

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 2008

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I was not present in the House chamber for votes on April 3, 2008.

If I had been present, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall No. 159, a motion to recommit H.R. 4847, the United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act, with instructions to amend the bill (forthwith) to provide liability protection to firemen that provide inspection services or advice on the use of child safety seats to their communities.

I would also have voted "yes" on rollcall No. 160, final passage of H.R. 4847, the United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act.

THE PASSING OF RINCON
CHAIRMAN VERNON WRIGHT**HON. DARRELL E. ISSA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 2008

Mr. ISSA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians Chairman Vernon Wright. Chairman Wright passed away on Thursday, April 10, 2008, of liver cancer at the age of 53—far too soon for a man that had so much left to give to his tribe and community.

Born in San Diego, California to Vernon Hollis Wright and Beverly Wright, Chairman Wright was a lifelong resident of the area. After graduating from San Diego High School and Palomar College, he studied at the Gemological Institute of America and operated a jewelry shop in Escondido, California until becoming politically active with the Rincon tribe in the 1990s.

In 2006, he was elected chairman of the 650-member tribe, after serving as a council member and vice-chairman for several years. As chairman, he did a number of good things for the tribe and surrounding community. He worked hard over the years to heal internal strife that dwelled within the tribe and helped to mend disagreements with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He also brought the community together through his leadership and helped to usher in the tribe's current economic success.

Not long before his passing, some tribal members had begun calling him "Chief," a title that hadn't been used on the reservation for decades. This informal honor was appropriate for Chairman Wright, because he worked tirelessly for the benefit of his tribe. Months before his passing, he devoted countless hours and effort to helping tribal members recover from the Poomcha Fire, which devastated the Rincon reservation last year.

Chairman Wright was a good man, an honorable man, who was taken from the world too soon and with much left to accomplish. While his passing is a tragedy, he truly touched the lives of those around him, and the Rincon Tribe has been left much better because of his leadership and guidance. He will be remembered and missed.

CELEBRATING THE U.S.-KOREA
FRIENDSHIP AND ALLIANCE**HON. DIANE E. WATSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 2008

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, it has been my privilege to represent California's 33rd Congressional District with the largest number of Korean American constituents in the Nation. The Korean Americans who live in my district and other neighborhoods in Los Angeles—and, for that matter, across the country—have made incalculable contributions to American life and society.

My purpose in mentioning the Korean American community—which now numbers more than 2 million people nationwide—stems from the arrival this week of President Lee Myung-Bak of the Republic of Korea, who comes to Washington to meet with President Bush, our congressional leadership, senior government officials, business executives, and Korean American leaders. I wish to take this opportunity to welcome President Lee and wish him well as he makes his first official overseas trip.

The United States and the Republic of Korea have shared a long and successful alliance. South Korea is a key partner in the Six-Party Talks aimed at assuring that North Korea does not develop and deploy nuclear weapons that could create a strategic imbalance in northeast Asia. The people of South Korea know better than anyone what the consequences of a nuclear-armed North Korea could be.

South Korea and the United States have also been political, diplomatic, and economic partners since the founding of the alliance 125 years ago. While our two countries were brought dramatically together through the Korean War, which ended in an armistice 55 years ago, we have worked together consistently in a much less dramatic way since then.

For instance, South Korea and the United States are close business partners with over \$80 billion in annual bilateral trade volume. In fact, South Korea is the seventh largest trading partner of the United States. Goods and services move between our two countries on a daily basis.

The pending U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement will not bring with it just economic benefits, many of which were described in a recent study released by the U.S. International Trade Commission, but also positive geopolitical and geostrategic consequences.

Approving the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement will strengthen our relationship with one of our most important and indispensable allies in Asia and give the United States a permanent economic foothold in the most dynamic and fastest growing region in the world. This agreement will also provide a counterbalance to China's emergence as a dominant market player in that region and worldwide.

