

We have some strong allies in that battle as evidenced above. There is more than abundant evidence here that despite all odds against it, the human spirit is a difficult, if not impossible, flame to snuff out. Hope is but a small thing on show this day when compared to the many triumphs and remarkable victories we celebrate. The courage shown every day by those with disabilities is contagious and their successes empower all of us to be better individuals, better community members, and better Americans.

Please join with me in celebrating all of the organizations who work to raise awareness about the dedicated and hard-working Americans who are blind or have other significant disabilities who provide quality products and services at fair market prices to the Federal government every day.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NATIONAL
TRANSPORTATION SAFETY
BOARD INTERIM SAFETY REC-
COMMENDATIONS ACT OF 2009

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, October 29, 2009

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, today I rise to introduce the National Transportation Safety Board Interim Safety Recommendations Act of 2009, joined by regional Members, including House Majority Leader STENY HOYER, D-MD, FRANK WOLF, R-VA, JIM MORAN, D-VA, CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, D-MD, DONNA EDWARDS, D-MD, and GERALD CONNOLLY, D-VA, as original co-sponsors. Our bill will clarify that the National Transportation Safety Board, NTSB, may, and should, offer interim safety recommendations to state and local transportation authorities.

On June 22, 2009, two Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, WMATA, trains collided near the Fort Totten station here in the Nation's capital. This collision was devastating for this region and for the Nation's transit systems, as nine regional residents died, seven from the Nation's capital. On Metro everyday, in the national capital region, Members of Congress and their staff and millions of other Federal employees of every rank form the majority of Metro's week day riders. Millions of tourists, people who work in every sector and school children are regular riders. The collision has had nation-wide consequences. On September 22, even before its Metro study was complete, the NTSB issued nine nation-wide safety recommendations to address concerns about the safety of train control systems that use audio frequency track circuits, like those that may have contributed to the June 22 train collision here. We believe that, in turn, low-cost, recommendations were in order that might save lives.

The NTSB has been particularly vigilant in quickly reporting defects and operational problems, to encourage remediation even before its final reports. Long before the June 22 collision, in 1996, NTSB had recommended to WMATA that it replace or retrofit its older 1970's 1000 series train cars after a train overran a station platform, striking a standing, unoccupied train, and killing the driver of the striking train. The NTSB renewed this recommendation to replace or refurbish the older cars following the roll back accident of a train

car in the Woodley Park Metro station in 2004, as it should have. The NTSB is not prohibited by statute from making interim recommendations for corrective actions, but low cost recommendations of the kind made thereafter were not made after any of the Metro accidents. This bill clarifies that the NTSB does have such authority.

While the reason for the June 22 crash has not yet been determined, it was evident that the striking car, which was an older 1000 series train car, was significantly more damaged than the struck car, which was a newer 6000 series car. In fact, all of the fatalities were from the 1000 series car. Following the collision, the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689 suggested that WMATA put the 1000 series cars between the newer, more crash-worthy 6000 series cars.

Unfortunately, without the regulatory authority established by this bill we have introduced, there have been no tests of crash worthiness either of the newer 6000 series cars or of the older 1000 series. However, the evidence from the crash suggests that 40 year old cars may be more dangerous as lead and rear cars. The NTSB did not disagree with this interim step at a Congressional hearing in July, but it never recommended this, or any other action, except action that is so costly that it will not occur.

It is a well known and frustrating fact that, for years, Metro has tried to convince Congress and the local jurisdictions to fund replacements for the old 1000 series cars and only this year, after the tragic collision, has Congress appropriated the first \$150 million of the \$1.5 billion authorized first time in 2007. The 1000 series cars were only 300 of Metro's 1,100-car fleet, but replacing those cars will cost \$600 million and take at least five years of combined federal and local area payments. Moreover, the cost of gas at the pump has so driven up Metro ridership, that it cannot simply cut its fleet by 300 cars. Congress and members of our regional delegation had been working long before the collision to get from Congress the \$1.5 billion that has now been authorized for WMATA's urgent capital and preventive maintenance needs, including new cars. While we have finally been successful in getting the first \$150 million, it will take years to fund these replacements, not to mention other problems such as the circuit signals that NTSB has already found may be implicated. Recommendations short of multimillion dollar upgrades and replacements can save lives. This bill requires the NTSB to specifically consider recommending interim recommendations where appropriate, especially when a transit agency has not secured funds to meet the costly permanent recommendations.

Madam Speaker, I ask that the House pass this bill.

