swung into action and began to perform the Heimlich maneuver, trying in vain four times to dislodge the small piece of pizza that was by now causing Kelci's face to turn purple. Finally, on her fifth attempt, Kelci coughed up the pizza and began to breathe again.

Kelci's mother, Melissa, told the local newspaper, "She's my hero. I want the world to know she saved my baby's life."

Brenda Vernatti has served the Alton School District for 22 years, touching hundreds if not thousands of young lives. But just a few weeks ago, she went above and beyond the already lofty call of duty of an educator to become a life-saving hero.

Every day, our Nation is blessed to have heroic citizens ready to spring into action to help another in distress. Today, I have the honor of recognizing Brenda Vernatti, who has dedicated her life to helping others attain their goals through education, and who, in that blink of an eye, reminded us all of the heroes in our midst.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE FOR H.R. 5819

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I submit the following CBO cost estimate for the bill H.R. 5819.

H.R. 5819—SBIR/STTR Reauthorization Act

Summary: H.R. 5819 would extend programs that require certain agencies to set aside portions of their research and development budgets for small businesses. The bill also would authorize appropriations to improve efforts to develop products funded through those programs that can be sold commercially. Finally, the bill would require participating agencies to develop new databases for program evaluation and business development.

Based on information from the Small Business Administration (SBA) and other agencies, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 5819 would cost $263 million over the 2009–2013 period, subject to appropriation of the specified and necessary amounts. Enacting the bill would not affect direct spending or revenues.

H.R. 5819 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

Estimated cost to the Federal Government: The estimated budgetary impact is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget functions 050 (national defense), 250 (general science, space, and technology). 270 (energy), 300 (natural resources and environment), 350 (agriculture), 370 (commerce and housing credit), 400 (transportation), 500 (education, training, employment, and social services), 550 (health), and 750 (administration of justice).

	By fiscal year, in millions of dollars—					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION						
SBIR/STTR Spending Under Current Law:						
Estimated Budget Authority[a]	30	0	0	0	0	0
Estimated Outlays	23	5	2	0	0	0
Proposed Changes:						
Reauthorize SBIR/STTR Programs:						
Estimated Authorization Level	0	27	33	25	13	13
Estimated Outlays	0	21	30	27	16	14
Increase R&D Budget Set-asides:						
Estimated Authorization Level	0	8	9	7	3	3
Estimated Outlays	0	7	8	7	4	3
Commercialization Program:						
Budget Authority	0	28	28	28	28	28
Estimated Outlays	0	4	16	24	28	28
FAST Program Reauthorization:						
Budget Authority	0	10	10	0	0	0
Estimated Outlays	0	2	5	7	5	1
Additional Agency Activities:						
Estimated Authorization Level	0	6	0	0	0	0
Estimated Outlays	0	3	3	0	0	0
Total Proposed Changes:						
Estimated Authorization Level	0	79	80	60	44	44
Estimated Outlays	0	37	62	65	53	46
Total SBIR/STTR Spending Under H.R. 5819:						
Estimated Authorization Level[a]	30	79	80	60	44	44
Estimated Outlays	23	42	64	65	53	46

[a] The 2008 level is the total amount CBO estimates was appropriated for that year for the SBIR and STIR programs.
Notes: SBIR = Small Business Innovation Research. STTR = Small Business Technology Transfer; FAST = Federal and State Technology Partnership.

Basis of estimate: Under current law, the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program requires federal agencies with extramural budgets for research and development (R&D) that exceed $100 million to set aside 2.5 percent of that budget for contracts with small businesses. (Extramural expenditures are expenditures for activities not performed by agency employees.) Likewise, the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) program requires federal agencies with extramural budgets for research and development that exceed $1 billion to set aside 0.3 percent of that budget for cooperative research between small businesses and a federal laboratory or nonprofit research institution. SBA is authorized to coordinate and monitor activities under both programs. Eleven agencies currently participate in one or both programs, including the Department of Defense, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Energy, the Department of Agriculture, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Science Foundation, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

The cost of these programs to the participating agencies consists primarily of personnel and associated overhead costs to solicit applications, prepare reports, and track outcomes. The organizational structures of such program offices vary. Some agencies have a full-time staff member devoted to the SBIR and STIR programs, with other staff assisting as part of their other duties; some have employees working part-time on the program.

Under current law, the SBIR program is scheduled to terminate at the end of fiscal year 2008. and the STIR program is scheduled to terminate at the end of fiscal year 2009.

Based on information from SBA and participating agencies. CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 5819 would cost $41 million in 2009 and $263 million over the 2009–2013 period, assuming appropriation of the specified and necessary amounts.

Reauthorization of the SBIR and STTR programs

The bill would extend both the SBIR and the STTR programs through fiscal year 2010. Based on information from SBA and participating agencies, CBO estimates that administering the two programs will cost about $30 million this year (about $2 million of that amount will be for SBA). CBO expects that federal agencies would continue to make extramural research expenditures under current law regardless of the SBIR and STTR programs and that participating agencies would continue to incur costs to administer existing contracts with small businesses for several years after the programs expire. CBO estimates that extending the current SBIR and STTR programs through 2010 would cost $108 million over the 2009–2013 period. assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts.

Increase in R&D budget set-asides for small businesses

The bill also would increase the amount of each agency's R&D budget to be set aside for the programs starting in fiscal year 2009: for SBIR, the set-aside would be increased to 3 percent; for STTR, the amount reserved for small businesses would be increased to 0.6 percent. Based on information from SBA and participating agencies, CBO expects that the expansion would lead to an increase in the number of applications received under both programs by more than a third. Assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts, CBO estimates that processing the additional applications would cost $29 million over the 2009–2013 period.

Commercialization program

H.R. 5819 would authorize appropriations of $28 million a year for a program to support agency efforts to assist small businesses participating in the SBIR program in developing products or services that could be sold to the government or in commercial markets. SBA would oversee this commercialization program—each agency participating in the SBIR program would be required to request funds from SBA to support its commercialization activities. Based on information from SBA and participating agencies, CBO estimates that implementing this provision would cost $100 million over the 2009–2013 period, subject to appropriation of the specified amounts.

FAST program reauthorization

H.R. 5819 would reauthorize the Federal and State Technology (FAST) Partnership program to conduct outreach and provide technical assistance so as to increase the number small businesses participating in the SBIR program. The outreach activities would be directed to geographic areas that are under-represented in the SBIR program and to small businesses owned by women, veterans, and minorities. The bill would authorize the appropriation of $10 million for each of fiscal years 2009 and 2010 to implement the program. Based on historical spending patterns of SBA's other business assistance programs, CBO estimates that implementing this provision would cost $20 million over the 2009–2013 period, assuming appropriation of the specified amounts.

Additional agency activities

H.R. 5819 would require each agency participating in the SBIR or STTR program to develop two databases, one to be used by the agency for program evaluation, the other, which would be available to the public, to be used to help businesses participating in the SBIR or STTR program to attract customers for the products or services created under the program. Based on information from the participating agencies, CBO estimates that developing new databases for each participating agency would cost about $6 million over the 2009–2013 period.

Intergovernmental and private-sector impact: H.R. 5819 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA. The bill would reauthorize the FAST program, a matching-grant program to encourage states to assist in the development of high-technology small businesses. Any costs to state governments of providing matching funds to participate in the FAST program would be incurred voluntarily.

Estimate prepared by: Federal Costs: Susan Willie; Impact on State, Local, and Tribal Governments: Elizabeth Cove; and Impact on the Private Sector: Jacob Kuipers.

Estimate approved by: Peter H. Fontaine, Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

APRIL 22, 2008.

Hon. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ,
Chairwoman, Committee on Small Business, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM CHAIRWOMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 5819, the SBIR/STTR Reauthorization Act.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Susan Willie.

Sincerely,

PETER R. ORSZAG.

Enclosure.

INTRODUCING THE ''FAMILY LEAVE INSURANCE ACT OF 2008''

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I rise today with Representatives GEORGE MILLER, LYNN WOOLSEY, and CAROLYN MALONEY to introduce a bill that will bring our Nation up to date with the rest of the world. One hundred and sixty-nine countries guarantee some form of paid family leave. The U.S. is part of an illustrious four-member club of nations—including Liberia, Papua New Guinea, and Swaziland—that fail to provide security for new parents or those caring for a loved one. The ''Family Leave Insurance Act'' will guarantee that workers will no longer have to choose between their jobs and their families.

Since becoming law 15 years ago, the landmark Family and Medical Leave Act, FMLA, has provided job protection and guaranteed leave for millions of workers. Unfortunately, the FMLA is limited to workers employed by large employers—only 45 percent of the private sector workforce—and, because the leave is unpaid, lower income workers can seldom afford to take it. Recent studies have found that 78 percent of FMLA eligible workers who wanted to take leave did not do so because they could not afford it. At a time of recession and tightening family budgets, this predicament is only getting worse.

A few years ago, my home State of California enacted the first paid family leave law in the country. The law has proven to be wildly popular. Despite the protests of business groups at the time the law was passed, most employers have come to embrace the law and realize that it facilitates continuity, productivity, and job satisfaction. Paid leave helps workers to strike a balance between work and family. Such a balance has real benefits for children. A Harvard School of Public Health study found that the education and health of children improves substantially when parents have work flexibility and paid leave. When parents are able to act as caregivers for a sick child, hospital stays are reduced by 31 percent. Parental involvement is also associated with higher achievement in language and math, improved behavior, and lower dropout rates.

The ''Family Leave Insurance Act'' takes the next logical and necessary step by implementing a comprehensive paid leave program that will cover all workers. The middle class is getting squeezed: hours are longer, job security is lower, and families have less time together. A report by the President's Council of Economic Advisers found that between 1969 and 1999 children lost 22 hours per week with their parents. Workers and their families need greater flexibility and support. Yet, according to the Department of Labor, only 8 percent of private employers provide paid leave. Clearly, there is room for improvement. This bill will:

Provide all workers with 12 weeks of paid leave over a 12-month period to care for a new child, provide for an ill family member, treat their own illness, or deal with an exigency caused by the deployment of a member of the military;

Provide these benefits through a new trust fund that is financed equally by employers and employees, who will each contribute 0.2 percent of the employee's pay;

Progressively tier the benefits so that a low-wage worker (earning less than $30,000) will receive full or near full salary replacement, middle-income workers ($30,000–$60,000) receive 55 percent wage replacement, and higher earners (over $60,000) receive 40–45 percent, with the benefit capped at approximately $800 per week;

Administer the program through the Department of Labor which will contract with states to administer the program (similar to how the Unemployment Insurance program is run);

Allow states and businesses with materially equivalent or better benefits to opt-out of the program.

The ''Family Leave Insurance Act'' is endorsed by the National Partnership for Women and Families, the AFL–CIO, the California Labor Federation, Voices for America's Children, First Focus, and the National Employment Law Project.

Members of Congress are constantly talking about family values. Let's go beyond talk and take action that families will actually value. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor the ''Family Leave Insurance Act.'' We can strengthen families, make business more competitive, and create a better future for our country. The time to act is now.

IN RECOGNITION OF GLORIA K. BELL ON HER RETIREMENT

HON. JAMES T. WALSH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. WALSH of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Gloria K. Bell.

Saturday, March 29, marked the retirement of Gloria K. Bell, a dedicated employee of the Department of Health and Human Services, HHS. Ms. Bell's Federal service spans 40 plus years, and her retirement provides a golden opportunity to reflect upon her service to her agency and to Capitol Hill as a liaison between HHS and congressional staffs.

Gloria Bell entered public service while working on her bachelors of science degree at American University in Washington, DC. Upon graduation, she joined HHS as a program analyst in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation where her portfolio included the Head Start and Developmental Disabilities programs.

In January 1987, Gloria continued her illustrious career at HHS in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Resources and Technology, Office of Budget, as a budget analyst. For over 20 years since, she has worked tirelessly through all phases of the process to develop and present the Department's budget and has progressed to an effective team leader in the office. She managed one of the largest budget databases in the Department, consisting of over 1,300 programs, project activities, and historical budget numbers from FY 1981 through FY 2005. Gloria also created a database that is used to produce the current All Purpose Tables, APTs. She wrote the operations manual and trained other staff in the APT system's operation.

