

Department of Transportation. He was appointed to that position in March of 2001 by Governor Rick Perry and in January of 2004 became the chairman of the Texas Transportation Commission.

Prior to his appointment, he served in the Texas State Legislature from 1985 to 1988. Numerous professional and legislative accomplishments are attributed to Ric Williamson, and many awards from the Texas media, including twice being recognized as one of the 10 best legislators in the Texas State Legislature in 1989 and 1991.

Ric was born in Abilene, Texas, and graduated with a B.A. degree from the University of Texas in 1974. He later founded his own natural gas production company. He made his home in Weatherford, Texas, with his wife, Mary Ann. He has three beautiful daughters, Melissa, Katherine and Sara, who spoke so eloquently on behalf of their father in the memorial service that we held this past January 3. Ric has two grandchildren. Most recently, his grandson was born at the beginning of December of this past year.

Chairman Williamson brought a sense of purpose, a sense of vision, and a sense of urgency that had not previously been present in the State of Texas when it came to issues regarding transportation. He established a strategic plan, he set real goals, and then he did everything within his power to meet those goals.

He wanted to reduce congestion. He wanted to improve safety. He wanted to expand economic opportunity, increase the value of the assets in the Texas highway system, and clean the air.

One of his greatest legacies was to empower local leaders to make local transportation decisions. The best example of this empowerment is the State Highway 121 Project in my district of the Dallas/Fort Worth area. This brought over \$3 billion in highway construction funds to north Texas. At a time when the rest of Texas and, indeed, many other areas of the Nation have money only to put towards maintenance, we have money available for new construction because of Ric's vision.

He wasn't always easy to live with, he wasn't always easy to work with, but you always knew where you stood with Ric Williamson; you were never left guessing.

He was more than just a leader for Texas; he helped make Texas a leader for the Nation. The United States Department of Transportation now looks toward Texas as a model for other States to use to employ some of those innovative solutions to their challenging problems. And that was, in whole part, due to Ric's unique vision for the State of Texas.

Shortly after Ric Williamson's death, the Federal Highway Administrator

Richard Capka said, "He helped pave the way for some of the Nation's most innovative transportation projects, and he is largely responsible for bringing highway financing for Texas and the rest of the Nation into the 21st century." He got Texans thinking. He got other Americans thinking on a broad and deep level about issues regarding transportation in a way that probably had never been done before.

During the memorial service for Ric Williamson, and many people got up and spoke on his behalf, it was frequently brought out how Ric Williamson regarded politics as a full contact sport. He would go at it with everything he had. And again, you always knew where you stood with Ric Williamson and he wasn't always easy to live with. But Ric Williamson believed that these discussions should take place within the light of day, not behind closed doors, not in some smoke-filled room. So, it's to his credit that he pushed these ideas in the State of Texas, but it was never done in secret; it was never done behind some veil. Everyone always knew where Ric Williamson was and what he was doing.

He will always be remembered by his friends and associates as a true champion for all things Texan. He was unafraid to challenge the status quo. He was highly regarded for bringing innovative ideas to provide safe, economic, and reliable transportation to improve the quality of daily lives of all Texans.

On a strictly personal level, Ric remained a patient mentor to me, a steadfast friend, and I will greatly miss him.

SCHIP VETO OVERRIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Ms. GIFFORDS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. GIFFORDS. Madam Speaker, I am speaking out today in strong opposition of the President's veto of the KidsCare bill, also known as SCHIP here in Washington. I am profoundly disappointed that we were not able today to override the President's veto.

In the State of Arizona, there are over 264,000 children that currently do not have health insurance. That's about one out of every five kids. Across the country, it's estimated that over 1 million children do not have health insurance.

I am deeply concerned, in addition, because of the slowing of the economy, about the fact that we're going to see unemployment rates increase. And just last week, the Joint Economic Committee came out and stated that "worsening economic conditions will likely create substantial increases in demands in States' Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Programs."