HONORING BENJAMIN P. LATHROP
UPON HIS RETIREMENT AS THE
MAYOR OF NORWICH, CT

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, October 29, 2009

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mayor Benjamin P. Lathrop who is retiring after years of service to the City

of Norwich, Connecticut. I rise to recognize him on his retirement after 4 years of service as Mayor, and over a decade of service to the community as a whole.

Ben has dedicated his life to public service, and is a veteran of the Air Force who served our nation during the Vietnam War. He has served as Mayor of Norwich since 2005 and previously on the Norwich City Council from 1997, the final two terms as President Pro-Tem. A perpetually enthusiastic booster for the city, Ben's good cheer, kindness, and dedication have helped him unite the people of Norwich and set the stage for further progress in the years to come.

Ben founded both the Mayor's Cup Challenge and the Norwich Ambassador Program. He has volunteered in community groups such as the American Cancer Society and the March of Dimes, and as a mentor at the Norwich Public Schools and the Greeneville School. Ben has served on many of Norwich's boards and commissions, notably as a member of both the Greater Norwich Area and Eastern Connecticut Chambers of Commerce.

We will honor his service on November 19 with a dinner, the proceeds of which will benefit Hospice of Southeastern Connecticut and Thames Valley Council for Community Action Inc.

Ben's dedication as a citizen of Norwich, and his passion as the city's Mayor will be remembered for years to come. He truly believes in the importance of community, and wears his love for his city on his sleeve. I ask all of my colleagues to join with me and my constituents in thanking Mayor Lathrop for his service and wishing him the best in his new endeavors.

SIGNING OF THE TURKEY/ARME-
NIA PROTOCOLS ON OCTOBER 10,
2009

HON. MICHAEL E. McMAHON

OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, October 29, 2009

Mr. McMAHON. Madam Speaker, I rise with optimism about the latest progress towards normalization of relations between the Republics of Turkey and Armenia.

On October 10, Foreign Ministers Ahmet Davutoglu of Turkey and Edward Nalbandian of Armenia signed a notable agreement, taking both countries a step closer to establishing full diplomatic relations, opening borders and greatly enhancing economic, political and cultural cooperation.

These historic protocols are a critical measure that will bring about regional stability. There have been confidential talks for approximately a decade between the two nations, and this agreement is a testament to the willingness of Armenia and Turkey to look forward towards the common goal of open borders and normalization of relations. As a Member of NATO, and a frontline country bordering Iraq, Turkey is a critical ally of the United States. As we re-deploy our forces in Iraq, Turkey plays a key role. Turkey has been a major support of the new Iraqi government and plays a positive role of investment in Iraq and developing a civil society in Iraq. Closer relations between Turkey and Armenia will hopefully move Armenia into a more westward

direction as this agreement will encourage Armenia to build trade and economic ties with its largest western neighbor.

The interest of the international community was evident with the presence of the representatives from France, Russia, Switzerland, the European Union and the United States in Zurich at the signing ceremony. I am particularly proud of Secretary Clinton's tireless efforts to encourage both parties to reach agreement on the accords. The signing of the protocols has been a priority for President Obama, and Secretary Clinton's work on October 10th underscores the value of stability in the Caucasus region for the United States and the entire international community.

The protocols must still be brought back to the respective parliaments and ratified, but we should acknowledge this significant progress and continue to encourage both Armenia and Turkey to work together to develop a long lasting diplomatic relationship and stability in the region.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY
OF FREDERICK K. BIEBEL

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2009

Ms. DeLAURO. Madam Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to pay tribute to Frederick K. Biebel of Stratford, Connecticut who passed away this week at the age of 83. Fred was a remarkable member of the community and a local political legend. His passing marks the end of an era in the Stratford community and in Connecticut's Republican Party.

Fred began his career in the 1950s as a member of Stratford's Town Council as well as the Chairman of the Stratford Republican Town Committee. During his tenure, he organized countless campaigns and served as a role model and mentor for other candidates. Fred went on to serve as Chairman of the Republican State Central Committee in Connecticut and during President Reagan's Administration he presided as Co-Chairman of the Republican National Committee. He also represented Connecticut as a delegate in fourteen national GOP conventions—the last just this past year. Fred served in every capacity—from volunteer to candidate to national party co-chair. He was committed to his ideals, but understood the value of debate. Through his activism he earned a distinguished reputation and was respected by colleagues of every political persuasion.

