IN HONOR OF DAVID PETERSON OF SARTELL MINNESOTA

HON. MICHIE BACHMANN
OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 9, 2009

Mrs. BACHMANN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of a true patriot, David Peterson, of Sartell, Minnesota. David is a City Councilman, community leader, attorney, husband and father. And, he is about to make his first deployment to Iraq as a Captain with the Minnesota National Guard's 34th Infantry Division.

Even a quick glimpse at David Peterson's life reveals the heart of a true citizen. An attorney by profession, David has worked in legal aid services as a prosecutor, and in the civil division of the Stearns County Attorney's office. He will use that training as a JAG officer during his deployment.

His long and strong history of community leadership led him to run for City Council, and in January 2007, he was sworn into office. He will take a leave of absence from that position while he serves his fellow Minnesotans in Iraq.

Tonight in Sartell, David's friends and family and neighbors are meeting to wish him Godspeed as he prepares for his deployment. Along with the Sartell American Legion, the Mayor and City Council will present Captain David Peterson with a flag flown over the U.S. and Minnesota capitols and the Sartell City Hall. They've asked David to take it with him to Iraq and they will fly it again over the City Hall when he returns.

I join all of Sartell in our pride of this citizen-soldier, and I, too, wish him Godspeed and God's blessings on his journey.

RECOGNIZING MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY, PRESIDENTIAL AWARD FOR SERVICE WINNER

HON. MIKE ROGERS
OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 9, 2009

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Madam Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to Michigan State University for its selection as a recipient of the Presidential Award for General Community Service for nationwide interoperable communications. Finally, it will provide consumers with new and innovative commercial wireless services.

Unfortunately, we are not prepared for this transition. The prior administration assured the Committee on Energy and Commerce repeatedly that the transition effort was on track. But on December 24, 2008, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) notified Congress that the converter box coupon program would run out of funding the first week of January and that it would need an additional $250 million to $350 million to meet projected demand.

The DTV converter box coupon program is supposed to ease the financial burden of the transition. But it has ground to a halt. There are currently over 2 million households on the waiting list. In addition, the FCC has not adequately planned for call centers and other assistance for consumers who will face technical problems after the transition has occurred.

The President's transition team asked Congress to extend the deadline for a brief period. This is not a step that anyone wants to take. But we have no good alternative. Without a short, one-time extension, millions of households will lose all television reception.

The measure before us extends the date of the transition to June 12 and extends the coupon program date until July 31, 2009. It will also allow those who hold expired coupons—or never received their coupons because of problems with third-class mail—to reapply.

Moreover, the economic recovery package that the House passed last week includes $650 million to fix the coupon program and intensify consumer education and support. S. 352 also takes steps to lessen the impact on other affected parties, including public safety, broadcasters, and wireless licensees.

I am pleased that this bill has broad support in the public safety community, including the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials-International (APCO), the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), and the National Emergency Number Association (NENA). It has the support of the two biggest winners of spectrum that would be vacant after the DTV transition at AT&T and Verizon. It has the support of the National Association of Broadcasters, the major networks, and Unisource.

And, it has the support of a number of public
interest groups, including AARP, Consumer’s Union and the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights to name a few.

S. 352 gives the Obama administration the resources it has told us it needs to fix the coupon program and better prepare consumers for the transition.

Unfortunately, our time to act on the legislation is short. If we do not pass this measure it is likely that there will be no transition extension. We are less than 2 weeks away from the transition date. This bill must reach the President’s desk immediately or time will have run out for the administration to implement the changes necessary to fix the problems with the transition. I urge Members to support this bill.

TRIBUTE TO AMBASSADOR RICHARD SKLAR

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO
OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 9, 2009

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Richard Sklar . . . . Ambassador, engineer, business leader, innovator, negotiator, professor, politician’s negotiator, civic leader and public servant, winemaker, NFL fan, loyal friend to so many and most importantly, exceedingly proud husband, father and grandfather.

