

biological corridors, NREPA connects the region's core wildlands into a functioning ecological whole. NREPA also creates jobs by putting people to work restoring the land in wildland restoration and recovery areas designated in the bill.

Finally, I want to be very clear about what NREPA doesn't do. NREPA does not impact private landowners. It impacts only federal public lands—lands owned by all Americans.

Some years ago, two NREPA supporters from Manhattan, Montana wrote to me and said "We feel that there is a little ray of hope for the incredible but dwindling wildlands we are so lucky to live near and love." All of us have a responsibility to sustain that hope.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, on Tuesday, February 10, 2009, I was not present for six recorded votes. Had I been present, I would have voted the following way: roll No. 54—"yea"; roll No. 55—"yea"; roll No. 56—"yea"; roll No. 57—"nay"; roll No. 58—"yea"; roll No. 59—"yea."

FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION ACT OF 2009

HON. MIKE PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, in October 2007, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the Free Flow of Information Act, legislation that would provide a qualified privilege to journalists to shield confidential sources from compelled disclosure by a federal court. I am pleased to join over 30 of my colleagues today in reintroducing that same legislation that previously garnered 398 votes here on the House floor. Today, we take up the mantle and renew the push to make this bill law.

I am honored to be joined by my distinguished colleague Congressman RICK BOUCHER, who is such a tireless advocate for the First Amendment. Also, we are pleased to have Chairman CONYERS and Reps. COBLE, WALDEN, BLUNT, GOODLATTE, LOFGREN, WEXLER, YARMUTH and many others as original cosponsors. This is truly a bipartisan issue. It is a First Amendment issue, and I thank these Members for their leadership. They are truly champions for a free press.

Enshrined in the First Amendment are these words: "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press."

As a conservative who believes in limited government, I know the only check on government power in real time is a free and independent press. The Free Flow of Information Act is not about protecting reporters; it is about protecting the public's right to know. Our Founders did not enshrine the freedom of the press in the Constitution because they got good press. And, I am certainly not advocating

a free and independent press because I always get good press.

We all remember when not long ago a confidential source brought to light abuses at the highest levels of government in the long national nightmare of Watergate. History records that W. Mark Felt never would have come forward without the assurance made to him of confidentiality.

But, thirty-plus years later the press cannot make that assurance to sources, and we face the real danger that there may never be another Deep Throat. The protections provided by the Free Flow of Information Act are necessary so that members of the media can bring forward information to the American public without fear of retribution or prosecution.

In recent years, we have famously seen reporters such as Judith Miller jailed and David Ashenfelter, Mark Fainaru-Wada and Lance Williams threatened with jail sentences. They are a few names among many who have been subpoenaed for taking a stand for the First Amendment and refusing to reveal confidential sources.

Compelling reporters to testify, and in particular, compelling them to reveal the identity of their confidential sources, is a detriment to the public interest. Without the promise of confidentiality, many important conduits of information about our government will be shut down. The dissemination of information by the media to the public on matters ranging from the operation of our government to events in our local communities is invaluable to the operation of our democracy. Without the free flow of information from sources to reporters, the public is ill-equipped to make informed decisions.

Thirty-six states and the District of Columbia have various statutes that protect reporters from being compelled to testify or disclose sources and information in court. Thirteen states have protections for reporters as a result of judicial decisions. The Free Flow of Information Act would set national standards similar to those that are in effect in the states.

The Free Flow of Information Act closely follows existing Department of Justice guidelines for issuing subpoenas to members of the news media. It simply makes the guidelines mandatory and provides protection against compelled disclosure of confidential sources. In doing so, this legislation strikes a balance between the public interest in the free flow of information against the public interest in compelling testimony in highly limited circumstances such as situations involving grave risk to national security or imminent threat of bodily harm.

Abraham Lincoln said, "Give the people the facts and the Republic will be saved." The Free Flow of Information Act is designed to ensure that the American people have the facts that they need to make choices as an informed electorate.

A free and independent press is the only agency in America that has complete freedom to hold government accountable. Integrity in government is not a Democratic or Republican issue, and corruption cannot be laid at the feet of one party. When scandal hits either party, any branch of government, or any institution in our society, it wounds our nation.