The JEC specifically linked employment woes to demands for programs

like KidsCare. Nationwide, they projected that between 700,000 and 1.1 million children per year will be added to the enrollment numbers for Medicaid and SCHIP due to the slowdown in the economy. That makes acting to ensure a strong SCHIP or KidsCare program in Arizona and across the country absolutely critical, but it also reveals how out of touch the President is and how willing he is not just to disregard our children, but to disregard the future of our Nation.

As the universal health care debate continues, there should be no debate about health care for kids. Kids can't work; kids can't afford to pay health insurance premiums, and that's why I'd like to thank the 259 colleagues on both sides of the aisle for voting today to reauthorize KidsCare.

Democrats and Republicans alike must stay united for the children of our country. We are their representatives; we are their voices, and we must speak out for them. That is precisely why I am speaking here today. It is why I will continue to speak out here in Washington and back home in Arizona and why I am not alone. I am joined by thousands and thousands of voices across southern Arizona in calling for Congress and the President to fully reauthorize KidsCare.

In this economic climate, we must not fail to recognize health care as one of the most costly economic challenges confronting businesses, confronting families, and confronting the children of our country.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO PRIVATE FIRST CLASS JASON LEMKE AND PRIVATE FIRST CLASS KEITH LLOYD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, as of Monday, January 21, 2008, 3,929 members of the United States military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press account. Today, I want to take this opportunity to talk about just two of these soldiers, residents of the Fourth Congressional District of Wisconsin.

After these gentlemen have given so much for their country and their communities, our community, I just must pause, we must pause. We can't just allow business to go on as usual until we pay tribute here on the floor of the House to these young men and to offer my sincerest condolences to their families.

On January 5, Army Private First Class Jason Lemke, age 30, was killed in Iraq as a result of wounds suffered when his vehicle struck a roadside bomb. PFC Lemke was not just a soldier, Madam Speaker, but also a father

of 3 young daughters, Amber, Liz and Casey.

When he was interred just a few weeks ago on January 16, a family lost a loving father, a beloved son, his mom and dad, Colleen and Greg, and brother to Jerrie and Jill Lemke.

A 1996 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran High School in Milwaukee, Jason wanted to enlist in the Army right after graduation from high school, but his parents talked him out of it. Instead, he worked and raised his baby girls. In December of 2004, PFC Lemke answered the call of his heart and enlisted in the Army in Milwaukee and reported to Fort Benning, Georgia, in January of 2005 for initial entry training.

In May of 2005, he reported to Fort Lewis in Washington where he was assigned to A Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, and his brigade was then deployed to Iraq in April of 2007.

One talent that sticks out in my mind was his exceptional linguistic skill. He possessed this extraordinary skill, and he spoke both Spanish and Arabic, and I'm sure that that was an incredible asset to his fellow soldiers in Iraq. His language training came about because the military saw something special in this young man and selected him for intensive training in Arabic. His proficiency in it speaks well of Private First Class Lemke's own capacity and ability to pick up a difficult language in such a short time. I wish I had had the opportunity to meet this outstanding young man. I can so relate to him, and I'm sure the rest of us can, in that he had his fair challenges in life.

Here are some of the words that have been used to describe this young man, just briefly, from his mom, Colleen.

"He's my son, my little boy, and my friend. He always made me proud and never disappointed me. His wit he shared with everyone. He always looked out for the underdog and did what he had to do. When he was with his kids and his sister's kids, the room was full of love. I'll miss his head in my lap when talking and watching TV. He was not afraid to show his love. But he's home in my heart and soul today."

From his father, Greg: "His grandpa was in the Marines. His uncle was a Marine. His father was in the Army, and my older brother was in the Army," Greg said. "So there's a family service thing here. He wanted to make a mark."

In a last but fitting honor, Private First Class Lemke was posthumously promoted to the rank of corporal. So today, Madam Speaker, as Corporal Lemke's family, friends, and his fellow soldiers come together at Fort Lewis to remember him in a memorial ceremony, I rise to honor this valiant soldier, loving son, and father, and to express my gratitude, condolences and that of the House to those who knew him and loved him best.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman's time has expired.

