

HONORING THE MOTOR TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT FOR THEIR EFFORTS TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2013

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to extend my deepest thanks and appreciation to the Motor Transport Association of Connecticut for their many efforts to combat human trafficking, including their most recent action in honoring Kendis Paris and "Truckers Against Trafficking" with their highest honor, the "Good Buddy Award."

As you know, each year hundreds of thousands of women and children are abducted and forced into prostitution and enslaved under some of the most abusive of circumstances. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has identified truck stops and rest areas as places where these abductions can occur. The Motor Transportation Association of Connecticut (MTAC), an organization dedicated to promoting the interests of Connecticut's trucking industry, has taken a leadership role in the national effort to combat this terrible epidemic. Truckers are the eyes and ears of our nation's highways—indeed just this past July, in one weekend, with the help of truckers and others, more than 100 teenagers were rescued. The leadership and members of MTAC have taken a special interest in this cause, making it a top priority.

At their most recent annual meeting, MTAC demonstrated their commitment to this effort by recognizing "Truckers Against Trafficking," a national non-profit organization that exists to educate, equip, empower and mobilize members of the trucking and travel plaza industry to combat domestic sex trafficking, and its co-founder, Kendis Paris, with their 2013 Good Buddy Award—a demonstration of the high level of esteem that MTAC holds for both the program and Kendis. I am proud to say that, in addition to these actions, MTAC has been working with me to develop a legislative agenda focused on combatting human trafficking.

Human trafficking is a rampant issue that is impacting the lives of millions across the world, hundreds of thousands in our nation alone. I applaud the Motor Transport Association of Connecticut, Truckers Against Trafficking, and Kendis Paris for their remarkable work in combating this appalling practice. I look forward to continuing to work with them and to someday realize the goal we all share—to ensure that every woman and child is protected from such a dreadful fate.

ANNOUNCING RECIPIENTS OF THE 2013 CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION FOR THE THIRD DISTRICT OF TEXAS

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2013

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to honor fourteen distinguished military veterans, community servants,

and American patriots who call the Third District of Texas home. All faithfully answered the call of duty and placed service above self for the sake of our great Nation. Each one leaves a legacy to be remembered, for future generations to follow, a legacy of bravery, loyalty, dedication, and sacrifice. For their selfless service, bold leadership, and undying commitment for their neighbor and nation, the following individual has been selected as a recipient of the third annual Congressional Veteran Commendation:

Sergeant Major Daniel Huff served in the United States Marine Corps from 1981 to 2010. After graduating high school, he enlisted in the Marine Corps, starting his career at Boot Camp and Administrative Clerk School. In 1983, then-Corporal Huff was transferred to the United Nations Command in Seoul, South Korea, where he earned his first Navy Achievement Medal. He was then assigned to the Inspector-Instructor Staff, 25th Marines, in Massachusetts and earned his promotion to Sergeant.

Later on in his career, Mr. Huff served as Senior Drill Instructor to mold young men into exemplary character with traits of honorable service to God and country and then as Administrative Chief to several Marine bases, the last being in Quantico, Virginia. He served in Operation Iraqi Freedom I and II, earning the Meritorious Service Medal and Bronze Star with Combat V Medal for heroic actions in intense combat situations. For instance, on April 14, 2004 in Karabilah, Iraq, a roadside bomb exploded and enemy fire unleashed on all sides of the Battalion Commander's convoy. During this attack, Mr. Huff provided first-aid to a critically wounded Marine while simultaneously returning fire. He then ensured the medical evacuation of 22 other wounded comrades and led the Marines to secure the medical evacuation route. During the following five days, the Battalion destroyed over 80 enemy insurgents, safeguarding the city from an attempted takeover by anti-Iraqi Forces. Mr. Huff's extensive career and numerous decorations only scratch the surface of his exemplary leadership, dedication, and sacrifice.

Currently, Mr. Huff works for Dyncorp International in Fort Worth, Texas, where he oversees approximately 10,000 to 11,000 personnel at the Afghanistan base. He also volunteers in the community with the Toys for Tots Program, as a USMC JROTC mini-boot camp program supervisor, and represents the Marine Corps in various community events around the DFW metroplex.

Sergeant Major Daniel Huff, let me both thank and congratulate you on your exceptional service to our country and community both past and present. It is my pleasure to award you the 2013 Congressional Veteran Commendation for the Third District of Texas.

OCEAN ENERGY SAFETY AND TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2013

HON. RUSH HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2013

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to introduce the Ocean Energy Safety and Technology Improvement Act of 2013, a bill to fa-

cilitate the development and use of technology to make offshore drilling safer for workers and the environment.

A little more than three and a half years ago, the Deepwater Horizon exploded and sank off the coast of Louisiana, killing eleven workers, and allowing its unfinished well to pour millions of barrels of crude oil into the Gulf of Mexico until it was finally capped several months later. This event—the greatest single environmental disaster in American history—exposed as a myth the idea that such tragic offshore events, such as the Montara explosion in Australia, the Piper Alpha disaster in the North Sea, or the Ixtoc blowout in Mexico, could not happen in the United States.

There was no question that the industry had gotten complacent. And the regulators had gotten complacent. And even Congress had gotten complacent. The only debate before the Deepwater Horizon tragedy was where drilling should occur, not how safe it would be. Those of us whose states depend on clean beaches and clear water to fuel a multi-billion dollar tourism industry were assured that technology had reached the point that there was no risk whatsoever: that offshore drilling could coexist with clean beaches, that vacationers and merchants would never have to fear oil-soaked seabirds dying on their shores, or tarballs staining the coasts for years to come.

Those assurances, we learned in April 2010, were completely false. The technology the industry boasted of was about drilling deeper and faster, not about being cleaner or safer. And while there is a requirement in the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act for companies to use the "best available and safest technology," in reality companies were allowed to simply meet regulatory minimums. The Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, or BSEE, recently proposed to close that loophole and ensure that companies really are using the best and safest technology; naturally that proposal was met with the predictable wails from industry.

But despite those complaints, this is clearly an idea whose time has come. In October, the National Academy of Sciences released a report with recommendations on how to implement a true requirement for using the best available and safest technology available in the offshore industry. The Academy endorsed BSEE's formation of an Ocean Energy Safety Institute, but said that the institute needed more funding, more stability, and more authority.

That is what my legislation does. It adopts the National Academy's recommendations by giving BSEE the authority to stand up a robust, permanent Ocean Energy Safety Institute with a steady source of funding. The Institute will facilitate collaboration between academia, regulators, and industry, serve as a center of excellence for offshore safety research and education, and most importantly, help BSEE identify the best available and safest technologies currently in use, and facilitate the development of better and safer technologies.

This legislation also implements other recommendations from the Academy, including providing the authority for the review of drilling plans and permits to be prioritized if they would use particularly innovative safety technologies, and promoting safety research by small businesses, where many of the best innovations arise.