As a conservative, I believe that concentrations of power should be subject to great scrutiny. The longer I serve in Congress, the more firmly I believe in the wisdom of our Found-

ers—especially as it pertains to the First Amendment and freedom of the press. It is imperative that we preserve the transparency and integrity of American government, and the only way to do that is by preserving a free and independent press.

Thomas Jefferson warned that, "Our liberty cannot be guarded but by the freedom of the press, nor that limited without danger of losing it."

This Congress would be wise to take those words to heart. Now is the time to heed the advice of Mr. Jefferson.

I believe there are bipartisan majorities in the House and Senate sufficient to enact this bill this year. President Obama pledged his support for a federal media shield during his service in the Senate.

With the bipartisan support of my colleagues in Congress and the President, I believe the time has come to stitch this tear in the First Amendment freedom of the press.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, on February 10, 2009, I was unavoidably detained and was not able to record my vote for rollcall Nos. 54–56.

Had I been present I would have voted: rollcall No. 54—"yes"—On Motion to Instruct Conferees; rollcall No. 55—"yes"—Supporting the goals and ideals of "National Girls and Women in Sports Day"; rollcall No. 56—"yes"—Recognizing and commending University of Oklahoma quarterback Sam Bradford for winning the 2008 Heisman Trophy and for his academic and athletic accomplishments.

EARMARK REFORM

HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, on January 28, 2009, I introduced a resolution, H. Res. 100, to amend the Rules of the House of Representatives to provide for earmark reform. The bill that I introduced will not only promote accountability and transparency in Congress, but push its Members in a direction that better serves their constituents.

All too frequently, Congressional spending requests are funding embarrassing and unworthy projects. This institution has lost credibility because earmarks fund "monuments-to-me," bizarre private enterprises, or even projects to subsidize their family. This growing trend is unacceptable and, as guardians of taxpayer dollars, we owe it to the citizens of the United States to be good stewards of their money.

Congressional spending requests deserve to be scrutinized and publicly debated, that is why I introduced this commonsense approach to reform the earmark process. This resolution will prohibit earmarks from being used for non-public entities, except for institutions of higher education. Likewise, this bill will prohibit any earmark for any entity named after an individual serving in Congress, which will eliminate controversial "monuments-to-me."

With regard to Congressional spending requests, proper disclosure of earmarks has come to the forefront of this debate. In an effort to encourage accountability and transparency, this bill will also require Members of the House to disclose earmark requests within 24 hours to the Clerk of the House of Representatives. The Clerk will then be tasked with publicly posting all earmark requests on the website designated for the Office of the Clerk in a uniform and searchable format.

As a reflection of my own principles in government spending, I have also included a provision to require certification that non-federal recipients will provide matching funds of at least 10 percent of the earmark request. Recipients of federal funds are more likely to spend their federal financial support efficiently and effectively if they too have a vested interest in the final project.

Lastly, H. Res. 100 will require that Members requesting earmarked funds certify that no family member is a beneficiary of the funding. This earmark reform measure will bring an end to deplorable family payouts.

Earmark abuse not only wastes taxpayer money, but it also erodes the credibility of this legislative body. It is time for Congress to regain the trust of the American people and bring integrity back to Capitol Hill through substantive earmark reform.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RUBÉN HINOJOSA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Mr. HINOJOSA. Madam Speaker, I regret that I was unavoidably detained yesterday evening. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 57, 58, and 59.

IN RECOGNITION OF SHELLY O'NEILL STONEMAN

HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Mr. ROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the outstanding contributions and dedication of my Deputy Chief of Staff, Shelly O'Neill Stoneman, as she leaves my office to work in the Office of Legislative Affairs for President Barack Obama. Shelly served on my staff for more than 5 years, and during that time she advised me expertly on issues of defense and foreign policy. Shelly continuously demonstrated extraordinary intellect, grace under pressure, and the highest ethical and professional standards. Shelly's vast sphere of knowledge and her friendship will genuinely be missed in my office.

Shelly was born in Newport Beach, California, and later moved to Orlando, Florida where she attended Dr. Phillips High School. She attended Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York, and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science. She has also earned a Master of Arts in National Security Studies from the United States Naval War College, as well as a Master of Arts in International Relations from the University of Oklahoma's Program in Europe.

