

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

INTRODUCTION OF THE CORAL REEF CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 2000

HON. JIM SXTON

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. SXTON. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to introduce the Coral Reef Conservation and Restoration Partnership Act of 2000. I am joined in this effort by the distinguished gentleman from American Samoa, who is the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans, along with 12 other bipartisan cosponsors.

Coral reefs support the economies of many local communities throughout the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, and Pacific Ocean. Coral reefs provide important areas for tourism, diving, fishing, scientific research and offers potential life saving pharmaceutical advances to treat human diseases. Unfortunately, many of our coral reef areas are threatened by a variety of natural impacts and human activities including coral disease, hurricanes, destructive fishing practices, over fishing, pollution, and changing ocean conditions. Under ideal circumstances, coral reefs can take decades or more to recover, and it is critical that we address the most serious problems facing these valuable marine areas. In cases where damage has occurred, we need to develop the technologies to help repair and restore coral reefs. Further, we need to improve our abilities to recognize areas that are susceptible to coral reef loss. This requires developing comprehensive maps of U.S. coral reef resources using new remote as well as using satellite data to monitor coral reef change.

Last year, I introduced H.R. 2903, the Coral Reef Conservation and Restoration Act, which was based on a bill approved by the House of Representatives in the 105th Congress. The Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans held a hearing on H.R. 2903 on October 21, 1998. The bill I am introducing today replaces that legislation and incorporates suggestions from that hearing, as well as provisions from H.R. 3133, the Coral Reef Protection Act, which was introduced by my friend and colleague from American Samoa, ENI FALOMAVAEGA. Over the last several months, I have worked closely with him to craft the Coral Reef Conservation and Restoration Partnership Act. This bill represents a major step forward in this nation's efforts to conserve valuable coral reef ecosystems.

The Coral Reef Conservation and Restoration Partnership Act represents a combination of the best ideas for enhancing and conserving coral reefs. The bill greatly assists ongoing efforts to understand, map and conserve U.S. coral reefs. Our bill authorizes \$15 million per year for coral reef conservation, for a total of \$60 million over four years. This level of funding is consistent with the FY 2001 budget

request of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The bill establishes a grant program to provide funding for coral reef projects carried out in local communities, States and U.S. Insular Areas that have limited sources of funding. Eligible grantees include local and State governments, certain nonprofit groups and educational institutions. A grant partner can receive up to 50 percent Federal matching funds for a variety of projects, such as mapping, monitoring, assessment, restoration and law enforcement. The Secretary of Commerce is given flexibility in the match requirements for small projects carried out in the Insular Areas.

The bill also provides statutory authority for the Coral Reef Task Force, which was established by Presidential Executive Order 13089. The Departments of Interior and Commerce are the designated Task Force co-chairs. The co-chairs can jointly designate the governors of the States and Territories to serve on the Task Force. The Task Force is charged with coordinating Federal agency activities, establishing a national coral reef action strategy, developing a comprehensive mapping, monitoring and assessment program for U.S. coral reefs, and providing regular reports to Congress on activities to conserve coral reefs.

Finally, our bill authorizes the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to carry out a variety of coral reef-related conservation activities, including restoration, mapping, and monitoring. The proposed legislation recognizes NOAA's important role in managing coral reef resources, and authorizes ongoing activities consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act and the National Marine Sanctuaries Act.

Since the Year of the Reef in 1997, I have been working to enact legislation that would focus the necessary resources to protect and restore coral reefs. I believe that the Coral Reef Conservation and Restoration Partnership Act will accomplish this goal, and I intend to work to ensure that this bill is signed into law. It is essential that we work to conserve our coral reef ecosystems for future generations. These ecosystems are the marine equivalent of the rain forest, rich in biological diversity and they provide innumerable benefits to the Nation.

I urge my colleagues to join with us by cosponsoring this important measure.

ROBERT "BAT" BATINOVICH HONORED WITH SAN FRANCISCO CATHOLIC CHARITIES' LOAVES AND FISHES AWARD

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, it is my great privilege today to call to the attention of my colleagues in the Congress the extraordinary

accomplishments of Mr. Robert "Bat" Batinovich of San Mateo, California. Bat brings the same extraordinary leadership qualities and generosity of spirit to his charitable contributions that he does to his entrepreneurial enterprises.

A shining example in the business community of the possibilities for philanthropic contribution, Bat Batinovich has for years made quiet contributions to causes ranging from women's athletics to services for homeless families. This Saturday, March 18, 2000, the Catholic Charities of San Francisco will honor Mr. Batinovich with its annual Loaves and Fishes Award for outstanding service to the community. This award recognizes the distinguished charitable efforts of individuals and organizations, and Mr. Batinovich reflects perfectly the spirit of commitment and service that define the work of Catholic Charities.

Robert Batinovich is Chairman and CEO of Glenborough Realty Trust, a San Mateo-based real estate investment trust. He is a self-made man whose drive has taken him from tuna-fishing on the high seas to chairing the California Public Utilities Commission during the energy crisis. His passion and vivacity have marked every step along the way with *joie de vivre*. As a leader, Mr. Batinovich has gained the respect and affection of our entire community. His reputation for honesty and tenaciousness is unassailable, but Bat's most admirable quality is his discernment that true success extends beyond the business arena and necessarily includes one's relationship to one's family, friends and community.

I invite my colleagues to join me and the Catholic Charities of San Francisco in honoring the remarkable accomplishments of the benevolent Robert "Bat" Batinovich in business, in life and in our community.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MISSOURI SPORTS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE TOM HENKE

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that retired major league baseball pitcher Tom Henke, of Taos, Missouri, was inducted into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame on February 6, 2000.