Along with the budget and APT databases, Gloria's legacy encompasses years of service as the Budget Office's Congressional Liaison, ensuring that the myriad Senate and House reports requested of HHS are responsive, complete, and received on Capitol Hill in a timely manner. Through the years, Gloria's industrious service has been commended by 20 Excellent Performance, 9 Outstanding Performance, 4 Special Act of Service, and 2 Employee of the Month Awards.

I ask that you join me in applauding Gloria Bell as she closes a chapter on many years of excellent service to her agency and the Federal Government.

RECOGNIZING NICOLE GAITHER

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. MARCHANT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Nicole Gaither on achieving the Girl Scout Gold Award. Receiving the Gold Award is a testament to Miss Gaither's leadership, citizenship, and service to her community.

For her Gold Award project, Nicole Gaither developed an outdoor volunteer program for children ages 11–14 called Outdoor Action Kids. O.A.K.S. provides children the opportunity to perform basic outdoor conservation tasks while helping the staff and adult volunteers maintain Bob Jones Nature Center, a 76-acre park. Miss Gaither developed a coordinator's manual, application, training manual, and training video to ensure her program will continue well into the future.

The Girl Scouts of America promotes a positive influence for young women of today. I am honored to represent Nicole Gaither in earning the highest award bestowed in Girl Scouts. I commend her commitment and dedication for the betterment of her life, her community, and her country.

HONORING THOMAS EDWARD PRICE

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Thomas Edward Price of Kearney, Missouri. Thomas is 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 earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Thomas has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Thomas 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 Thomas Edward Price for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, on April 8, 2008, I was unavoidably detained and was not able to record my vote for rollcall No. 193.

Had I been present I would have voted:

Rollcall No. 193—''yes''—Providing for consideration of H.R. 2634, Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Collection Act.

GONZAGA UNIVERSITY SENDS TEAM TO SUSTAINABLE DESIGN EXPO

HON. CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the efforts of a team of college students making a difference in Africa. A student team from Gonzaga University has been selected to present their project, ''West African Technology, Education, and Reciprocity, WATER, for Benin,'' at the 4th Annual National Sustainable Design Expo on April 20–22, 2008.

The goal of the WATER for Benin project is to address the clean water shortage that many developing nations are currently facing. Through their participation, students learn about contemporary health problems in Africa and their contributing factors; the relationship between water, sanitation, and causes of morbidity and mortality in Africa; and communication skills for providing culturally appropriate health education.

In August of 2007, 17 students from eight academic programs, and three faculty members, traveled to Benin. At the Songhai Center in Porto-Novo, this group trained staff to make inexpensive, effective drinking water filters. Through leadership, community building, and personal sacrifice, these students created innovative ways to solve the water crisis. Their exhibit, on display at the National Sustainable Design Expo, chronicles the research and development the students implemented in order to find the best technology to provide clean water to the people of Benin.

Madam Speaker, many of us take something as simple as having clean water every day for granted. I commend these students for responding to the needs of the developing world and helping them to move toward sustainability. I invite my colleagues to join me in congratulating Gonzaga University team on this great accomplishment, and for being chosen to compete for the EPA's prestigious P^3—People, Prosperity, and Planet—Award.

HONORING CAROLDYNE AND HERSHEL SWEDLOVE

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, on June 14th, 2008, the Congregation Emanu El of San Bernardino, California, will present to Caroldyne and Hershel Swedlove the prestigious Rabbi Norman F. Feldheym Award. The Rabbi Norman Feldheym award was established in 1983 to pay tribute to those members of the Congregation Emanu El that reflect the Rabbi's qualities of love and loyalty to the synagogue, service to their community, and the personal traits of humility and kindness.

The Swedloves have been members of the Congregation Emanu El since 1966. They have long been active in supporting the congregation's endeavors, most notably their annual sponsorship of the Rosh Hashanah congregational luncheon. Caroldyne has been especially active in the community, as a member of the Sisterhood of Congregation Emanu El. She has taught in the Religious School there, while also volunteering in the Sisterhood Gift Shop. Hershel was a regular volunteer in the congregation's major fund raising activities, an effort that enabled the synagogue to pay off its mortgage.

I am sure that the Swedloves are most proud of their family's involvement in the synagogue as well. Their four sons Jerome, Sheldon, Randall, and David all attended the religious school, were Bar Mitzvahed and confirmed in the synagogue and are now all active members of the Congregation as well.

The Swedloves have been an important part of the Jewish community in the Inland Empire for years, as members of Paradise B'Nai B'rith and the Redlands Jewish Club, and as supporters of Jewish homes for the Aging and the Western States Jewish Historical Society. As owner-operators of Morris Automotive Supply in Fontana since 1962, they have been prominent members of the business community as well. Well known for their family traditions and unquestioned integrity, the Swedloves have been honored by the Fontana Chamber of Commerce for their excellence.

I am honored to recognize Caroldyne and Hershel Swedlove for their commitment to our community. I congratulate them on an honor well deserved on the 117th anniversary of the chartering of the congregation in San Bernardino. May both the Congregation Emanu El and the Swedloves continue to serve San Bernardino for years to come.

A TRIBUTE TO RODNEY D. HUDSON

HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Madam Speaker, I rise before you today to honor Rodney D. Hudson, founder and president of QuickSilver Analytics. Graduating with a bachelors degree in chemistry from Cameron University in 1974, Rodney went on to earn a master's degree in chemistry from the University of Delaware in 1982. QuickSilver Analytics is a registered service-disabled veteran-owned small business, specializing in chemical and biological warfare-related services and products. Rodney Hudson has been named the SBA's Veteran Small Business Champion of the Year for 2008.

Mr. Hudson was an Army Chemical Officer for over 21 years. He managed numerous chemical warfare materials (CWM) sampling and analysis (S&A) projects. Mr. Hudson has been directly involved with all aspects of chemical warfare agents for over twenty years, including CWM storage, laboratory procedures for environmental S&A, the operation of equipment for air monitoring, quality assurance/control, and major project management.

Mr. Hudson is a veteran of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. While in the Middle East during Operation Desert Storm, Mr. Hudson evaluated and briefed the Army Headquarters Staff on the potential chemical downwind hazards from destroyed Iraqi chemical storage igloos. He managed the collection, reporting and deployment of the only remote chemical monitoring and biological detection teams in the theater of operation and coordinated the transportation of all suspect chemical and biological samples to U.S. laboratories.

President of the Maryland Chapter of Elite Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business (SDVOB) Network, Rodney is also a member of the American Chemical Society, the Association of the United States Army, the National Defense Industrial Association, and the Society of American Military Engineers. Rodney has been a strong advocate for service-disabled veterans, lobbying the Maryland State Legislature to award three percent of all Maryland state contracts to service-disabled veterans. He has counseled several business owners on techniques and opportunities currently available to SDVOB owners and on ways to improve their business volume.

Mr. Hudson has worked tirelessly taking from his personal time to offer counsel to veterans who are considering starting a business. He has garnered the support of the MD Secretary of Veterans Affairs for his efforts and has provided a conduit for information flow to state legislators and the governor on issues important to Maryland SDVOB owners. Mr. Hudson has reached out to county government procurement personnel and introduced the Maryland Chapter of the Elite SDVOB network at last year's Maryland Association of Counties Conference.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join with me today to honor Rodney Hudson. His legacy as a successful business owner in the defense industry is surpassed only by his tireless advocacy for service disabled veterans. It is with great pride that I congratulate Rodney Hudson on his being awarded the SBA's Veteran Small Business Champion of the Year.

RECOGNIZING REBECCA SIMPSON

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. MARCHANT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Rebecca Simpson on achieving the Girl Scout Gold Award. Receiving the Gold Award is a testament to Miss Simpson's leadership, citizenship, and service to her community.

For her Gold Award project, Rebecca Simpson assisted 400 families from Gainesville, Texas who were displaced by the floods in the summer of 2007. Miss Simpson collected necessary household items and personal toiletries and delivered them to the Gainesville Relief Center for distribution. The local Girl Scout Council had specifically called for Girl Scouts

to help in this crisis, and Miss Simpson responded wholeheartedly. Additionally, Miss Simpson painted cabinets for Angel's Attic, a resale and outreach ministy of the Whites Chapel United Methodist Church.

The Girl Scouts of America promotes a positive influence for young women of today. I am honored to represent Rebecca Simpson in earning the highest award bestowed in Girl Scouts. I commend her commitment and dedication for the betterment of her life, her community, and her country.

HONORING JASON BAUR

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Jason Michael Baur of Kearney, Missouri. Jason is 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 earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Jason has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Jason 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 Jason Michael Baur for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

EQUAL PAY DAY

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, I am honored to rise here today to recognize Tuesday, April 22, 2008, as Equal Pay Day. National and community organizations alike make this a national day of action to promote equal pay for women and minorities. It is a day to recognize the wage gap that exists between men and women and offer solutions that will address and remedy this economic injustice.

It is no accident that a Tuesday in April is chosen as the day in which we recognize income inequality. April symbolizes the month when women's wages catch up to men's wages from the previous year and Tuesday represents the day on which women's wages equal men's wages from the previous week. According to 2007 statistics by the United States Census Bureau, on average women are paid 77 cents for every dollar that their male counterparts earn. For a country where 46 percent of its workforce is female, this is unacceptable.

It is clear that we are not moving fast enough in promoting pay equality. Some reports estimate that if we continue at the current pace, the wage gap will not be closed until 2057. That is far too long for this discrimination to continue. We must promote all efforts to encourage employers to pay women fairly, educate women on negotiating appropriate salaries, and enforce current equal pay legislation.

It is imperative that we protect every American's right to earn a fair wage based solely on qualifications and performance. There is no room in the American workforce for perpetuating gender and race stereotypes. By eliminating pay discrimination we will be ensuring that we will have the best and most productive workforce.

I applaud all Americans who participate in and support Equal Pay Day. The first step in correcting this inequity is by alerting others it exists. It is my hope that together we can do this and ultimately be the catalyst for change.

EXPRESSING SYMPATHY TO VICTIMS AND FAMILIES OF COLORADO SHOOTINGS

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 14, 2008

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 886 which expresses sympathy to the victims and families of the tragic acts of violence in Colorado Springs, CO and Arvada, CO.

The events last year in Colorado Springs, CO and Arvada, CO were another sad example of gun violence in this country. The nation is still mouming the loss of life at Northem Illinois University, Virginia Tech, the mall in St. Lake City, the Red Lake Indian Reservation, and in countless other communities. On December 9, 2007, Tiffany Johnson, Philip Crouse, Stephanie Works, and Rachel Works were tragically killed and David Works, Judy Purcell, Larry Bourbannais, Dan Griebenow, and Charlie Blanch injured by bullets fired from an assault rifle and one of two handguns wielded by the assailant.

Expressing sympathy to the victims and families of this tragedy is not enough. Far too many people are the victims of gun violence in our nation, including the hundreds who are killed and thousands injured in unintentional shootings. The Federal Govemment has an obligation and moral responsibility to prevent this type of violence, including mandatory background checks at gun stores and gun shows and requiring safety devices that prevent guns from being used by someone other than the owner.

Congress must reinstate the ban on assault style weapons and broaden it to include enhanced restrictions on many different assault-style guns that were not previously covered. A new ban should also direct the Attomey General to maintain a weapon database system of guns that have been used in violent crimes and submit the record to Congress each year. This is a necessary public safety measure that will allow law enforcement to do their job and combat crime.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the victims of gun violence in Colorado Springs, CO and Arvada, CO and working together on common-sense gun laws that help to prevent tragedies like these from reoccurring.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 22, 2008

Mr. MARKEY. Madam Speaker, on April 16th and 17th, 2008, I was unavoidably absent from the House due to an injury, and missed rollcall votes 192, 193, 194, 200, 203, and 204. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcalls 192, 193, 194, 200, 203, and 204.

RECOGNIZING CAROLYN KULIG

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. MARCHANT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Carolyn Kulig on achieving the Girl Scout Gold Award. Receiving the Gold Award is a testament to Miss Kulig's leadership, citizenship, and service to her community.

