

IN MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF  
COAST GUARD HELICOPTER CG-  
6505

**HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 23, 2008*

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, I rise today to pay a special tribute to four members of the United States Coast Guard.

Lieutenant Commander Andrew Wischmeier, Aviation Survival Technician First Class David Skimin, and Aviation Maintenance Technician Second Class Joshua Nichols, were all killed when the helicopter in which they were conducting training exercises crashed near Honolulu, Hawaii, on September 4.

Commander Thomas Nelson, who was the Executive Officer of Air Station Barbers Point and was also flying as part of the training mission, remains missing.

The active search for Commander Nelson, which encompassed an area of more than 3,000 square miles and involved not only Coast Guard personnel but officials from the City of Honolulu, the United States Navy, and the Air National Guard, has now been suspended.

Commander Nelson, who is originally from Staten Island, had been stationed at Barbers Point since the summer of last year. During his 20-year career, he had served as Deputy Chief of the Office of Security and Defense Operations at Coast Guard Headquarters here in Washington, and at air stations in Louisiana, New York, and Washington state.

Lieutenant Commander Wischmeier, the pilot of the helicopter at the time it crashed, was from Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He graduated from Naval Flight School in 1991 and over his 19-year Coast Guard career, he served at air stations in Florida, Louisiana, and Alaska.

Petty Officer Skimin was from San Bernardino, California. An experienced rescue swimmer, he had served at air stations in Texas, California, and Alaska over his 16-year career.

Petty Officer Nichols was from Gloucester, Virginia, and had been in the Coast Guard for 8 years. He was a flight mechanic and had previously been stationed in Alabama and at several bases in California.

Each of these men was married and had children.

These men gave their lives in service to our nation. As members of the Coast Guard, their mission—the mission to which they chose to devote their professional careers—was saving lives.

To those who are in peril at sea, the sight of a Coast Guard helicopter coming over the horizon means that help is at hand—and that the often desperate hopes of people whose lives are truly at stake are about to be realized.

Throughout their careers, these four men, who combined more than 60 years of service, each contributed their strength, skills, and dedication to making such rescues possible.

My prayers are with the families of those who have been lost to us, the men and women of Barbers Point, and the nearly 42,000 men and women of the Coast Guard who together comprise our thin blue line at sea.

My prayers are also with all the members of the Coast Guard. Every day as they conduct search and rescue operations, interdict illegal drugs, respond to pollution and national security incidents, and man cutters and aircraft, each member of the Coast Guard faces the same risks that Commander Nelson, Commander Wischmeier, Petty Officer Skimin, and Petty Officer Nichols faced with the same dedication to duty that these four showed.

Just this week, we have again seen the Coast Guard's dedication in action as they have worked to aid those who have been so terribly affected by Hurricane Ike, including rescuing more than 200 people.

We thank the members of this service for their heroic efforts—and mourn with them the tragic loss of their comrades.

ARTICLE BY DR. PHYLLIS ZAGANO  
CONCERNING CATHOLIC TEACHING  
ON HUMAN LIFE

**HON. THADDEUS G. McCOTTER**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 23, 2008*

Mr. McCOTTER. Madam Speaker, today I rise to place into the RECORD an article by Dr. Phyllis Zagano, Senior Research Associate-in-Residence at Hofstra University concerning Catholic teaching on human life.

[From the 2008 Religion News Service]

COMMENTARY: CATHOLICS DEMS AND BISHOPS  
IN FOR A BUMPY RIDE

(By Phyllis Zagano)

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is clearly confused about Catholic teaching on life issues. On NBC's "Meet the Press," Tom Brokaw asked her: "When does life begin?" She answered, "We don't know." Pelosi said "that as an ardent, practicing Catholic," this is an issue she's studied for a long time. "And what I know is, over the centuries, the doctors of the church have not been able to make that definition."

Pelosi is wrong, and some Catholic bishops have tried to correct the record.

I don't think the Democrats are worried.

A few years ago I rode the New York-to-Washington shuttle with a prominent politician who is a Catholic and a Democrat. He said that U.S. bishops collectively squandered their moral authority with the priest pederasty scandal. Whether for so-called "liberal" or "conservative" causes, he said, Catholic bishops are the political touch of death. No one listens to them. Including, it seems, Catholic-educated Pelosi. While the bishops try to straighten out Pelosi, who confuses medieval discussions about "ensoulment" with historical teachings on abortion, the Democrats are trying to sound like they are both for and against abortion.

Brokaw backed Pelosi into a theological corner by playing part of a televised interview in which California Pastor Rick Warren asked Sen. Barack Obama (and, later, Sen. John McCain), "At what point does a baby get human rights?"

Catholicism calls that two questions: First, is the embryo human life? Second, when does the embryo become a person? Obama addressed both questions. He said "If you believe that life begins at conception . . . then I can't argue with you." He also basically said deciding when the embryo becomes a person was above his paygrade. After seeing the Warren-Obama replay, Pelosi muddled Brokaw's question. She said—incorrectly—that the church only decided human life begins at conception "like maybe 50 years" ago.

Wrong, Madame Speaker. "The Didache" (the teachings of the apostles collected a generation after Christ) says, "You shall not procure an abortion, nor destroy a newborn child." Several church fathers—from Tertullian to St. Jerome—and the apostolic constitutions all forbade abortion. Some, however, confused matters by talking about ensoulment, asking when the human being became a human person. The ensoulment debate seems stuck in Pelosi's memory, and could be what she was talking about. She said St. Augustine thought ensoulment occurred about 30 days after conception. But trying to figure out ensoulment only leads to debate over whether abortion is merely similar to murder (killing a human being) or actually equal to murder (killing a human person).

No one knows for sure when the developing human being becomes a person with a soul. It might be at conception, or it might not. So Christianity, with other religions, has historically forbidden abortion in the face of this dilemma because the human being is always potentially a human person. The earliest fertilized egg is not a future banana or frog. It is human life. What's fascinating is that Sens. Joe Biden and John McCain agree that life begins at conception. And although neither expects (or possibly wants) help from the bishops, McCain has the most to gain by Pelosi's misstep.

Pelosi is at best misinformed, and has misinformed a nation. The Catholic bishops will try to counter her bad information. And Catholic politicians, who have increasingly ignored a lot of Catholic teaching, don't seem to think that what the bishops say will make any difference. Seatbelts, everybody. It's going to be a bumpy ride.

HONORING DR. ROBERT F. KNAUTZ

**HON. DALE E. KILDEE**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 23, 2008*

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, it is with profound sadness that I announce the passing of Dr. Robert F. Knautz, the founding principal of the U.S. House of Representatives Page School. "Dr. K," as he was affectionately known by many of his former students, died on September 17, 2008, at Suburban Hospital in Bethesda, MD. He left an indelible mark on the House Page School, the institution he was charged with creating in 1983. The House Page Program owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to Dr. Knautz for his vision for the School, his commitment to quality education, and his compassion for students.

Dr. Knautz was a proud son of the Land of Lincoln. He was born in Chicago, IL, and remained throughout his life a devoted fan of both the Cubs and the Bears. Dr. Knautz obtained his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Northern Illinois University, earning