The Free Trade Agreement will complement the likely admission of the Republic of Korea into the Visa Waiver Program, making it easier for Korean travelers to visit the United States as tourists or as students, or for business or family purposes. I can attest that many of my constituents are looking forward eagerly to Ko-

rea's inclusion in the Visa Waiver Program, which will bring with it many economic benefits aside from—and in addition to—those benefits that will accrue from the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement.

Madam Speaker, I have just barely touched on the many important issues that will be discussed this week while President Lee is in Washington. The South Korean President's visit gives us a special reason to address these topics, but it does not mean that the conversation will end when he returns home. I know from experience that my colleagues on the Foreign Affairs Committee's Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment will be exploring these issues in depth in the weeks and months to come.

We welcome the opportunity to hear directly from President Lee his own views and the views of his government on these matters that affect both South Korea and the United States.

XIA LANIEL**HON. ED PERLMUTTER**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 2008

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Xia Laniel who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Xia Laniel is a student at Drake Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Xia Laniel is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Xia Laniel for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character to all her future accomplishments.

CHARLES HITCHBORN**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, it is with great pride and pleasure that I rise today to recognize the outstanding service and leadership of Chuck Hitchborn on the occasion of his retirement as Mayor of the City of Smithville, Missouri.

Chuck served four years as Mayor of Smithville. Before that, he served six years on the Smithville Board of Aldermen. In addition to his service in Smithville, Chuck also served eight years as a city council member in Arrowhead, Colorado. Chuck has been married to his wife, Joan, for 57 years. Together they have two children, five grandchildren, and ten

grandchildren with two more on the way. In his spare time, he is an avid quilter and enjoys gardening. He gets his greatest enjoyment from working with kids and supporting Smithville's local student organizations and athletes.

Chuck has served the Smithville community in many other ways as well. He has been a member and past President of the Rotary Club and is also a current member of the Smithville R-II School District Foundation. Some of Chuck's accomplishments include the downtown sewer replacement project, the approval of Smithville Commons and the addition of the veterans memorial in downtown Smithville.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join with me in commending Chuck Hitchborn for his dedicated service to the people of Smithville, Missouri. I know Chuck's colleagues, family and friends join with me in thanking him for his commitment to others and wishing him happiness and good health in his retirement.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING
JENNY HOSTETLER FOR WINNING THE OHIO DIVISION IV STATE BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 2008

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker:

Whereas, Jenny Hostetler showed hard work and dedication to the sport of basketball; and

Whereas, Jenny Hostetler was a supportive team player; and

Whereas, Jenny Hostetler always displayed sportsmanship on and off of the court; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that along with her friends, family, and the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I congratulate Jenny Hostetler on winning the Ohio Division IV State Basketball Championship. We recognize the tremendous hard work and sportsmanship she has demonstrated during the 2007-2008 basketball season.

IN HONOR OF LEONARD M.
CALABRESE

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 2008

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of Leonard M. Calabrese, who through his service to the Catholic Church of Cleveland has dedicated his life to serving as a community organizer on behalf of the poor, the vulnerable and the voiceless.

For over 20 years, Mr. Calabrese has served as executive director of the Commission on Catholic Community Action (CCCA), the Social Action Office for Catholic Charities Services, for the Diocese of Cleveland. Prior to his appointment as executive director, Len served as a volunteer board member for nine

years. Founded in 1969, the CCCA works to protect and promote human dignity through empowering the poor and the often voiceless minority groups by promoting and ensuring their full participation in society. Through his leadership at the Commission, he is able to work with many other local organizations to educate, mobilize and raise the consciousness of the community, especially among Catholics.

Len Calabrese has a multifaceted background and a very impressive record in serving our community. He was an associate professor for several higher learning institutions such as John Carroll University, University of Akron, Northwestern University and St. Mary Seminary. He was also a consultant for several mayors and the Ohio Senate, and board member for several institutions such as Cuyahoga County Public Library, Immigrant Minority Business Alliance, The City Club of Cleveland and the greater Cleveland Round Table of Civic Leaders, Greater Cleveland Inter-Religious Task Force on Central America just to name a few.

