

members on the department are volunteers. Channahon FPD was also successful in winning two Fire Act Grants during the first year they were offered.

Channahon FPD believes in a commitment to excellence as shown by their continuing education programs for Department members. Tragically, the Channahon Fire Protection District recently experienced the loss of Firefighter Kenneth J. Frayne in the line of duty. Ken was a four-year member of the department and died while performing dive rescue training. Ken was twenty-eight years old and left behind his wife of three years, Deborah Frayne. I know the entire Department will miss Ken and his dedication to the service. I will keep Ken and Deborah in my thoughts and prayers.

Since the attack on September 11, 2001, the whole country is more aware of the importance of our firefighters and their critical role in our national defense and security. Channahon FPD members and volunteers are excellent examples of our nation's citizens at their finest. It has been my privilege to serve Channahon FPD as part of my 11th Congressional District. I look forward to serving and working with them in the years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I urge this body to identify and recognize other institutions in their own districts whose actions have so greatly benefited and strengthened America's communities.

CONGRATULATING PRINCIPAL  
MICHAEL J. OTTO

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 14, 2001*

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, it is with much pride that I rise today to congratulate one of Missouri's educators. With emphasis placed on the need to reform our public schools and ensure that our children receive quality instruction, it pleases me to know that Graden Elementary School is on the right path. I ask that you join me in congratulating Principal Michael J. Otto, recently named a recipient of the 2001 National Distinguished Principals award.

The U.S. Department of Education, along with the National Association of Elementary School Principals, began this program in 1984 to honor those principals that exemplify the vital leadership necessary to guide our school communities. Education Secretary Paige commented that, "Principals today—more than ever before—are critical leaders in the effort to improve America's public schools. I applaud these outstanding principals for their dedication, achievements, tirelessness, and leadership. I look forward to working with principals across the nation . . . to improve the performance of all students so that no child is left behind." I could not agree more with Secretary Paige's comments. I find it admirable that the recipients were nominated by their peers, further demonstrating the effects of their commitment to educational excellence.

I am honored to represent a man who has given so much of himself to provide our schoolchildren not only with excellent instruc-

tion, but also inspiration. Again, I congratulate Principal Michael J. Otto and commend him for his diligent work on behalf of our schoolchildren.

RECOGNIZING ROB ATWILL

**HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 14, 2001*

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Rob Atwill for being named an Extension Specialist Award finalist by the Friends of Agricultural Extension. The Friends of Agricultural Extension will recognize Rob at their annual awards dinner.

Rob is a Veterinary Medicine Extension Specialist at the U.C. Veterinary Medical Training & Research Center in Tulare, CA. He is conducting research on the subject of "The Interface Between Water Quality, Animal Agriculture, and Human Health—with particular emphasis on the fate and distribution of waterborne pathogens from animal agricultural systems." Rob's efforts to develop responsible data to determine the extent and risk of microbial movement from dairy lagoons and other such systems has been invaluable to our livestock industry. His work has helped develop responsible handling techniques and provide factual insight on which to base regulatory guidelines.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Rob Atwill for being named an Extension Specialist Award finalist by the Friends of Agricultural Extension. I urge my colleagues to join me in wishing Rob Atwill many more years of continued success.

SCHOOLBUS SAFETY ACT OF 2001

**HON. MARK UDALL**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 14, 2001*

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing the Schoolbus Safety Act of 2001, legislation designed to close a loophole in federal regulations that can threaten the safety of children who ride a bus to and from school.

As my colleagues may know, the sale of new 15-passenger vans to carry school-age children has been banned since 1974 because they do not have the same safety features as school buses and because the vans are more likely to roll over when carrying many passengers. However, current regulations allow schools to purchase used 15-passenger vans—the loophole my legislation addresses.

School buses and 15-passenger vans are radically different vehicles. A school bus must meet numerous mandated federal safety standards. School buses have multiple horizontal and vertical steel beams bonded together in such a manner that essentially wraps the passengers in a cage of steel. The inside and outside of the bus is further reinforced by thick sheets of steel.

A school bus is generally heavier than a comparable sized passenger vehicle and has

exit doors, superior roof structure, an interior aisle, significant interior seat padding, driver visibility, fuel system integrity, and a far superior center of gravity and stability. In addition school buses have special warning light and pedestrian control systems and are generally painted a bright yellow, which are all significant safety features.

The traditional 15-passenger van is structurally and generally a significantly different vehicle. These vans were originally rated as "light trucks" and, as such, were not required to meet passenger safety standards. Therefore, the area behind the driver is anticipated only to carry cargo and does not have side bar protection which accompanies normal passenger vehicles, including mini vans.

The numbers tell the whole story. When evaluating the relative safety of all passenger vehicles and school buses per road mile, studies show that school buses are markedly safer vehicles. In 1994, there were 21,813 deaths in passenger vehicles, which translates to .86 deaths every 100 million miles. In school buses, there were two occupant deaths, which translate into .005 deaths per 100 million road miles. In other words, passenger vehicles per road mile had a fatality rate 170 times higher than school buses.

School buses are the safest form of mechanized transportation that exists. School buses are 34 times safer than train travel and 4 times safer than commercial aviation.

My legislation removes the nearly 30 year old loophole in the federal regulations that allows used vans to be purchased while new vans are banned. In addition, this bill extends the ban from sale of vans to leasing, renting and buying, thereby making the buyers accountable as well as the seller. These changes will insure that the intent of the 1974 law is finally realized. The bill also would strengthen the penalties on those who violate this important safety provision.

In light of numerous high profile cases involving colleges and universities, my bill extends the definition of "schools" for these provisions to include "postsecondary" institutions.

The legislation raises the prescribed penalty for breaking this law from "not more than \$1000" to "not more than \$25000", thereby giving the enforcement agencies something to make it worth their while to pursue. This provision is important because from 1974 until 1997, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), which had responsibility for administering the law, did not initiate one single enforcement proceeding in the entire country.

Finally, the bill mandates that fines collected under this legislation would be pooled into an account under the Secretary of Transportation for use in enforcing these provisions.

Mr. Speaker, as a nation, we long ago decided that the means by which we transport our children to and from school and school-related activities, should be as safe as possible. This bill will go a long way in ensuring that safety for our children.