Dick Sklar passed away of pancreatic cancer at the age of 74 on January 29, 2009, at his home in San Francisco after watching with great satisfaction President Obama’s inauguration with his beloved wife Barbara by his side. Touchingly, his hometown newspaper, the San Francisco Chronicle noted, “his death came the day after he received the highest noncitizen medal of honor from the Republic of Montenegro, for his role in helping the new country achieve independence.”

Dick is survived by his wife Barbara, his daughters Pamela Ball of San Francisco, Karen Wong King of Santa Rosa, sons Mark Sklar of Phoenix and Eric Sklar of St. Helena, eight beautiful grandchildren, son-in-law John Sklar and daughters-in-law Erica and Marilyn Sklar. Dick was born on November 18, 1943 in Baltimore, Maryland. His father was an engineer and his family moved often while he was a young man. He was a graduate of Cornell University earning both a Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees in Engineering.

After serving in the United States Army, Dick founded and sold his first business, Allied Steel and Tractor Corporation, a Cleveland Ohio based manufacturing company. Cleveland is where he met the love of his life Barbara who is recognized in her own right as a brilliant artist and a civic leader.

Dick Sklar was a friend and a mentor to many in public service, from Mayors to Congressmen to Presidents. In 1976, Mayor Moscone recruited him to San Francisco to oversee the $1.5 billion sewer project program and the Yerba Buena Center known as the Moscone Center. At the time Dick began his service to the City, it was under a building ban for non-conformance. Senator Feinstein (then Mayor of San Francisco) appointed him to head the Public Utilities Commission. He was exceptionally successful in these projects and became known world wide as a leader who was pragmatic and fair, and who set aside bureaucratic nonsense, challenging those around him to think practically and strive for excellence and innovation in everything they did. Dick’s projects consistently came in under budget and ahead of schedule.

From 1983 to 1996, Dick served as President of O’Brien Kreitzberg and Associates (OKA). He developed the first integrated program management system now used industry-wide to track spending, measure progress and improve accountability on public construction projects. During his tenure with OKA, the company built ten airports, light rail lines in major cities in the U.S. and facilities for the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

In 1996, President Clinton wisely turned to Dick Sklar for help and appointed him first as Special Representative to the President in Bosnia after the Dayton Peace Accords. He then appointed him an Ambassador to the United Nations from 1997 to 1999 and lastly as Special Representative of the President for the Southeast Europe Initiative from 1999 to 2001. Dick led the extraordinary economic recovery effort in the Balkans in coordination with the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the European Union, focusing on industries critical to establishing a market economy to encourage investment.

After five years in Europe, Dick and Barbara came home to the Bay Area in 2001 and this time it was the Governor of California, Gray Davis, who needed his expertise to help with California’s energy crisis. Dick expedited construction of new power-generating facilities and helped keep the lights on for California. In recent years he consulted with transportation, engineering and construction firms in California and served as an advisor to the Prime Minister of Montenegro.

Dick Sklar was also known for his love of fine foods. He knew the menus of great restaurants around the world and could turn out great culinary delights out of his own kitchen. Scores of friends dined at his table in San Francisco, at his beloved home in the vineyard in Rutherford and at tables of restaurants around the world.

Madam Speaker, I ask the entire House of Representatives to join me in honoring the extraordinary life and accomplishments of Richard Sklar and extend our sympathy to the family he loved so much. His decades of contributions to his community and his country stand as lasting legacies of a life lived well. How privileged I am to have known this magnificent man and to have had him as one of my dearest friends. He made our world better by contributing to it in unique ways with an unmatched passion for justice, integrity and decency. Those of us who knew him and loved him will miss him deeply all the days of our lives, and his life instructs each of us on what it means to be a true patriot.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADAM SMITH
OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 9, 2009

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, due to events in my district, I was unable to vote on rolloff No. 53: On the motion to sus-