As involved in politics as he was, Fred was just as committed to his family and community. He and his wife of 58 years, Violet, raised three children and he was a proud grandfather and great-grandfather. Fred was also a dedicated member of the Lordship Community Church where he served as deacon. In fact, he helped to literally build the Church itself, dismantling, transporting, and reassembling an unused Colonial white church from Vermont in the late 1940s. Fred was proud of the life he built—a fact that was reflected in his recently published autobiography, "Path of a Patriot: The Political Journey of Mr. B."

Though we may have come from different political viewpoints, Fred and I shared a com-

mon cause—public service. Whether through his political career or his work in the community, Fred dedicated a lifetime to service. He understood better than most that a community is only as strong as those members who dedicate themselves to its improvement. He knew that meaningful change came from active involvement—a lesson that he passed on to several generations. I consider myself fortunate to have known him.

Today, as family and friends reflect on the life of Frederick K. Biebel, I extend my deepest sympathies to his wife, Violet, his children, Karen, Kyle, and Kevin, as well as his nine grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. Fred was an extraordinary man who touched the lives of many. His is a legacy that will continue to inspire generations to come.

BOEING BRINGS JOBS TO SOUTH
CAROLINA

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2009

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, yesterday, Boeing announced that they had chosen their North Charleston, South Carolina, facility as the site for a second 787 Dreamliner final assembly line. This is tremendous news not just for the people of Charleston but for all the families of South Carolina. As we have seen with the success of Michelin across the state, including Lexington, recruited from France by Governor Jim Edwards and BMW at Greer secured from Germany by the late Governor Carroll Campbell bringing new jobs, Boeing's decision will have a broader impact on our state's economy. As noted in today's edition of The State, "S.C. officials expect a network of companies will spring up across the state to support Boeing's operations, just as businesses sprang up around BMW's Upstate plant, opened in the 1990s."

This decision by Boeing is a testament to the strong workforce in South Carolina. I am grateful for the hard work and dedication of so many members of our communities who continue to fight to bring more jobs to South Carolina. In particular, South Carolina Secretary of Commerce Joe Taylor has shown excellent leadership. I've been grateful to work with Secretary Taylor and other leaders as we keep our commitment to those we serve to promote South Carolina as a leader for industry and innovation in the positive environment of a Right to Work State.

HONORING BROOKSIDE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. CAROLYN McCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2009

Mrs. McCARTHY of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the students, faculty and staff of the Brookside Elementary School and congratulate them for having received the prestigious Blue Ribbon School Award. The Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes schools that make significant progress in closing the achievement gap or whose students achieve at very high levels.

The teachers and staff at Brookside School aim to provide a rigorous yet nurturing environment where on-going academic, social and emotional support is provided so all students can realize their potential. Brookside School has the advantage of small class sizes which creates an atmosphere where each child is recognized for his or her individual gifts and talents.

Character education is woven throughout the curriculum at Brookside Elementary School. Each month, the school hosts "BBOTB", Brookside Brings out the Best, Assembly, where students are recognized for excellent citizenship, character, effort, respect, neatness and organization. As a member of the Committee for Education and Labor, I have the privilege of learning about school both locally and nationally. The future of this country depends on the hopes and dreams of its children. Our community, and our nation, is enhanced by the contributions of high achieving students like those at Brookside Elementary School. Additionally, I would like to recognize the work of the teachers and administrators who dedicate their lives to their students. The staff is the back-bone of the student's success and I thank them for all that they do on a daily basis.

Madam Speaker, it is with pride and admiration I offer my thanks and recognition to the Brookside Elementary School.

RECOGNIZING HISPANIC HERITAGE
MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2009

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 783, which recognizes Hispanic Heritage Month and celebrates the vast contributions of Hispanic-Americans to the strength and culture of the United States.

In 1968, President Lyndon Johnson introduced Hispanic Heritage Week, which was later expanded to Hispanic Heritage Month in 1988 by President Ronald Reagan. This year, Americans commemorated the history of Hispanic-Americans and their numerous contributions to our country from September 15, 2009, to October 15, 2009.

The estimated Hispanic population of the United States as of July 1, 2008, was 46.9 million. Hispanic-Americans constitute 15 percent of the Nation's total population, comprise 62.2 percent of my district in Houston, Texas, and are the fastest-growing minority group in the United States. Their contributions to our society are evident in many areas including the arts, architecture, literature, military, and our government.

In congratulate all Hispanic-Americans on their rich history and culture, and recognize Hispanic Heritage Month as an important time to commemorate the great achievements and contributions of Hispanic-Americans to the United States.

As a cosponsor of this important resolution, I urge my colleagues to support its passage.