I have had the opportunity and privilege to work closely with Len Calabrese in a number of capacities. In the aftermath of the tragedy of September 11, 2001, Len worked with the community at large to allay fears expressed against immigrants. He has helped many newcomers from abroad with his welcoming touch and his help with the necessary networking to succeed in business. He represented the CCCA in the Sustainable Communities Symposium and other collaborations with the inner city and suburbs of Cleveland.

Len's talent to mobilize the community and to advocate for the social welfare of others is manifested through his new position as president of Caritas Connection, a nonprofit organization that works to connect Catholic charities, health care, nursing homes and colleges. He will also serve as director of Ministering Together, a national umbrella of Catholic Charities USA, Catholic Health Care, the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, National Catholic Education Association and various organizations of the laity.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in recognition of Leonard M. Calabrese, who has dedicated his life to serving his church and the greater Cleveland community. Let his advocacy on behalf of the welfare of others serve as inspiration for all those in pursuit of social change.

ACKNOWLEDGING MARY KATE
RIDGWAY'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO
TENNESSEE AGRICULTURE

HON. JOHN S. TANNER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 2008

Mr. TANNER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of my friend Mary Kate Ridgway, who recently began an exciting new opportunity as director of the Henry County office of the University of Tennessee Agriculture Extension Service. Her new position will allow Mary Kate to continue more than 30 years of service to family farmers in Henry County and across Tennessee.

Mary Kate is originally from Obion County. Her husband Don is deputy director of the Northwest Tennessee Economic Development Council. Don represented the 75th district in the Tennessee House of Representatives, where he served with distinction as the Democratic Caucus Chairman and Chairman of the House Transportation Committee. Their son, John Penn, who several years ago worked in our Washington office, and his wife Melissa have two children, Walker and Jackson.

With bachelor's and master's degrees in family and consumer science education from the University of Tennessee at Martin, Mary Kate is also active in other important organizations in our community, including as secretary of Helping Hand Incorporated and co-chair of the Lifeline blood board.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate you and our colleagues joining me as we thank Mary Kate Ridgway for her long service to the agricultural community in west Tennessee and congratulate her on her new position as county director for the University of Tennessee Agriculture Extension program.

CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF SKAGIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

HON. RICK LARSEN

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 2008

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Madam Speaker, on April 9th, 1958, Skagit Valley Hospital opened its doors and began a tradition of providing high-quality healthcare to the residents of Northwest Washington. I rise today to commend Skagit Valley Hospital on its 50th Anniversary and thank the more than 1,200 employees, 250 physicians, 450 volunteers and countless community supporters who continue to work to fulfill the hospital's goal of being "the best regional, community hospital in the Northwest."

Over the last fifty years, Skagit Valley Hospital has grown dramatically and expanded the services it offers to patients. After opening a 220,000 square foot expansion in June of 2007, the hospital now boasts 137 beds, a Level III Trauma Center, and cutting-edge Kidney, Diagnostic Imaging and Comprehensive Cancer Care Centers.

Most of Skagit Valley Hospital's facilities are located in Mount Vernon, Washington, but in recent years the hospital has expanded geographically to serve more families in rural and underserved areas. Its Community Health Centers in Stanwood, Washington and Camano Island, Washington bring healthcare services closer to patients who need them.

The fine work of Skagit Valley Hospital has been supported by the generosity of both the Skagit Valley Hospital Foundation and the Skagit Hospice Foundation. Together, these organizations have raised and donated over \$9 million to improve Skagit Valley Hospital and support patients and their families.

For fifty years, Skagit Valley Hospital has been a pillar of our community and the Northwest Washington healthcare system. Please join me in celebrating the 50th Anniversary of