

theft is more effective in protecting the public than expanding the power of the federal police force. Federal punishment of identity thieves provides cold comfort to those who have suffered financial losses and the destruction of their good reputations as a result of identity theft.

Federal laws are not only ineffective in stopping, private criminals, but these laws have not even stopped unscrupulous government officials from accessing personal information. After all, laws purporting to restrict the use of personal information did not stop the well-publicized violations of privacy by IRS officials or the FBI abuses of the Clinton and Nixon administrations.

In one of the most infamous cases of identity theft, thousands of active-duty soldiers and veterans had their personal information stolen, putting them at risk of identity theft. Imagine the dangers if thieves are able to obtain the universal identifier, and other personal information, of millions of Americans simply by breaking, or hacking, into one government facility or one government database?

Second, the federal government has been creating proprietary interests in private information for certain state-favored special interests. Perhaps the most outrageous example of phony privacy protection is the "medical privacy" regulation, that allows medical researchers, certain business interests, and law enforcement officials access to health care information, in complete disregard of the Fifth Amendment and the wishes of individual patients! Obviously, "privacy protection" laws have proven greatly inadequate to protect personal information when the government is the one seeking the information.

Any action short of repealing laws authorizing privacy violations is insufficient primarily because the federal government lacks constitutional authority to force citizens to adopt a universal identifier for health care, employment, or any other reason. Any federal action that oversteps constitutional limitations violates liberty because it ratifies the principle that the federal government, not the Constitution, is the ultimate judge of its own jurisdiction over the people. The only effective protection of the rights of citizens is for Congress to follow Thomas Jefferson's advice and "bind (the federal government) down with the chains of the Constitution."

Madam Speaker, those members who are not persuaded by the moral and constitutional reasons for embracing the Identity Theft Prevention Act should consider the American people's opposition to national identifiers. The numerous complaints over the ever-growing uses of the Social Security number show that Americans want Congress to stop invading their privacy. Furthermore, according to a survey by the Gallup company, 91 percent of the American people oppose forcing Americans to obtain a universal health ID.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I once again call on my colleagues to join me in putting an end to the federal government's unconstitutional use of national identifiers to monitor the actions of private citizens. National identifiers threaten all Americans by exposing them to the threat of identity theft by private criminals and abuse of their liberties by public criminals, while diverting valuable law enforcement resources away from addressing real threats to public safety. In addition, national identifiers are incompatible with a limited, con-

stitutional government. I, therefore, hope my colleagues will join my efforts to protect the freedom of their constituents by supporting the Identity Theft Prevention Act.

HONORING BRIAN MICHAEL  
BIRCHLER

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 6, 2009*

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Brian Michael Birchler of Kansas City, Missouri. Brian 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 1261, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Brian has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the many years Brian 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 Brian Michael Birchler for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

TO REAUTHORIZE THE TROPICAL  
FOREST CONSERVATION ACT  
AND EXPAND THE PROGRAM TO  
INCLUDE THE CONSERVATION OF  
ALL FORESTS AND CORAL  
REEFS AND ASSOCIATED COAST-  
AL MARINE RESOURCES

**HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 6, 2009*

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, today I introduce a bill to reauthorize and expand Rob Portman's landmark legislation, the Tropical Forest Conservation Act. This reauthorization will help developing countries reduce foreign debt and provide comprehensive environmental preservation programs to protect forests and endangered marine habitats around the world.

Since enacted in 1998, Tropical Forest Conservation Act programs have generated more than \$162 million over 10 to 25 years to help conserve 50 million acres of tropical forests in Asia, the Caribbean, Central and South America. But the rate of deforestation continues to accelerate across the globe in all types of forests.

Similarly alarming is the rapid rate of coral reef and coastal exploitation. The burden of foreign debt falls especially hard on the smallest of nations, such as island nations in the Caribbean and Pacific. With few natural resources, these nations often resort to harvesting or otherwise exploiting coral reefs and other marine habitats to earn hard currency to service foreign debt. 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 Forest and Coral Conservation Act will credit qualified developing nations for each dollar spent on a comprehensive reef preservation or management program designed to protect these unique ecosystems from degradation. This legislation will make available resources for environmental stewardship that would otherwise be of the lowest priority in a developing country. It will reduce debt by investing locally in programs that will strengthen indigenous economies by creating long-term management policies that will preserve the natural resources upon which local commerce is based.

This legislation has enormous consequences for the existence of critical ecosystems, the health of our planet and the livelihoods of millions of people across the globe. I am proud to introduce the Forest and Coral Conservation Act with Representative ALCEE HASTINGS (D-FL), which will help preserve the world's most precious natural resources.

RECOGNIZING CONNIE PASQUA-  
LINO OF SPRING HILL, FLORIDA

**HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 6, 2009*

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Connie Pasqualino of Hernando County, Florida. Connie will do something later this year that all of us strive to do, but that very few of us will ever accomplish, celebrate her 100th birthday.

Connie Pasqualino was born June 28, 1909 in Brooklyn, New York. While she was never married and has no children, Connie did make a career in advertising, attending the Pratt Institute of Design in Brooklyn. In fact, Connie said her proudest moment was the day she graduated from school. Following school she went on to work at BBD and O Advertising Company. While she did not pursue a career in design, if she had it all to do over again she would have spent her career as a fashion designer.

As someone who lived in New York for many years, Connie remembers going to see the Pope perform Mass at Shea Stadium. She said that it was raining before he came onto the stage and as he came to the stage, the rain stopped and the sun shined brightly. She described it as a little miracle.

Although she has never met her, Mother Teresa is Connie's second cousin. Once, Connie and her family were going to visit Mother Teresa in New Jersey when she was visiting relatives there, but there was a blizzard and they had to cancel their trip.

Moving with her sister Nancy to Hernando County in 1990, Connie said she made the switch because of the great Florida weather. She and Nancy also lived with their sister Margaret, who was ill and needed extra care, and her nephew Joseph.

Today Connie lives in Hernando County near her centenarian sister, Nancy. She gets the most pleasure out of taking care of and playing with her pet Quaker parrot, named Jade. Connie's advice to young people is to listen to their parents' advice and get a good education.