For her Gold Award project, Carolyn Kulig decorated the library at the Easter Seals facility in Carrollton, Texas. Miss Temple painted book shelves in lively colors and added color to the walls. She also collected books and videos through donations that will be given to low-income families that have children being treated at the facility. Her efforts will liven the spirit of all that use the library at Easter Seals.

The Girl Scouts of America promotes a positive influence for young women of today. I am honored to represent Carolyn Kulig in earning the highest award bestowed in Girl Scouts. I commend her commitment and dedication for the betterment of her life, her community, and her country.

ENSURING CONTINUED ACCESS TO FEDERAL STUDENT LOANS ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 2008

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration of the bill (H.R. 5715) to ensure continued availability of access to the Federal student loan program for students and families:

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Chairman, today I rise to support H.R. 5715, the Ensuring Continued Access to Federal Student Loans Act of 2008. As current turmoil in the U.S. financial markets make obtaining and affording student loans more and more difficult, today we take an affirmative step to relieve that pressure on students and families by providing greater access to Federal loans. This legislation: reduces borrowers' reliance on costlier private college loans and encourage responsible borrowing; gives parent borrowers more time to begin paying off their Federal PLUS college loans; helps struggling homeowners pay for college; provides the U.S. Secretary of Education additional tools to safeguard access to

student loans; and encourages Federal financial institutions to exercise their existing authorities to ensure borrowers have access to Federal loan funds in the upcoming academic year.

Here in Congress, we must ensure that access to higher education is as unfettered as possible. As our economy goes more and more global we have to assure that our future generation will be able to effectively compete on the world stage.

I strongly support this bi-partisan legislation that makes access to college more affordable thereby giving greater opportunities to many more to pursue the American dream. The Ensuring Continued Access to Federal Students Loans Act will achieve its goal at no additional cost to the government and with so much money being spent on building infrastructure in Iraq by the Executive branch it is encouraging to see the Congress show fiscal restraint and responsibility.

I would like to commend Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member MCKEON for their work and leadership in bringing this bill to the floor so families can receive relief before this coming August.

RECOGNIZING MAYA ANGELOU ON HER 80TH BIRTHDAY

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 80th birthday of Dr. Maya Angelou, one of the great voices of contemporary literature and a remarkable Renaissance woman.

I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Angelou when I attended Yale University. She was a mentor to me then, not for her literary works, which were inspiring, but for her love for the least of us. She maintains a passion for all people regardless of race, gender, or class.

Dr. Angelou was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on April 4, 1928, and attended public schools in Arkansas and California. Dr. Angelou is truly a woman of great vision, grace, and intellect. She speaks French, Spanish, Italian, Arabic, West African Fanti, and English.

In addition to written and spoken word, for which she is most known, she has other accomplishments that have not received as much attention. She taught modern dance at the Rome Opera House and the Hambina Theatre in Tel Aviv. She was has been a civil and human rights activist for many years, and in fact was the northern coordinator for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, SCLC, in 1959, appointed at the request of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

HONORARY DEGREES AND AWARDS

Maya Angelou has been honored by several universities, Howard University to Spellman College, from Columbia University to the University of Southern California giving her over 30 honorary degrees.

She has received Tony Awards, Grammy Awards, Woman of the Year Awards, a Congressional Tribute by Former Congressman Kweisi Mfume, and even a Presidential Medal of Arts from President Bill Clinton.

BOOKS, POEMS, AND SHORT STORIES

Maya Angelou is known for her stirring poems and storytelling abilities. ''On the Pulse of the Morning'' and ''Phenomenal Women'' were two of the poems that helped her become only the second poet in U.S. history to have the honor of writing and reciting original work at the Presidential inauguration.

Dr. Angelou has authored 12 bestselling books including ''I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings,'' ''A Song Flung Up to Heaven,'' and ''Even the Stars Look Lonesome.'' She has the unique ability to shatter the opaque prisms of race, class, and gender between the reader and the subject. She captivates her audience, be they children in Tel Aviv, Civil Rights Leaders, or even Presidents.

CONCLUSION

I would have had us sing to Maya Angelou on her 80th birthday, but I would rather say thank you. Thank you, Dr. Angelou, for your dedication to civil and human rights, thank you for your activism, your perceptive stories and poems, thank you for your wisdom, and thank you for reminding us how powerful language can be. For Maya Angelou has moved hearts and minds with her lyric and prose.

I thank Maya Angelou for being a Phenomenal Woman, for now we understand ''Just why [your] head is not bowed. Why you don't shout or jump about, or have to talk real loud. Why when we see you pass by, we are so proud, Some say, It's in the click of your heels, the bend of your hair, the palm of your hand, the need of your care, But its because you are a woman, Phenomenally. Phenomenal woman . . . that, Dr. Angelou, is you.

Happy 80th Birthday, Maya Angelou.

PHENOMENAL WOMAN

(By Maya Angelou)

Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.
I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size
But when I start to tell them,
They think I'm telling lies.
I say,
It's in the reach of my arms
The span of my hips,
The stride of my step,
The curl of my lips.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

I walk into a room
Just as cool as you please,
And to a man,
The fellows stand or
Fall down on their knees.
Then they swarm around me,
A hive of honey bees.
I say,
It's the fire in my eyes,
And the flash of my teeth,
The swing in my waist,
And the joy in my feet.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Men themselves have wondered
What they see in me.
They try so much
But they can't touch
My inner mystery.
When I try to show them
They say they still can't see.
I say,
It's in the arch of my back,
The sun of my smile,
The ride of my breasts,
The grace of my style.
I'm a woman

Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Now you understand
Just why my head's not bowed.
I don't shout or jump about
Or have to talk real loud.
When you see me passing
It ought to make you proud.
I say,
It's in the click of my heels,
The bend of my hair,
The palm of my hand,
The need of my care,
'Cause I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

IN CELEBRATION OF THE RETIREMENT OF LEROY R. CLINK

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I wish to celebrate the accomplishments of Mr. Leroy R. Clink, Sr. for his 30 years of service. Below is a brief description of his accomplishments.

Leroy Clink comes from humble origins, attending a two room schoolhouse in West Granville, MA. After graduating from Westfield High School, he went on to New England College to receive his Bachelors of Science in Civil Engineering. He also obtained a Master of Science in Engineering Management from Western New England College.

Mr. Clink was an impressively well-rounded college student. During his time at New England College, Mr. Clink ascended to the presidency of the Sigma Alpha Beta Fraternity, in addition to becoming Chairman of the Inter-Fraternity Council, Mr. Clink displayed his leadership skills in the Student Senate. He was also the First New England college student to be a voting member of the College Admissions Committee. Mr. Clink was able to find time in his busy schedule to become a student guide, dormitory proctor, and a student member of ASCE.

Mr. Clink began his professional career in 1978 at Westover Air Reserve Base as a Pavements Engineer. From there he became the Project Engineer in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He served as a Base Civil Engineer at the Westover ARB, where he coordinated construction projects. Mr. Clink has played an imperative role in runway overlays, east ramp improvements, water distribution, and base operations. He also played an active role as a security police officer. In addition, he was involved in control tower, base civil engineering, and Marines site support element.

Before his retirement, he was working on the New BRAC projects Armed Forces Reserve Center and the Navy Sea Bee Battalion Facility. On this occasion, I am proud to mark 30 years of Mr. Clink's service and to congratulate him on his well-deserved retirement.

JUBILEE ACT FOR RESPONSIBLE LENDING AND EXPANDED DEBT CANCELLATION OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 16, 2008

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2634) to provide for greater responsibility in lending and expanded cancellation of debts owed to the United States and the international financial institutions by low-income countries, and for other purposes:

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to express my full support for H.R. 2634, the Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation of 2008. This is extremely important legislation that will have no budgetary impact on the United States Federal budget but stands to have a lasting and life changing impact for up to 24 additional poor countries. The Jubilee Act is one of the most humanitarian efforts this Congress could undertake.

Poverty is one of the greatest ills to plague mankind. We have recent evidence of the impact of poverty in the demonstration of desperately hungry people for food no longer affordable because of economic forces beyond their control. Those who survive in poverty are under constant threat of death. The debt forgiveness offered by the Jubilee Act will enable poor countries to address the issues of poverty, create opportunities for economic growth and establish sound governing practices. The Jubilee Act also promotes responsible development assistance by prioritizing grants over loans, which is an important measure to prevent these countries from falling back into debt.

It is inconceivable for the United States not to act immediately in passing this legislation; there are many poor countries desperately awaiting our assistance. By granting authorization for the U.S. Treasury Department to begin negotiations within the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other multilateral creditors is the first step towards improving the lives of so many impoverished people. Above all other reasons, we are morally obligated to help those less fortunate, therefore I urge my colleagues to support the Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation Act.

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE DAVID BRELAND

HON. ROBERT E. (BUD) CRAMER, JR.

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. CRAMER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the outstanding career of Judge David Breland.

On April 12, Judge Breland was honored with the Newton B. Powell Loyalty Award by the Democratic Party of Morgan County, AL.

Judge Breland has served the people of the State of Alabama for over 25 years as a District Judge in Morgan County. Judge Breland is best known as a tireless advocate for the children of the Tennessee Valley. During his judicial career, Judge Breland established over 35 programs throughout the State of Alabama designed to assist at-risk youth.

Additionally, Judge Breland was the Chairman of Northwest Alabama Corrections for Youth, the Co-Chairman of the Morgan County Children's Policy Council, and a member of the President's Summit on Youth. His efforts have helped countless young people throughout Alabama become successful and responsible adults.

Judge Breland's civic involvement has inspired many in North Alabama. He has received commendations from organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club, the NAACP, and the Rotary Club. In 2008, Judge Breland was named as the Citizen of the Year by the Decatur-Morgan County Chamber of Commerce.

I commend Judge David Breland's work on behalf of North Alabama and, on behalf of the United States House of Representatives, I congratulate him on a distinguished career.

CONGRATULATING ROBERT AND CAROLYN CRAWFORD FOR RECEIVING THE MOTHERS AGAINST DRUNK DRIVING (MADD) HERO AWARD

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Robert and Carolyn Crawford for receiving the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Hero Award. The Lewisville couple received the award on Saturday April 19th, 2008, for their commitment to educating others about the dangers of drunken driving while volunteering for MADD.

The Crawfords' mission began back in 1993 when their daughter, son-in-law, granddaughter and another unborn grandchild were killed in a car wreck by a drunken driver. From that moment the couple has made it a priority to inform others of the dangers involved with drunk driving.

Since 2007, Robert Crawford has traveled all across the country participating in the MADD speaker's tour. He has spoken to over 10,000 people, and in these first few months of 2008, Robert has talked to almost 400 convicted drunk drivers at Victim Impact Panel meetings at the Denton County courthouse. Robert has also attended court trials to provide moral support to victims' families affected by drunk driving.

MADD was founded in 1980 and has more than 2 million members and supporters nationwide. Like Robert and Carolyn, the organization's goal is to stop drunken driving. The Crawfords' avid participation in MADD can be attributed to their passionate aspiration of trying to ensure that no other families endure the pain and devastation they suffered as a result of a drunken driver's poor decision.

Madam Speaker, I proudly rise today to honor two worthy citizens who strive every day to make this world a better place. Robert and Carolyn Crawford are truly deserving of the honor MADD has bestowed upon them. I am proud to represent them in the 26th District of Texas and greatly appreciative for their ongoing service to their local community and the Nation. Their passion and devotion to such a worthy cause is admirable.

CONGRATULATING DENNIS KAVANAUGH, RECIPIENT OF 2008 SHELLEY ARTS ADVOCACY AWARD

HON. HARRY E. MITCHELL

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dennis Kavanaugh, recipient of 2008 Shelley Arts Advocacy Award from the Arizona Citizens Action of the Arts. As a member of the Mesa City Council and a leader within numerous boards and organizations, Dennis has been a tireless advocate for the arts in Arizona. Dennis recognizes the importance that the arts have on strengthening communities and enhancing our quality of life.

Dennis currently serves as Chair of both the Mesa Arts Center Foundation board and the Development Committee of the National Association of State Arts Assemblies. Through his work on the National Association of the State Arts Assemblies, Dennis has been a champion for efforts to increase federal funding for the National Endowment of the Arts.