Prior to joining my office, Shelly worked as an intern in the White House Office of Legislative Affairs in 1997 during the Clinton Administration. This is the same office which Shelly will now be joining as a staffer within the Obama Administration. In 1999, Shelly joined the United States Senate Governmental Affairs Committee's Subcommittee on International Security, Proliferation, and Federal Services under Senator DANIEL AKAKA (D-HI), and later worked as a research consultant for the Small Arms Survey, evaluating the arms export control systems of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern European countries. Her previous experience has served her well and helped make her an extraordinarily effective member of my staff, and I know those same capabilities will serve her well in the White House.

While serving long hours as the brilliant Deputy Chief of Staff for my office, Shelly directed my legislative agenda and staffed me on the House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations, as well as the Subcommittee on Defense. In addition to her work within my office, Shelly founded the Democratic Legislative Directors Study Group, a wonderful support and networking system for Democratic senior staff on Capitol Hill.

Madam Speaker, over the past 5 years, my office has come to know Shelly O'Neill Stoneman well and we will remember her as a conscientious and dedicated colleague, a gifted writer, and a loyal friend to her fellow coworkers. Shelly is a passionate advocate for the protection of human rights and international aid, and has used her well-honed skills as a policy-maker to help ensure that these vital aspects of United States foreign policy are maintained. Throughout her tenure with my office, Shelly provided me with thoughtful and accurate counsel, which has allowed me to better serve the people of New Jersey's Ninth District. She is now, and forever, an honorary "Jersey Girl", and has my deep respect and appreciation for all of the contributions she has made to my office and the work she has done. While I will miss her dearly, I wish Shelly the very best and know that she has a bright future ahead of her. The White House is lucky to have her.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CONSUMER FAIRNESS ACT OF 2009

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to announce the introduction of my bill, the Consumer Fairness Act of 2009. In the last decade, too many of our nation's consumers have been subjected to abusive payday lending and increasingly relied on high-cost credit cards and predatory mortgage loans. To make matters worse, a consumer's ability to fight back against predatory lenders or to challenge unfair credit card fees and rates has been severely constrained by consumer contracts that require binding, mandatory arbitration to settle disputes between the borrower and the lender. We cannot allow these unfair practices to compound our economic challenges.

Mandatory arbitration clauses undermine existing consumer protections. They prohibit class action lawsuits by requiring consumers to waive their right to access a court of law and by forcing them into an arbitration system that has been set up for the benefit and expediency of corporate America. In many cases, individual consumers are required to pay thousands of dollars in arbitration fees that they cannot afford before their case is even heard. If this strikes my colleagues as unfair, then I ask them to support my bill, the Consumer Fairness Act of 2009.

The Consumer Fairness Act of 2009 would prohibit binding arbitration clauses in any consumer contract by recognizing these clauses as an unfair and deceptive trade practice. This legislation will help to level the playing field in the fight against predatory lending practices by giving consumers access to the courts and to class action lawsuits in order to address these unfair practices in an environment free of bias. When our constituents suffer through the worst recession in decades, the very least we can do is to give them a fair environment to defend themselves against predatory practices.

TRIBUTE TO HAMILTON COUNTY, NEBRASKA

HON. ADRIAN SMITH

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Hamilton County, Nebraska, for being named Progressive Farmer's Best Place to Raise a Family.

Anyone who has ever visited Nebraska has seen first hand it is a wonderful place to raise a family. It looks like the message is getting out.

Founded in 1867 and named after the first Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, and anchored by the city of Aurora, this area of my district truly lives up to the moniker "The Good Life."

This designation wasn't an accident. Hamilton County is a strong community of people who care for each other, who help out during hard times, and who live up to the benchmarks set by our forefathers.

So, congratulations to the good people of Hamilton County for representing Nebraska and making us proud.

HONORING MARTIN DELANEY

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Martin Delaney who passed away in his home in San Rafael, California, on January 23, 2009, of liver cancer. Mr. Delaney, who was 63, was a leader in AIDS activism, especially the movement to represent the needs of HIV patients in the drug approval process.

Although not HIV positive himself, Martin's experience with experimental treatments for his Hepatitis B infection and his dismay at the