

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