Dennis was also instrumental in building the new Mesa Arts Center which has become a point of pride for the entire community. Dennis served for more than 6 years on the Center's Architect Selection and Design Committee. The center now serves as a place to showcase world-class performances and exhibits but also houses studio space for art education.

I commend the Arizona Action of the Art's for selecting such a deserving arts advocate. Dennis truly understands the tremendous impact that the arts have in achieving educational excellence and a greater sense of community. Dennis was recently elected to the Mesa City Council where he has displayed his leadership skills previously and where I am sure he will continue to support public policy that will advance the arts in Arizona.

Madam Speaker, please join me in recognizing Dennis Kavanaugh's continued work and advocacy for the arts in Arizona.

JUAN SEGUIN—TEXAS FREEDOM FIGHTER

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, as Texans we are proud of our fight for independence. We often celebrate the courage and sacrifice made by the Alamo defenders. We boast of the cunning and valor displayed by the victorious troops at the Battle of San Jacinto. When celebrating these two historic events, I would be remiss not to mention the vital role that Juan Seguin played in both of those battles.

Juan Seguin was born in 1806 at San Antonio, in what was then Mexico. He soon grew

tired of President Santa Anna's policies and in 1835, he responded to a call for support by raising a company of Tejanos, Texans of Hispanic descent, to aid in the revolution. In October of 1835, following a battle in Bexar, Stephen F. Austin granted a captain's commission to Seguin.

Seguin's company would soon arrive at the Alamo with other Revolutionary heroes such as, Jim Bowie, Davy Crockett, and William Barrett Travis, who were taking shelter as General Santa Anna's army was advancing on San Antonio.

As the Alamo came under constant bombardment, Colonel Travis sent out messengers to get help. The last messenger sent out was Juan Seguin on a mission to seek reinforcements from Colonel James Fannin to send troops from nearby Goliad to help the defenders at the Alamo. After his failed attempts to persuade Fannin, he journeyed to the ranches along the Guadalupe and San Antonio Rivers to recruit more Tejanos.

His company then met up with General Sam Houston at the town of Gonzales. There, the tragic news that the Alamo had fallen was delivered. A decision was made to burn the town of Gonzales in order to deny shelter to Santa Anna's troops.

As General Houston's armies retreated, he gave Seguin's company the task of riding into the frontier and warning the settlers of the coming danger. Because of this great service to the Texas Revolution, he has been dubbed "The Paul Revere of Texas."

Later, Seguin commanded the only Tejano unit to fight in the Battle of San Jacinto. None of the Texians at San Jacinto wore uniforms on the battlefield. In order to distinguish themselves from the Mexican soldiers, only Mexican officers wore uniforms, Seguin's Tejanos wore playing cards in their hats to avoid friendly fire. After the battle, Seguin personally accepted the surrender of a number of Mexican officers. After his company's valiant effort in the battle, Seguin was promoted to Lt. Colonel. Texas liberty would not be secure without the help of the native Tejanos in this and other battles during the fight for Texas independence.

Each year, approximately 220,000 people visit the World's tallest war memorial, The San Jacinto Monument. The monument, which stands 15 feet taller then the Washington Monument, has two roads leading to the park. In honor of the contributions made by Seguin and his Tejanos one of those roads is named Juan Seguin Boulevard.

One of the oldest towns in Texas, Seguin was originally founded in 1838 near the Guadalupe River. In 1853, it was incorporated and named Walnut Springs. Six months later the name was permanently changed to Seguin. Today, the city nicknamed the "Pecan Capital of Texas" is home to the Texas Lutheran University. In October of 2000, the city of Seguin unveiled a 17-foot statue of its namesake in the town square. The statue depicts this Texas hero valiantly leading the charge atop a horse with his saber in hand. As I stand here one day after we celebrated the historic battle of San Jacinto that gave Texas its independence, I want to acknowledge this Texas legend that played such an instrumental role in the victory.

And that's just the way it is.

HONOR THE TRUTH OF THE PAST: COMMEMORATION OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the survivors and their descendants of the Armenian Genocide. On Sunday, April 20th, a service in remembrance of the 93rd Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide took place at the Armenian Church of Our Savior in Worcester, Massachusetts. The message of the generations gathered there is simple: "Honor the truth of the past because denial makes it more likely that genocide will happen again."

Each year we mark the anniversary of the cataclysmic events that occurred in the Ottoman Empire from 1915–1923, when 1.5 million Armenians were killed and over half a million survivors were exiled.

I would like to enter into the RECORD the letter I sent to the parishioners of the Armenian Church of Our Savior on this solemn and special occasion, as well as the April 21st article that appeared in the Worcester Telegram & Gazette describing the commemorative event.

Memory is a precious commodity. I urge all my colleagues to support passage of the Armenian Genocide Resolution before we lose the last survivors of this terrible period of genocide against the Armenian people.

OPEN LETTER FROM REP. JAMES P. MCGOVERN TO THE PARISHIONERS OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOR

APRIL 20, 2008.

DEAR FRIENDS: As you know, this year marks the 93rd anniversary of the first genocide of the 20th Century, the Armenian Genocide. Carried out between 1915 and 1923, the Armenian Genocide was a systematic and deliberate campaign by the Turkish Ottoman Empire to destroy its Armenian minority, which resulted in 1.5 million Armenian deaths and the exile of nearly all Armenians from their ancestral homeland.

The Armenian Genocide is officially recognized and commemorated in 40 States, including the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and by nearly two dozen nations, including 11 of our NATO allies. The federal government must follow suit.

I believe adopting the Armenian Genocide Resolution is the right thing to do:

As a matter of morality—and in the name of humanity—the United States should recognize and condemn all genocides.

In the name of historic truth—and in honor of the historic role so many American diplomatic personnel and humanitarian and relief workers played in saving lives and condemning the genocide as it was taking place—the U.S. especially should recognize the Armenian Genocide.

And in the hope of preventing future genocides—we have to recognize and honor the truth of the past. Denial of the Armenian Genocide—just like denial of the Holocaust—makes future genocides more likely, not less.

No nation, not Turkey, or any other country, should be allowed to block the official recognition or commemoration or the teaching of historic truth about the Armenian Genocide.

I am disappointed that the Federal government has not yet taken the necessary and courageous steps to recognize the Armenian Genocide. I will continue to work to change that reality.

It's ironic that the current Turkish government doesn't seem to realize that the more it denies the Armenian Genocide, the more people begin to think that there really is a connection between the Turks who carried out the Armenian Genocide at the beginning of the 20th Century and today's 21st Century democratic government.

By denying the truth, Turkey undermines its own standing throughout the world, blocks its own acceptance into the European family, and increases regional tensions, especially with neighboring Armenia. Turkey's recognition of the Genocide, its reconciliation with the past, would widely be viewed as the act of a mature democracy, which the world would rush to embrace and reward.

This is why America must also officially recognize the Armenian Genocide.

Some will always argue that the timing is not right to act on this bill. But when will the timing be right? After the last surviving witnesses of the Armenian Genocide are gone?

In April of last year, I was in eastern Chad. And the reality of genocide was right before my eyes. There are over 250,000 refugees from Darfur, Sudan living in camps just inside Chad. I met with individuals and families who had been forced to flee their villages in Darfur. Each had a story about loved ones murdered, homes destroyed, people and family left behind. Many didn't know if some of their family or children were even alive.

So 93 years after the Armenian Genocide, I struggle to find meaning in the words, "Never Again."

I am thankful I can turn to Worcester's Armenian-American community for inspiration, one of the oldest in the United States and the first to establish a church in America. They have worked tirelessly for nearly a century to keep alive the historic memory of the Armenian Genocide and to speak out, condemn and organize against the genocides—too many—that mark the past nine decades of human history. They were among the very first to bring to my attention the events unfolding in Darfur.

The least we can do is honor and recognize this selfless community by passing the Armenian Genocide Resolution, so that their history and heritage will be remembered for all time, even after the last survivor passes away.

With warmest respect and friendship,
CONGRESSMAN JIM MCGOVERN.

[From the Telegram & Gazette, Worcester, MA, Apr. 21, 2008].

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE REMEMBERED

(By Lisa D. Welsh)

WORCESTER.—Three generations of Armenians—a 99-year-old woman, a three time—Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and a high school essayist—spoke from differing perspectives but shared one message during the 93rd anniversary of the Armenian genocide recognition yesterday at the Armenian Church of Our Saviour: "Honor the truth of the past because denial makes it more likely that genocide will happen again."

Heghine Minassian was 6 years old the day Turkish soldiers went house to house and emptied all the buildings in her village. She said most Armenians were marched into the desert, where they were left to starve to death; but some of the women, like her aunt, were kept as slaves.

"My grandparents were in the attic hiding," Mrs. Minassian said in Armenian through an English interpreter, Van Aroian. "My grandmother's sister yelled, 'Don't open

the door. Don't go out.' But the (soldiers) gave the order to come down and they came down.''

Within three years Mrs. Minassian would be an orphan, the same age of many of the children in church who participated in a candle-lighting ceremony in honor of their family members who had died in the genocide. Looking out at the young faces in the front pews, Mrs. Minassian said, ''Don't forget our struggle.''

Stephen A. Kurkjian, a reporter for the Boston Globe for 38 years, has written about many high-profile events. However, sharing the story of his father's family was not one of them.

''I was not an appreciating Armenian until 1992, when I accompanied my 83-year-old father to the village where he was born,'' Mr. Kurkjian said at the Martyrs' Day commemoration. ''The sadness hit me like a sledgehammer. I started asking, 'How could this happen?' ''

''I came back and wrote an article called 'Roots of Sorrow.' But now I'd add to that title, 'Seeds of Hope.' ''

Mr. Kurkjian's father lost his father, brother and sister in the genocide of 1915; he survived after making the 300-mile trek to Syria with his mother, and later to America.

''My father would say out of tragedy there was opportunity for liberty and religious freedom. There was education and economic opportunity in America. I would have never had the successes I've had. Instead I would have worked at a small weekly in a mountain village.''

''I asked my Der Hayr (priest), 'How this could happen?' '' Mr. Kurkjian said. ''He said, 'God would not have allowed the first Christian church to not have survived.' That's as good an answer as you are going to get.''

With the internal awakening about his heritage Mr. Kurkjian has traveled to Turkey and watched pressure build on the Turkish government to reassess its position that downplays references to the genocide.

Robin Garabedian, a junior at Doherty Memorial High School whose family has been with the Armenian Church of Our Saviour since her grandmother's family immigrated to Worcester, said she was 7 years old when her father told her about the genocide. In reading her award-winning essay, ''Why Remembrance of the Genocide is Important,'' she quoted Adolf Hitler as saying. ''Who today remembers the extermination of the Armenians?'' as rationalization for the Holocaust.

''How does someone hate someone else so much?'' Robin asked in anger. ''If the world had stood up (against) the Armenian genocide, there wouldn't have been genocide of the Jews, or in Cambodia in the '70s, or in Darfur today.''

H.R. 1374—FLORIDA NATIONAL FOREST LAND

HON. ANDER CRENSHAW

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. CRENSHAW. Madam Speaker, today the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee considered S. 934, a companion bill to H.R. 1374, which passed the House of Representatives on December 17, 2007. This legislation provides the Forestry Service the flexibility they need to properly manage their assets. This legislation modifies the Florida National Forest Land Management Act in two simple ways which will provide the Forest Service essential authority to manage the national forests in Florida effectively.

The first provision simply adds an unmanageable tract of land located in Tallahassee, FL to the list of lands the Secretary of Agriculture is currently authorized to sell. This specific property, tract W–1979, is approximately 114 acres of land that has evolved into an unmanageable, problem area for the Apalachicola National Forest. Due to the configuration and surrounding development, the vegetation cannot be managed through prescribed fire. Although a very valuable tract from a real estate/commercial aspect, this tract has lost its national forest character. The sale of this land will allow the Forest Service to purchase other lands located within the Forest that are more manageable and will enhance national forests in Florida.

Secondly, this legislation would allow the Forest Service to use proceeds from the sale of other ''non-green land'' to be used for construction and improvements to administrative facilities essential to the proper management of the Forest. These ''non-green land'' tracts of land are owned by the Forest Service, but have urban improvements like fairgrounds or sporting complexes and are not conducive to the overall purpose of protecting our national forests.