□ 1530

THE 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP: THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, it is an honor to come before the House once again. As you know, the 30-Something Working Group comes to the floor to share issues that are before the Congress not only with many of our colleagues but also with the American people.

But at this time, Madam Speaker, I am going to yield to Congresswoman MOORE.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Thank you so much, Representative.

I rise, Madam Speaker, to memorialize another of my constituents, Private First Class Keith Lloyd, who died of wounds suffered when the vehicle he was in struck a roadside bomb in Iraq at the tender age of 26 on January 12.

He was born in Milwaukee. He went to elementary school in Milwaukee prior to his family moving to Oak Creek and then to South Milwaukee. Lloyd graduated from South Milwaukee High School in my district in 2000 and worked in a number of retail stores. He also took courses at Milwaukee Area Technical College in Oak Creek and ITT Technical Institute in Milwaukee.

According to media reports, as a teen, Private First Class Lloyd was not crazy about high school, but he never shirked the responsibility that came with it. After graduation he wasn't quite sure what career path to take, like many high school graduates, including myself.

Finally, as a young man, he decided to follow the path of his younger brother, who had just completed a tour of duty in Iraq with the United States Army. According to his sister Christine, he was looking for direction. He wanted to make something of himself and thought the Army was a good place to do that. He enlisted in March 2007, and, indeed, he made much of his life and paid the ultimate price for us, his fellow Americans.

This was a young man who did not want to sit on the bench and let life pass him by.

His sister also noted that he had a big heart and would do anything for anybody.

Private First Class Lloyd deployed to Iraq in November as a member of the 1st Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment based in Fort Hood, Texas.

Yesterday Private First Class Lloyd was laid to rest at Good Hope Cemetery in Milwaukee.

Madam Speaker, I wish to express my deepest sympathy and condolences to the family of Private First Class Lloyd today: his sister, Christine; brother Thomas; his mom, Cynthia Allam; his dad and stepmother, Gary and Joanne Lloyd; sister Cora Lloyd; and brothers Kraig, Gary, and Joshua Lloyd.

These men certainly made the lives of those around them better day by day and exemplified the character and qualities that enrich our communities and our Nation. This is indeed a sad day for the Nation. While as the Bible says, "each heart knows its own grief" and I cannot possibly understand the grief their families are going through today, I offer this timely tribute today to express the gratitude of a Nation and my condolences on their loss.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you so very much, Ms. MOORE. And I can tell you anytime we get a chance to come to the floor and honor our patriots is always a day that the Congress should yield and pay respect to not only that individual but also the family.

Madam Speaker, I think it's important we start to look at what the Congress is facing right now and the American people are facing right now as it relates to the economy. The news has been for the last 5 to 10 days the economy, stimulating the economy, and it is very important that we do so. And as you know, many news accounts have shown the President, also the Speaker of the House, and the Democratic leader in the Senate meeting. You have also seen meetings with the Republican leadership and Democratic leadership here in the Congress. The American people are counting on us working in a bipartisan way, and I just want to make sure that all Members know that this is nothing new for the Democratic House of Representatives, especially the majority of Democrats that are here, because we came in saying we wanted to work in a bipartisan way. As a matter of fact, Madam Speaker, I went back and pulled out a chart because so many times here in the 30-Something Working Group it's important that we share with the Members what we have already done and what we can do. And I will use this chart all the way up to today.

Many of these acts took place in the first session of the 110th Congress, and it was the first time, with your help, Madam Speaker, we were able to take the majority of the House:

Implementation of the 9/11 Commission recommendations, H.R. 1, passed with 299 Democratic votes with 68 Republican votes. Raising the minimum wage, H.R. 2, passed 315 with 82 Republican votes. The funding for enhanced stem cell research passed 253 with 37 Republican votes. Making prescription drugs more affordable, H.R. 4, passed 255 with 24 Republican votes. And cutting student loan interest rates in half, H.R. 5, passed this House of course with