This legislation would allow the Service to use the proceeds from the sale of improved lands to build critical infrastructure they need to manage the forests in Florida, while allowing the forest service to continue its practice of using receipts from all non-developed ''green land'' tracts for the acquisition of other ''green land'' tracts to enhance the national forests in Florida. I am pleased that this legislation is moving forward and the Forest Service will have the ability to efficiently and effectively manage our Nation's precious resources.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE EARTH DAY COALITION

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of the Earth Day Coalition of Cleveland, as they celebrate EarthFest 2008 on April 20, 2008—a date that also commemorates the 19th annual celebration of EarthFest in Cleveland, Ohio.

Cleveland's Earth Day Coalition was formed in 1990 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Earth Day in Ohio. EarthFest is now Ohio's largest environmental educational event and one of the most successful Earth Day events in the country. I stand in recognition of the staff and volunteers of the Earth Day Coalition for all their effort and dedication in creating such an innovative, exciting and educational event for the Great Cleveland community to enjoy. This year, EarthFest 2008 will be entirely wind powered, signifying the ability of the Earth Day Coalition in effectively demonstrating the need and possibilities of alternative forms of energy. The event features over 160 environmental exhibits and displays, all focused on educating the community about sustainability efforts and solutions to climate change. EarthFest is just one of Earth Day Coalition's many nationally-recognized programs and promises once again to be a significant aspect of the world celebration of Earth Day.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor and recognitions of the staff, volunteer and members of the Earth Day Coalition as we celebrate EarthFest 2008 on April 20, 2008. EarthFest 2008 promises to educate, inspire and motivate all of us to join together as a community and work toward maintaining a more healthy earth for future generations.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR SECURE ELECTIONS ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL E. CAPUANO

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 15, 2008

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to share my views on H.R. 5036, the Emergency Assistance for Secure Elections Act.

As both a Member of the Committee on House Administration which has considered this issue for many months and a former mayor who was responsible for overseeing elections for many years, I know how important it is that people have confidence in their votes. This bill is part of an effort to ensure that we improve that confidence, which has waned in recent years.

There are good provisions in this bill. I believe firmly that the best way to ensure that votes are cast as intended and counted accurately, is to provide paper ballots that the voters themselves mark. This bill helps move the Nation in that direction by providing optional funding for many localities that wish to switch to paper ballots. For this reason, I support it.

However, there are some shortcomings in this legislation that I feel must be stated for the record. I do not personally believe that it is the most effective use of Federal resources to give states funding in order for them to add on printers to Direct Recording Electronic devices (DREs). I don't believe that ''paper trails'' are an adequate substitute for real paper ballots and for this reason, I have concerns about giving states the funding to retrofit their DREs rather than simply incentivizing the switch to real paper ballots.

Similarly, I am discouraged that the bill does not allow jurisdictions with DREs that produce a paper trail access to Federal funds to switch to real paper ballots. Many jurisdictions across the country have come to the conclusion that paper ballots, not electronic voting machines with paper trails, are the most reliable type of voting system. By denying some jurisdictions the Federal resources to make that positive switch, the bill fails to reward those who are making the commitment to switch to what many believe is the best system.

However, I am supporting this bill. Because is not overly prescriptive, I hope that many jurisdictions consider utilizing its positive provisions, should it become law. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues on the committee and in the full House toward a better and more trustworthy vote.

TRIBUTE TO MORLEY NELSON

HON. BILL SALI

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. SALI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a remarkable Idahoan and a place in my beautiful home State.

Today, the House is voting on renaming the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area—right outside my hometown of Kuna, ID—after a man named Morley Nelson. Morlan W. Nelson—everyone called him "Morley"—was born in North Dakota. Morley was fascinated by raptors from a young age as he grew up on a ranch in his native State. He earned a degree in soil science, engineering and nuclear chemistry from North Dakota State in 1938 and went on to serve with great valor as a captain in the 10th Mountain Division during the Second World War, the same outfit where our esteemed former colleague Bob Dole served with such distinction. Morley won a Bronze Star, a Purple Heart, and a Silver Star for his courage and indomitable spirit.

Morley moved to Idaho after the War. In 1948, he made his home in Boise and began serving as the Columbia Basin's Snow Survey Supervisor and pursued his groundbreaking work with such raptors as the golden eagle.

To give a fuller account of Morley's remarkable life, allow me to quote from a biography of Morley drafted for the Morley Nelson Elementary School in Boise:

> Morley continued his work with raptors and, after relocating to Idaho, became interested in the golden eagle. In 1958 he influenced the State Legislature to enact a law protecting raptors in Idaho. In the early 1960s Morley began working for Walt Disney Production's True Life Adventure Series training falcons, eagles, and hawks. He worked on numerous films with Walt Disney and Paramount Pictures as well as working with Marlin Perkins on the Wild Kingdom television series, and television programs for PBS and other networks. In the 1980s and 1990s Morley participated in many documentaries and videos featuring his birds. In the 1970s and 1980s Morley was instrumental in recognizing the importance of the Snake River Canyon as a haven for birds of prey and with the help of Governor Cecil Andrus, who was then Secretary of the Interior, and others, they establishing the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area. He also influenced the establishment of the World Center for Birds of Prey in Boise. Morley had a long and productive association with the Idaho Power Company and the Edison Electric Institute to help solve the electrocution of eagles problem. He designed nesting platforms that attach to large transmission lines which have helped to expand the nesting areas of Raptors. His power line corrections and nesting platform designs are now used worldwide.

Idaho's rich natural heritage is exemplified by the raptors that make their homes in the Gem State. Thanks largely to Morley's efforts, "Idaho hosts the densest population of nesting raptors in North America, and possibly on planet Earth," according to writer Lee Foster.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of my great home State, let me say that we will remember this wonderful man, exemplary patriot and outstanding naturalist.

I also commend and thank my friend and colleague, MIKE SIMPSON, for introducing H.R. 3651, which renames the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area the "Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area." It's a fitting tribute to a great Idahoan and a great American.

TRIBUTE TO KATIE EDWARDS

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Katie Edwards who will be inducted into the Dade County Farm Bureau's distinguished Hall of Fame on Saturday April 26, 2008.

For more than four years, Katie has served as the Executive Director of the Dade County Farm Bureau. In that capacity, she has been a solid and steady voice advocating for the more than 4,000 members she represents. Under Katie's exceptional leadership, the Dade County Farm Bureau received the President's Award from the Florida Farm Bureau Federation in 2004 and 2007.

Katie has focused her efforts on a variety of issues facing South Florida's diverse agricultural industry. She has consistently promoted and supported the economic viability of agriculture, the competitiveness for specialty crops, the need for agricultural disaster following numerous hurricanes, and increased funding for mitigating the risks associated with invasive pests and diseases.

This fall, Katie will start law school at Florida International University, where she plans to stay true to her passion and concentrate on agricultural law. Though her shoes will be difficult to fill, I know she has a made a lasting impact on the Dade County Farm Bureau.

I urge all my colleagues to join me in congratulating Katie Edwards on her induction into the Hall of Fame.

RECOGNIZING THE 175TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WEST BLOOMFIELD, MICHIGAN

HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Madam Speaker, I want to recognize the Township of West Bloomfield, in Oakland County, MI, which is celebrating its 175th Anniversary on April 22, 2008. The township's many beautiful lakes show why it continues to rank among Michigan's loveliest communities.

In the early 19th century, a group of mainly Scottish Presbyterian settlers migrated to Bloomfield Township from New York, New England, and the United Kingdom. These settlers were attracted to the picturesque lakes that covered nearly 20 percent of the area, and many settled in and built sheep farms. By 1850, sheep by far outnumbered residents, with over 16,000 sheep contributing to the booming farm industry compared to only 940 people.

On April 22, 1833, West Bloomfield Township was formally established as a General Law Township by an act of the legislative council which carved out 30 square miles from the western part of Bloomfield Township. Then on April I, 1982, the council passed a resolution establishing West Bloomfield as a Charter Township.

Today, West Bloomfield, known as the "lake township of Oakland County," is one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse townships in the country. Home to a large and active Jewish community, West Bloom1ield opened the first Holocaust Memorial Center of its kind in 1981. It has since expanded and been moved to Farmington Hills, something I was proud to assist and support, but its roots are firmly planted with the residents of West Bloomfield. In addition, there is a growing Chaldean community that has worked to integrate fellow Arab immigrants into life in the United States.

Madam Speaker, today West Bloomfield is a vibrant, diverse community in Oakland County that is home to over 64,000 residents and 25 beautiful lakes. I congratulate them on their 175th anniversary and wish the residents many more years of prosperity.

IN RECOGNITION OF EUGENE STARKS ROBERTS, SR. AND HIS RUN ACROSS AMERICA FOR JESUS

HON. MIKE McINTYRE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. MCINTYRE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and welcome to our nation's capital a special guest and great American hero named Eugene Starks Roberts, Sr. A former Marine, Vietnam veteran, and double amputee, Mr. Roberts joins us near the conclusion of his long and inspiring mission to run across America for Jesus. Mr. Roberts has run over 3,500 miles during the last nine months—miles that represent his commitment to Jesus Christ and the ideals central to his strong Christian faith.

Throughout his journey, Mr. Roberts has sought to raise awareness and money for the less fortunate and for medical research for diseases such as cancer and diabetes. Making the cross-country trek on prosthetic legs, Mr. Roberts has also made it his goal to inspire wounded warriors in their recoveries. Indeed, his endurance of both body and spirit should be an inspiration to us all.

Mr. Roberts has run through more than 80 different U.S. cities, including two in my district—Shallotte and Wilmington, North Carolina. Southeastern North Carolina is honored to have been included along the way. Mr. Roberts has reminded my constituents and countless other Americans, both those with and without disabilities, of the importance of perseverance. He serves as a testament to the phenomenal strengths and great characters of our men and women in uniform. Finally, he has reminded us of what it means to give of oneself in order to help others in need.

His wife of 40 years, Marian Alicia, his three daughters, one son, and 11 grandchildren should be extremely proud of the man they call husband, father, and "Poppop".

Madam Speaker, I stand today to honor Mr. Roberts' achievements not only over the last nine months, but also over his entire life, as

he approaches the end of his run across our great Nation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Madam Speaker, I missed one vote on April 15, 2008. Had I been present, I would have voted the following way:

(1) Frank Amendment to H.R. 2634, rollcall No. 196—I would have voted "yea."

HONORING E. YVONNE LEWIS

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to E. Yvonne Lewis as she is elevated to Supervisor of Women for the Michigan Southeast Jurisdiction of the Churches of God in Christ. A banquet will be held in her honor on April 28th in Flint Michigan.

E. Yvonne Lewis grew up in Saginaw Michigan. Her parents, the late Drs. Hurley J. and Martha Coleman founded the Coleman Temple Church of God in Christ in Saginaw. As the 5th of 11 children, she earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree from Ferris State University, and from the University of Michigan-Flint a Bachelor of Science in Clinical Community Psychology degree and a Masters of Health Education degree. She is the mother of 3: Tiffanie, Tanya and Maurice.

She is now a member of the Greater Holy Temple Church of God in Christ. After receiving her license as an Evangelist of the Church of God in Christ in 1978, E. Yvonne became the Coordinator of the National Church of God in Christ Young Ladies for Scholastic Motivations, of the Auxiliaries in Ministry Convention. She also served as an active member of the Second Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of Southwest Michigan under the leadership of Bishop Earl J. Wright Sr. and Mother Francis Curtis.

Bishop Roger L. Jones selected her in 2007 to become the Supervisor-Elect for Women in the Michigan Southeast Jurisdiction. In this role she will serve as the leader of women and work closely with Bishop Jones guiding the Church through the coming year.

E. Yvonne Lewis is the Executive Director of Faith Access to Community Economic Development. She serves on the boards of the Greater Flint Health Coalition, the Michigan Cancer Consortium, Co-Founder and Past Chair of the National Community Committee for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Prevention Research Centers, founding member and Past Chair of the Caucus of Public Health and the Faith Community of the American Public Health Association, and the Advisory Board for the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America.

Madam Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in congratulating E. Yvonne Lewis as she is elevated to the position of Supervisor of Women. May Christ continue to bless her in her work and leadership for many, many years to come.

IN HONOR OF THE AAA STATE CHAMPION KENDRICK LADY CHEROKEES BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the first girls' State championship basketball team from the city of Columbus, Georgia, the Kendrick High School Lady Cherokees.

On Saturday, March 8, 2008, the Lady Cherokees finished a perfect season with a 79–67 win over Carrolton High School. The victory followed three years of close calls for the Lady Cherokees—in 2005, 2006, and again last year in 2007—during which they found themselves in the finals or semifinals of the state basketball tournament, only to lose by slight margins.

However, 2008 proved to be the year of the Lady Cherokees. Their victory in this year's AAA State championship embodied 3 years of frustration, hard work, and determination bursting forth into a singular moment of athletic perfection and teamwork.

With a 32–0 record, the Lady Cherokees became only the third girls' basketball team in the last decade to complete a perfect season. Additionally, the team's seniors completed their high school career with an astonishing 121–5 record.

I cannot put into words the amount of pride that everyone in Columbus, and indeed in the Second Congressional District, has in being able to call this outstanding group of young women its own. They have accomplished a special goal, one that could not have been possible without the unrelenting support and encouragement from their coach, Sterling Hicks, as well as their families, schoolmates, and everyone in the community who believed in their ability to bring home a State championship trophy.

Madam Speaker, these special young women have worked hard, persevered, made sacrifices, and developed the character that will help them to succeed in other aspects of life.

I am proud to represent them and once again congratulate them on their history-making achievement.

EQUAL PAY DAY

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, today, on Equal Pay Day, Americans are reminded of how far we have to go in order to eliminate pay inequity between men and women in the United States. While our Nation has made many strides in the fight against discrimination, the struggle for equal pay for equal work continues. On this day, we remind ourselves that much more work needs to be done.

Women have seen recent success shattering a number of glass ceilings within the ranks of corporate and government leadership. Yet the fact is that American women are still only being paid 77 cents for every dollar that their male counterparts earn with the same education, training, and experience. Any wage gap based on sex is unacceptable. The current one is staggering. As pay equity advocate Evelyn Murphy has calculated, the current wage gap means a woman with a high school education will lose $700,000 over her lifetime. A woman with a college education will lose $1.2 million over her lifetime. And a woman with a professional degree will lose $2 million over her lifetime.

But unequal pay not only surfaces in workers' weekly paychecks, it also harms workers' retirement and health care security. Its sheer irrationality hinders the American economy as a whole. In the new global economy, those who stand in the way of equal pay are tying one hand behind America's back. Holding women back not only hurts workers, it's bad for business.

And even where progress is made on the most insidious forms of intentional discrimination, reactionaries are still trying to roll back these protections. Just last year, the Supreme Court did precisely that in the case of Ledbetter v. Goodyear. Lilly Ledbetter worked for nearly two decades at the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company plant in Alabama. She sued the company soon after learning that she was paid less than her male counterparts. A jury found that her employer had unlawfully discriminated against her on the basis of sex.

But, five members of the United States Supreme Court rejected longstanding law and said that Lilly Ledbetter did not file a complaint quickly enough, nullifying the jury's verdict. In fact, Ms. Ledbetter filed her complaint as soon as she learned of the pay discrepancy through an anonymous note in her mailbox.

However, the Supreme Court ruled that the clock on filing started to run when the employer made its discriminatory pay decisions, decisions which the employer effectively hid by explicitly forbidding anyone to discuss their pay. So despite finding that Ms. Ledbetter was unlawfully paid less than her male counterparts, she could not recover anything. The company that paid her less just because she was a woman owed her nothing. A slim majority of the Supreme Court shunned reason in order to satisfy its own narrow ideological agenda.

I am proud to say that just months after the ruling the House of Representatives repudiated the Supreme Court's decision by passing the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which would restore workers' right to challenge discriminatory paychecks.

Today should serve as a call to action to end the pay inequity that half of our country's workforce continues to endure. The Senate should pass and the President should sign the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. And the Congress should take up additional legislation to strengthen the Equal Pay Act.

I urge my colleagues to recommit themselves to the fight for equal pay. The wage gap between men and women must disappear. And the Congress has a very clear role to play in that effort.

TRIBUTE TO CHIEF JUSTICE SUE BELL COBB

HON. ROBERT E. (BUD) CRAMER, JR.

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. CRAMER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the distinguished career of Chief Justice Sue Bell Cobb.

On April 12th, Justice Cobb was honored with the Albert P. Brewer Award for outstanding public service to the State of Alabama.

Chief Justice Cobb has dedicated over 27 years of her life to serving the people of the State of Alabama. She began her service as Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court in 2007.

Throughout her career, Justice Cobb has made protecting our Nation's children one of her highest priorities. She has served as the President of the Alabama Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and the Chairwoman of the Children First Foundation. For her efforts, Justice Cobb has been recognized by the Child Welfare League of America and the National Juvenile Detention Association.

Additionally, Justice Cobb has been an advocate for the American Cancer Society. She has served as the Chairwoman of the Alabama Division of the American Cancer Society and has been named as the Volunteer of the Year by that organization. Additionally, she has been awarded the St. George Medal, the highest national award given by the American Cancer Society.

I applaud Justice Sue Bell Cobb on her outstanding judicial career and I thank her for her tireless efforts on behalf of the men and women of the State of Alabama.

RECOGNIZING THE TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY GYMNASTICS TEAM

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Texas Woman's University Pioneers gymnastics team on winning first place at the 2008 USA Gymnastics Women's Collegiate National Championship in Shreveport, Louisiana. Through a show of dedication, passion and solidarity, the Pioneers secured the USAG National Title on Friday, April 18, 2008.

The Texas Woman's University Pioneers rallied dramatically to come from behind and win the National Title. Their score of 194.700 was not only sufficient to clinch first place, but was also the team's highest score of the season. Additionally, many members of the team met or exceeded their personal best scores in the individual events.

The Pioneers seized their first USAG National Title in 1993, with additional wins in 1994, 1995, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2003, and 2006. Their success at the 2008 USA Gymnastics Women's Collegiate National Championship gives them a total of nine National Titles in the last 16 years.

Many titles and awards have been awarded to the team as a result of their hard work and dedication, as well as the support and guidance of head coach Frank Kudlac, Assistant Coaches Lisa Klein and Tim Rivera, Graduate Assistant Gretchen Goerlitz, and Trainer Kris Ring.

TWU team members Courtney Arno-Templet, Jennifer Kingsbury, Nicole Poling, Michelle Graves, Alexa Brennan, Keri Miller, Leslie Pladson, Amie Boles, Amy Hulbert, Brista Michael, Kelsey Nixon, Brittany Parker, Tonya Pipkorn, Abbi Thomas, Mollie Blessing, Kristie Costa, Caroline Hilpisch, Jennifer Liberato, Lauren Sizemore, and Amanda Walker have carried on the Pioneer's legacy of excellence, and are outstanding representatives of their school and the community.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to heartily applaud the efforts and success of the Texas Woman's University gymnastics team. Their legacy of hard work and excellence shall continue to inspire others to go after their dreams. I am extremely honored to represent these fine young individuals in the 26th District of Texas, and I am confident that they will continue to achieve greatness in future endeavors.

OBSERVANCE OF EQUAL PAY DAY

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, today, as we observe Equal Pay Day, I rise with my colleagues and professional women everywhere to say: Women are the face of pay equity.

The Census Bureau reports that, on average, a woman earns 77 cents for every dollar earned by a man. More simply, I would have been working since the beginning of the year to earn the same annual salary as a man who started today, April 22.

Equal pay is not solely a women's issue, it's a family issue; when women aren't paid equally, their families pay the price. There are long-term consequences too: lower pay means less Social Security and less saved for retirement.

We have talked for years about closing the wage gap, now we must act. Today I was added as the 227th cosponsor of the Paycheck Fairness Act, joining more than half of this body who believes it is time to eliminate gender-based wage discrimination once and for all.

Congresswoman DELAURO's bill, which she has introduced for the last eight years, strengthens enforcement of the Equal Pay Act while providing businesses with training and resources to ensure they're in compliance.

Madam Speaker, since the Equal Pay Act was passed in 1963, we have made great strides. Wages for women are up, and the pay gap has narrowed, but the gap is still far too wide, and women and their families are paying a terrible price.

This is my first year, and my first Equal Pay Day, as a member of this House. I genuinely look forward to a time when I don't need to remind Americans that Women are the face of pay equity.

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S3213–S3271

Measures Introduced: Three bills and five resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2898–2900, and S. Res. 524–528. **Page S3257**

Measures Reported:

S. 1046, to modify pay provisions relating to certain senior-level positions in the Federal Government. (S. Rept. No. 110–328)

Report to accompany S. 1551, to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to making progress toward the goal of eliminating tuberculosis. (S. Rept. No. 110–329)

S. 1853, to promote competition, to preserve the ability of local governments to provide broadband capability and services, with amendments. (S. Rept. No. 110–330)

H. Con. Res. 307, expressing the sense of Congress that Members' Congressional papers should be properly maintained and encouraging Members to take all necessary measures to manage and preserve these papers.

S. Res. 497, expressing the sense of the Senate that public servants should be commended for their dedication and continued service to the Nation during Public Service Recognition Week, May 5 through 11, 2008.

S. 431, to require convicted sex offenders to register online identifiers, with amendments. **Page S3254**

Measures Passed:

Recognizing 60th Anniversary of the Founding of the Modern State of Israel: Committee on Foreign Relations was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 522, recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S3267**

National Community Health Aide, Community Health Practitioner, and Dental Health Aide Week: Senate agreed to S. Res. 526, designating April 20 through 26, 2008, as "National Community Health Aide, Community Health Practitioner, and Dental Health Aide Week". **Pages S3267–68**

National Adopt A Library Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 527, designating April 23, 2008, as "National Adopt a Library Day". **Page S3268**

Global Youth Service Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 528, designating April 25, 2008, as "Global Youth Service Day". **Pages S3268–69**

E. Arthur Gray Post Office Building: Senate passed H.R. 3196, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 20 Sussex Street in Port Jervis, New York, as the "E. Arthur Gray Post Office Building", clearing the measure for the President. **Page S3269**

Dr. Clifford Bell Jones, Sr. Post Office: Senate passed H.R. 3468, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1704 Weeksville Road in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, as the "Dr. Clifford Bell Jones, Sr. Post Office", clearing the measure for the President. **Page S3269**

Private Johnathon Millican Lula Post Office: Senate passed H.R. 3532, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 5815 McLeod Street in Lula, Georgia, as the "Private Johnathon Millican Lula Post Office", clearing the measure for the President. **Page S3269**

Army PFC Juan Alonso Covarrubias Post Office Building: Senate passed H.R. 3720, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 424 Clay Avenue in Waco, Texas, as the "Army PFC Juan Alonso Covarrubias Post Office Building", clearing the measure for the President. **Page S3270**

John Henry Wooten, Sr. Post Office Building: Senate passed H.R. 3803, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3100 Cashwell Drive in Goldsboro, North Carolina, as the "John Henry Wooten, Sr. Post Office Building", clearing the measure for the President. **Page S3270**

Sgt. Jason Harkins Post Office Building: Senate passed H.R. 3936, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 116 Helen Highway in Cleveland, Georgia, as the "Sgt. Jason

Harkins Post Office Building'', clearing the measure for the President. **Page S3270**

Master Sergeant Kenneth N. Mack Post Office Building: Senate passed H.R. 3988, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3701 Altamesa Boulevard in Fort Worth, Texas, as the ''Master Sergeant Kenneth N. Mack Post Office Building'', clearing the measure for the President. **Page S3270**

Steve W. Allee Carrier Annex: Senate passed H.R. 4166, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 701 East Copeland Drive in Lebanon, Missouri, as the ''Steve W. Allee Carrier Annex'', clearing the measure for the President. **Page S3270**

Specialist Jamaal RaShard Addison Post Office Building: Senate passed H.R. 4203, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3035 Stone Mountain Street in Lithonia, Georgia, as the ''Specialist Jamaal RaShard Addison Post Office Building'', clearing the measure for the President. **Page S3270**

Judge Richard B. Allsbrook Post Office: Senate passed H.R. 4211, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 725 Roanoke Avenue in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, as the ''Judge Richard B. Allsbrook Post Office'', clearing the measure for the President. **Page S3270**

Felix Sparks Post Office Building: Senate passed H.R. 4240, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 10799 West Alameda Avenue in Lakewood, Colorado, as the ''Felix Sparks Post Office Building'', clearing the measure for the President. **Page S3270**

Iraq and Afghanistan Fallen Military Heroes of Louisville Memorial Post Office Building: Senate passed H.R. 4454, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3050 Hunsinger Lane in Louisville, Kentucky, as the ''Iraq and Afghanistan Fallen Military Heroes of Louisville Memorial Post Office Building'', in honor of the servicemen and women from Louisville, Kentucky, who died in service during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, clearing the measure for the President. **Page S3270**

Sergeant Jamie O. Maugans Post Office Building: Senate passed H.R. 5135, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 201 West Greenway Street in Derby, Kansas, as the ''Sergeant Jamie O. Maugans Post Office Building'', clearing the measure for the President. **Page S3270**

Major Arthur Chin Post Office Building: Senate passed H.R. 5220, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3800 SW. 185th Avenue in Beaverton, Oregon, as the ''Major Arthur Chin Post Office Building'', clearing the measure for the President. **Page S3270**

Sgt. Michael M. Kashkoush Post Office Building: Senate passed H.R. 5400, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 160 East Washington Street in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, as the ''Sgt. Michael M. Kashkoush Post Office Building'', clearing the measure for the President. **Page S3270**

Julia M. Carson Post Office Building: Senate passed H.R. 5472, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2650 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street, Indianapolis, Indiana, as the ''Julia M. Carson Post Office Building'', clearing the measure for the President. **Page S3270**

Congresswoman Jo Ann S. Davis Post Office: Senate passed H.R. 5489, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 6892 Main Street in Gloucester, Virginia, as the ''Congresswoman Jo Ann S. Davis Post Office'', clearing the measure for the President. **Page S3270**

Measures Considered:

Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act: Senate resumed consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans. **Pages S3221–27, S3227–33, S3233–48**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By a unanimous vote of 94 yeas (Vote No. 109), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, having voted in the affirmative, Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill. **Page S3225**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at approximately 6:00 p.m., on Wednesday, April 23, 2008, the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill be agreed to. **Pages S3270–71**

Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at approximately 5:00 p.m., on Wednesday, April 23, 2008, Senate resume consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 2831, to amend title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to clarify that a discriminatory compensation decision or other practice that is unlawful under such Acts occurs each time compensation is paid pursuant to the discriminatory compensation decision or other practice, and that the

time until 6:00 p.m. be equally divided and controlled between the Majority and Republican Leaders, or their designees; provided further, that at 6:00 p.m., Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill, and that all time during any adjournment, recess or morning business count against cloture.

Pages S3270–71

Messages from the House: Pages S3251–52

Executive Communications: Page S3252

Petitions and Memorials: Pages S3252–54

Executive Reports of Committees: Pages S3254–57

Additional Cosponsors: Pages S3257–59

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: Pages S3259–63

Additional Statements: Page S3251

Amendments Submitted: Pages S3263–66

Notices of Hearings/Meetings: Page S3266

Authorities for Committees to Meet: Page S3266

Privileges of the Floor: Pages S3266–67

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—109) Page S3225

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 7:24 p.m., until 5 p.m. on Wednesday, April 23, 2008. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S3271.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

CREDIT RATING AGENCIES

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine United States credit markets, focusing on the role of the credit rating agencies, after receiving testimony from former Representative Christopher Cox, Chairman, United States Securities and Exchange Commission; and John C. Coffee, Jr., Columbia University Law School, Arturo Cifuentes, R.W. Pressprich and Company, Stephen W. Joynt, Fitch Ratings, Inc., Claire Robinson, Moody's Investors Service, and Vickie A. Tillman, Standard and Poor's, all of New York, New York.

FUTURE OF THE INTERNET

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the future of the internet, after receiving testimony from Kevin J. Martin, Chairman, Federal Communications Commission; Michele Combs, Christian Coalition of America, Robert W. Hahn, American Enterprise Institute Center for Regulatory and Market Studies, and Kyle McSlarrow, National Cable and Telecommunications Association, all of Washington, D.C.; Patric M. Verrone, Writers Guild of America, West, Los Angeles, California; Justine Bateman, FM78.tv, Studio City, California; and Lawrence Lessig, Stanford Law School, Stanford, California.

FUTURE OF TRANSPORTATION

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission, focusing its report on the future of the surface transportation system in the United States, after receiving testimony from Frank J. Busalacchi, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Madison; Jack Schenendorf, Covington and Burling, Washington, D.C.; and Steve Heminger, Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Oakland, California, Matthew K. Rose, BNSF Railway Company, Fort Worth, Texas, and Patrick E. Quinn, U.S. Xpress Enterprises, Inc., Chattanooga, Tennessee, all on behalf of the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission.

LAND BILLS

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests concluded a hearing to examine S. 934 and H.R. 1374, bills to amend the Florida National Forest Land Management Act of 2003 to authorize the conveyance of an additional tract of National Forest System land under that Act, S. 2833, to provide for the management of certain public land in Owyhee County, Idaho, and S. 2834, to establish wilderness areas, promote conservation, and improve public land in Washington County, Utah, after receiving testimony from Senators Bennett and Crapo; Julie Jacobson, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Land and Minerals Management; Joel Holtrop, Deputy Chief, National Forest System, Forest Service, Department of Agriculture; James J. Eardley, Washington County, Saint George, Utah; William H. Meadows, Washington, D.C., and Craig Gehrke, Boise, Idaho, both of the Wilderness Society; and Chad C. Gibson, Owyhee Cattlemen's Association, Wilder, Idaho.

INTERNATIONAL DEFORESTATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Committee on Foreign Relations: Subcommittee on International Development and Foreign Assistance, Economic Affairs and International Environmental

Protection concluded a hearing to examine international deforestation and climate change, after receiving testimony from Stuart E. Eizenstat, Covington and Burling, LLP, David Hayes, former Deputy Secretary, Department of the Interior, and Dirk Forrister, Natsource LLC, all of Washington, D.C.; and Kevin Gurney, Purdue University Climate Change Research Center (PCCRC), West Lafayette, Indiana.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee ordered favorably reported the following:

H.R. 3320, to provide assistance for the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw, Poland, with an amendment;

S. Con. Res. 74, honoring the Prime Minister of Ireland, Bertie Ahern, for his service to the people of Ireland and to the world and welcoming the Prime Minister to the United States;

S. Res. 494, expressing the sense of the Senate on the need for Iraq's neighbors and other international partners to fulfill their pledges to provide reconstruction assistance to Iraq, with an amendment;

S. Res. 523, expressing the strong support of the Senate for the declaration of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization at the Bucharest Summit that Ukraine and Georgia will become members of the alliance;

The Protocol of Amendments to the Convention on International Hydrographic Organization done at Monaco on April 14, 2005 (Treaty Doc. 110–09); and

The nominations of Mark Kimmitt, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Political-Military Affairs), Barbara McConnell Barrett, of Arizona, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Finland, Frank Charles Urbancic, Jr., of Indiana, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Cyprus, Kurt Douglas Volker, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Permanent Representative on the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, with the rank and status of Ambassador, Nancy E. McEldowney, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Bulgaria, Scot A. Marciel, of California, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Affairs, Patricia M. Haslach, of Oregon, for the rank of Ambassador during her tenure of service as United States Senior Coordinator for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum, William Edward Todd, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to Brunei Darussalam, D. Kathleen Stephens, of Montana, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Korea, Joxel Garcia, of Connecticut, to be Medical Director in the Regular Corps of the Public Health Service, subject to the qualifications therefor as provided by law and regulations, and to be an Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services, Robert J. Callahan, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Nicaragua, Peter E. Cianchette, of Maine, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Costa Rica, Heather M. Hodges, of Ohio, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Ecuador, Hugo Llorens, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Honduras, Stephen George McFarland, of Texas, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Guatemala, Samuel W. Speck, of Ohio, to be a Commissioner on the part of the United States on the International Joint Commission, United States and Canada, Barbara J. Stephenson, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Panama, and Yousif Boutrous Ghafari, of Michigan, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Slovenia, and a promotion list in the Foreign Service.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee held closed hearings on intelligence matters, receiving testimony from officials of the intelligence community.

Committee recessed subject to the call.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 19 public bills, H.R. 5856–5874; and 8 resolutions, H. Res. 1124, 1127–1133 were introduced.

Pages H2551–53

Additional Cosponsors: Pages H2553–54

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 900, to provide for a federally sanctioned self-determination process for the people of Puerto Rico, with an amendment (H. Rept. 110–597);

H.R. 5151, to designate as wilderness additional National Forest System lands in the Monongahela National Forest in the State of West Virginia, with an amendment (H. Rept. 110–598, Pt. 1);

H.R. 5712, to require disclosure by Federal contractors of certain violations relating to the award or

performance of Federal contracts, with an amendment (H. Rept. 110–599);

H.R. 5613, to extend certain moratoria and impose additional moratoria on certain Medicaid regulations through April 1, 2009, with amendments (H. Rept. 110–600);

H.R. 5522, to require the Secretary of Labor to issue interim and final occupational safety and health standards regarding worker exposure to combustible dust, with an amendment (H. Rept. 110–601);

H.R. 3032, to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to permit candidates for election for Federal office to designate an individual who will be authorized to disburse funds of the authorized campaign committees of the candidate in the event of the death of the candidate, with an amendment (H. Rept. 110–602);

H. Res. 1125, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5819) to amend the Small Business Act to improve the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program and the Small Business Technology transfer (STTR) program (H. Rept. 110–603); and

H. Res. 1126, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2830) to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal year 2008 (H. Rept. 110–604). **Page H2551**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein she appointed Representative Cohen to act as Speaker Pro Tempore for today. **Page H2491**

Recess: The House recessed at 12:42 p.m. and reconvened at 2:00 p.m. **Page H2494**

Member Resignation: Read a letter from Representative Wynn, wherein he resigned as Representative for the 4th Congressional District of Maryland, effective 11:59 p.m. EST, May 31, 2008. **Page H2495**

Commission on Children and Disasters—Appointment: Read a letter from Representative Boehner, Minority Leader, in which he appointed the following individuals to the Commission on Children and Disasters: Dr. David Schonfeld of Glendale, Ohio and Mr. Lawrence E. Tan of Newark, Delaware. **Page H2495**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Copper Salmon Wilderness Act: H.R. 3513, amended, to amend the Oregon Wilderness Act of 1984 to designate the Copper Salmon Wilderness and to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate segments of the North and South Forks of the Elk River in the State of Oregon as wild or scenic rivers; **Pages H2496–97**

Wild Monongahela Act: A National Legacy for West Virginia's Special Places: H.R. 5151, amended, to designate as wilderness additional National Forest System lands in the Monongahela National Forest in the State of West Virginia, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 368 yeas to 17 nays, Roll No. 206; **Pages H2497–99, H2531**

Coffman Cove Administrative Site Conveyance Act of 2008: H.R. 831, amended, to provide for the conveyance of certain Forest Service land to the city of Coffman Cove, Alaska, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 382 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 207; **Pages H2499–H2500, H2531–32**

Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area Act: H.R. 3734, to rename the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area in the State of Idaho as the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area in honor of the late Morley Nelson, an international authority on birds of prey, who was instrumental in the establishment of this National Conservation Area; **Pages H2500–01**

Expressing Congressional support for the goals and ideals of National Health Care Decisions Day: H. Con. Res. 323, to express Congressional support for the goals and ideals of National Health Care Decisions Day; **Pages H2501–02**

Recognizing March 6, 2008, as the first-ever World Glaucoma Day: H. Res. 981, amended, to recognize March 6, 2008, as the first-ever World Glaucoma Day, established to increase awareness of glaucoma, which is the second leading cause of preventable blindness in the United States and worldwide, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 387 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 205; **Pages H2508–10, H2530–31**

Recognizing 2008 as the International Year of the Reef: H. Res. 1112, to recognize 2008 as the International Year of the Reef; **Pages H2510–12**

Celebrating 35 years of space-based observations of the Earth by the Landsat spacecraft: H. Res. 891, amended, to celebrate 35 years of space-based observations of the Earth by the Landsat spacecraft and to look forward to sustaining the longest unbroken record of civil Earth observations of the land; **Pages H2512–13**

Honoring the life and achievements of John Archibald Wheeler and expressing condolences on his passing: H. Res. 1118, to honor the life and achievements of John Archibald Wheeler and to express condolences on his passing; and **Pages H2513–15**

Declaring the support of the House of Representatives for the goals and ideals of Earth Day for developing the scientific and technological capabilities to achieve those goals: H. Res. 1117, to declare the support of the House of Representatives for the

goals and ideals of Earth Day and for developing the scientific and technological capabilities to achieve those goals. **Pages H2528–30**

Recess: The House recessed at 4:54 p.m. and reconvened at 5:22 p.m. **Page H2528**

Recess: The House recessed at 5:35 p.m. and reconvened at 6:30 p.m. **Page H2530**

Suspensions—Proceedings Postponed: The House debated the following measures under suspension of the rules. Further proceedings were postponed until Wednesday, April 23rd:

Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008: H.R. 5613, amended, to extend certain moratoria and impose additional moratoria on certain Medicaid regulations through April 1, 2009 and **Pages H2502–08**

Recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel: H. Con. Res. 322, to recognize the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and to reaffirm the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel. **Pages H2515–27**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on page H2495.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Three yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H2530–31, H2531, and H2531–32. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 12:30 p.m. and adjourned at 9:58 p.m.

Committee Meetings

FDA FOREIGN DRUG INSPECTION

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled " FDA's Foreign Drug Inspection Program: Weaknesses Place Americans at Risk." Testimony was heard from Andrew C. von Eschenbach, M.D., Commissioner FDA; Department of Health and Human Services; Marcia G. Crosse, Director, Health Care, GAO; Carl R. Nielsen, former Director, Office of Regulatory Affairs, Division of Import Operations, FDA, Department of Health and Human Services; and public witnesses.

PRISON ABUSE REMEDIES ACT OF 2007

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security held a hearing on H.R. 4109, Prison Abuse Remedies Act of 2007. Testimony was heard from Sarah V. Hart, Assistant District Attorney, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Jeanne S. Woodford, Chief Adult Probation Officer, City and County, San Francisco, California and former Warden, San Quentin State Prison; and public witnesses.

COMMITTEE MEETING COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2007

Committee on Rules: Granted by voice vote, a structured rule providing for consideration of H.R. 2830, the "Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2007." The rule provides one hour of general debate, with 40 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Homeland Security.

The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. In lieu of the amendments in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, Homeland Security, and the Judiciary now printed in the bill, the rule provides that the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in part A of the Rules Committee report shall be an original bill for the purpose of amendment. The rule provides that the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in part A of the Committee report shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in part A of the Committee report except those arising under clause 10 of rule XXI. This does not affect the point of order available under clause 9 of rule XXI (regarding earmark disclosure).

The rule makes in order only those further amendments printed in part B of the Rules Committee report. The amendments made in order may be offered only in the order printed in the Rules Committee report, may be offered only by a Member designated in this report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in this report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for a division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. The rule waives all points of order against the amendments except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI.

The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. In addition, in the engrossment of H.R. 2830, the Clerk IS directed to add at the end the text of H.R. 2399, the "Alien Smuggling and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007," as it

passed the House. The rule provides that, notwithstanding the operation of the previous question, the Chair may postpone further consideration to a time designated by the Speaker. Finally, the rule authorizes the chairman of the Judiciary Committee to file a supplemental report on H.R. 2830. Testimony was heard from Chairwoman Velázquez and Representatives Wu, Welch of Vermont, Sutton, Foster, Chabot, aud Ehlers.

REAUTHORIZING—SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION AND SMALL BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER PROGRAMS

Committee on Rules: Granted, by voice vote, a structured rule providing for consideration of H.R. 5819, the ''SBIR/STTR Reauthorization Act.'' The rule provides one hour of general debate, with 40 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Small Business and 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Science and Technology.

The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill except clauses 9 and 10 of Rule XXI. The rule provides that the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Small Business now printed in the bill shall be considered as an original bill for the purpose of amendment and shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against the amendment in the nature of a substitute except for clause 10 of rule XXI.

The rule makes in order only those amendments printed in the Rules Committee report. The amendments made in order may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for a division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against the amendments except for clauses 9 and 10 of rule XXI are waived. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. The rule provides that, notwithstanding the operation of the previous question, the Chair may postpone further consideration of the bill to a time designated by the Speaker. Testimony was heard from Chairman Oberstar and Chairman Thompson and Representatives Cummings, Cuellar, Clay, Bordallo, LaTourette, Poe, Boustany, Bilirakis, Chabot, and Kirk.

Joint Meetings

FARM BILL EXTENSION ACT

Conferees met to resolve the differences between the Senate and House passed versions of H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, but did not complete action thereon, and recessed subject to the call.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2008

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Defense, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2009 for the Missile Defense Agency, 10:30 a.m., SD–192.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: to hold hearings to examine phantom traffic, 2:30 p.m., SR–253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on National Parks, to hold hearings to examine S. 662, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to evaluate resources at the Harriet Beecher Stowe House in Brunswick, Maine, to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing the site as a unit of the National Park System, S. 827, to establish the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area in the States of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, S. 923 and H.R. 1528, bills to amend the National Trails System Act to designate the New England National Scenic Trail, S. 956, to establish the Land Between the Rivers National Heritage Area in the State of Illinois, S. 2073, to amend the National Trails System Act relating to the statute of limitations that applies to certain claims, S. 2513, to modify the boundary of the Minute Man National Historical Park, S. 2604, to establish the Baltimore National Heritage Area in the State of Maryland, S. 2804, to adjust the boundary of the Everglades National Park, H.R. 53, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to enter into a long-term lease with the Government of the United States Virgin Islands to provide land on the island of Saint John, Virgin Islands, for the establishment of a school, and H.R. 1483, to amend the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 to extend the authorization for certain national heritage areas, 3 p.m., SD–366.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine the crisis in Darfur, 9:30 a.m., SD–419.

Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, to hold hearings to examine the crisis in Tibet, focusing on a path to peace, 2:30 p.m., SD–419.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Nanci E. Langley, of Virginia, to be a Commissioner of the Postal Regulatory Commission, 2:30 p.m., SD–342.

Committee on the Judiciary: to hold hearings to examine National Security Letters, focusing on the need for greater accountability and oversight, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: to continue oversight hearings to examine Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense cooperation and collaboration, 9:30 a.m., SR–418.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Defense/Select Intelligence Oversight Panel, executive, on the National Security Agency, 5 p.m., H–140 Capitol.

Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, on Department of Housing and Urban Development—Status of Project-Based Section 8 Program, 10 a.m., and 1 p.m., 2358–A Rayburn.

Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing on challenges associated with achieving full dental readiness in the reserve component, 2:30 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Committee on Education and Labor, Subcommittee on Workforce Protections, hearing on Improving Workplace Safety: Strengthening OSHA Enforcement of Multi-Site Employers, 11:30 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health, to mark up the following bills: H.R. 1343, Health Centers Renewal Act of 2007; H.R. 5669, Poison Center Support, Enhancement, and Awareness Act of 2008; H.R. 1553, Conquer Childhood Cancer Act of 2007; and H.R. 3112, Prenatally Diagnosed Condition Awareness Act of 2007, 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, to consider the following H.R. 5818, Neighborhood Stabilization Act of 2008; and pending Committee business, 12 p.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, hearing on Foreign Assistance Reform in the Next Administration: Challenges and Solutions, 9:30 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment, hearing on A New Beginning for the U.S.-South Korea Strategic Alliance, 2 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Europe, hearing on the Bucharest Summit and the Way Forward for NATO, 1 p.m., 2200 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, hearing entitled "Moving Beyond the First Five Years: Improving the Functionality, Governance, and Accountability of the Department of Homeland Security," 10 a.m., 311 Cannon.

Committee on the Judiciary,, oversight hearing on the FBI, 10:15 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, to consider H.R. 2801, Izembek and Alaska Peninsula Refuge and Wilderness Enhancement and King Cove Safe Access Act, 11 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans, to markup the following bills: H.R. 21, Oceans Conservation, Education, and National Strategy for the 21st Century Act; H.R. 2964, Captive Primate Safety Act; H.R. 5534, Bear Protection Act of 2008; and H.R. 5618, National Sea Grant College Program Amendments Act of 2008, 2 p.m., 1324 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Water and Power, to markup the following bills: H.R. 2649, To make amendments to the Reclamation Project Authorization and Adjustment Act of 1992; H.R. 3323, Goleta Water Distribution System Conveyance Act of 2007; and H.R. 4841, Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians Settlement Act, 2 p.m., 1334 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, hearing on Domestic Abstinence-Only Programs: Assessing the Evidence, 10 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census, and National Archives, hearing on H.R. 5811, Electronic Communications Preservation Act, 2 p.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Science and Technology, hearing on Opportunities and Challenges for Nuclear Power, 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, Subcommittee on Regulations, Health Care and Trade, hearing entitled "Minority and Hispanic Participation in the Federal Workforce and the Impact on the Small Business Community," 12 p.m., 1539 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Aviation, hearing on the Reauthorization of the National Transportation Safety Board, 2 p.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Railroad, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials, hearing on Rail Capacity, 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, to mark up the following bills: H.R. 5684, Veterans Education Improvement Act of 2008; H.R. 4884, Helping Our Veterans to Keep Their Homes Act of 2008; H.R. 4883, To amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to provide for a limitation on the sale, foreclosure, or seizure of property owned by a servicemember during the one-year period following the servicemember's period of military service; H.R. 4889, The Guard and Reserved Are Fighting Too Act of 2008; H.R. 3681, Veterans Benefits Awareness Act of 2007; H.R. 3889, To amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a longitudinal study of the vocational rehabilitation programs administered by the Secretary; H.R. 5664, To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to update at least once every six years the plans and specifications for specially adapted housing furnished to veterans by the Secretary; and H.R. 3467, Second Chance for America's Veterans Act, 1 p.m., 340 Cannon.

Subcommittee on Health, to mark up the following bills: H.R. 2790, To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish the position of Director of Physician Assistant Services within the office of the under Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Health; H.R. 3819, Veterans Emergency Care Fairness Act of 2007; H.R. 5729, Spina Bifida Health Care Program Expansion Act; H.R. 5554, Veterans Substance Use Disorders Prevention and Treatment Act of 2008; and H.R. 5856, Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Authorization and Lease Act of 2008, 2:30 p.m., 334 Cannon.

Committee on Ways and Means, hearing on Clearing the Disability Backlog, 10 a.m., 1100 Longworth.

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, executive, hearing on Fiscal Year 2009 Budget-Human Capital, 1 p.m., H–405 Capitol.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

5 p.m., Wednesday, April 23

Senate Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 2831, Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, and after 60 minutes of debate vote on motion to invoke cloture thereon.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Wednesday, April 23

House Chamber

Program or Wednesday Consideration of the following suspensions: (1) H.R. 5479—The ''Alonzo Woodruff Post Office Building'' Designation Act; (2) H.R. 5528—The ''Rocky Marciano Post Office Building'' Designation Act; (3) H.R. 5483—The ''Private First Class David H. Sharrett II Post Office Building'' Designation Act; (4) H.R. 3721—The ''Marine Gunnery Sgt. John D. Fry Post Office Building'' Designation Act; (5) H.R. 4185—The ''Marisol Heredia Post Office Building'' Designation Act; (6) H. Res. 1016—Expressing the condolences of the House of Representatives on the death of William F. Buckley, Jr.; (7) H.R. 3033—Contractors'and Federal Spending Accountability Act; (8) H.R. 5712—Close the Contractor Fraud Loophole Act. Consideration of H.R. 5819—SBIR/STTR Reauthorization Act (Subject to a Rule).

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