Tom began his major league baseball career with the Texas Rangers in 1982, then continued with the Toronto Blue Jays in 1985. He became the Blue Jays career leader with 217 saves during his eight years in Toronto, including a save during the 1992 World Series. In 1993, Tom returned to the Rangers and recorded a career-high 40 saves. He spent the final year of his sterling career pitching for the St. Louis Cardinals, the team he cheered for while growing up in Missouri. His 1995 season was one of the finest of his 15-year professional career. Tom was named to

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the National League All-Star team, was voted the Cardinals Player of the Year and won the Rolands National League Relief Man Award. He donated the \$25,000 award to the Taos Parks and Recreation Board and St. Francis Xavier School, and now devotes a portion of his time to helping local high school baseball programs.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to extend my congratulations to Tom Henke for his most deserved induction into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RURAL EDUCATION

HON. BILL BARRETT

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Rural Caucus, I would like to share my strong support for one of the most vibrant sectors of rural America—our rural schools. Out in my part of the country, schools, along with churches, are at the heart of a community. And, rural administrators, teachers, and school boards should be commended for the educational opportunities they work to offer rural school students.

Rural schools offer students the types of educational experiences we hope all students can have—small classes, quality basic academic programs, personal relationships with teachers and administrators, hands-on vocational education opportunities, and the chance to participate in a variety of quality extracurricular activities. In fact, more than 20 percent of students in this country attend small, rural schools. Rural schools in my district have done an exceptional job maximizing learning opportunities for their students by investing in distance learning technology, forming educational service units to offer special education and gifted and talented programs, and holding themselves accountable, not only to the federal government and to the state, but, most importantly, to parents.

When I consider excellent rural schools in my district, several examples come to mind. For instance, I think of the one-room Kindergarten through 6th grade Macon School in the tiny village of Macon, Nebraska, where students receive one-on-one attention in basic academic areas and the arts. From the first grade on, every student at the Macon School receives individual piano lessons from their teacher, Mrs. Johnson; writes plays, songs, and poems; and performs original programs to packed houses of family and friends. There aren't too many one-room schools left, but the Macon School is an example of how tiny rural schools can offer their students more enriching experiences than larger schools may be able to offer.

Rural schools also work together to keep their standards high. Schools like Franklin and Hildreth, Nebraska, have invested in state-of-the-art distance learning facilities so foreign language, advanced math, and other advanced courses can be available to all students, regardless of the size of their school or the distance between the teacher and the students. This year, these schools banded together to hire an exchange teacher, Cristina Bermejo, from Spain to teach Spanish. This

teacher is physically located in the Franklin school, but her courses are beamed via two-way audio-video connection to Hildreth.

Because of their size and location, many schools in our rural areas are able to reach out to underserved and at-risk populations, like the Santee School in Santee, Nebraska. Led by a dedicated superintendent, Chuck Squire, the Santee School works to empower children from the Santee tribe and helps them gain the skills they need for the 21st Century workplace.

These are just a few examples of the high quality educational experiences students in rural school districts benefit. But, while there are certainly many benefits to rural education, there are also some real challenges facing rural schools. One is the difficulty of attracting teachers to work in far-flung school districts, especially in fields like foreign language, music, advanced math, and science. Recently, many schools in Nebraska have started offering signing bonuses to draw teachers to their schools.

In addition to staffing issues, federal funding formulas have not addressed the unique funding needs of these districts. The problem is that not all schools are created equal. Bigger schools have an advantage when it comes to attracting federal funds and resources. By their very nature, small, rural schools have their own strong points, as I have mentioned, but they struggle, nearly always, for needed funding. All current federal education formula grants unintentionally ignore small, rural schools by not producing enough revenue for rural schools to carry out the program the grant is intended to fund. To address this problem, together with Mr. Pomeroy, I introduced a bill, H.R. 2725, the Rural Education Initiative Act, which was later incorporated into the reauthorization package for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and passed by the House last October.

This program is completely optional, but if a school district chooses to participate, the rural provisions will allow a small, rural school district with fewer than 600 students and located in a community with a Beale Code of 6, 7, 8, or 9 (the Beale Code is a measure used by the USDA to determine ruralness) to combine its federal education dollars in selected programs.

Small schools qualifying for this program would have the option to apply for a flexible lump-sum in place of funds from federal education formula grants. While federal education formula grants normally include strict rules for how they must be used, schools receiving the lump-sum grant could make their own decisions about how to use the money. For example, they could use the money to support local education and to improve student achievement or the quality of instruction. In exchange for this flexibility, school districts would have to meet high accountability standards.

When I've been in my congressional district, I have heard from many rural school administrators who have told me that this particular provision will help them serve their students even better. They can't wait for this provision to become law so rural America's students will be able to benefit from the same types of programs as their urban and suburban counterparts.

This provision has broad bipartisan support and more than 80 endorsements from education organizations across the country. It pro-

vides a commonsense approach to using federal dollars in the way Congress intended—to insure that all students, regardless of their background, have the opportunity to receive a high quality education.

As the ESEA reauthorization efforts continue during this session of Congress, I look forward to helping this provision and others designed to strengthen rural school districts become law. I am pleased that the Rural Caucus is taking a step forward to highlight some of the issues facing rural America, including rural education.

THE PASSING OF GOVERNOR MALCOLM WILSON

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is with deep regret that I inform our colleagues of the passing of one of the outstanding political leaders of New York State over the past century.

Malcolm Wilson was first elected to our New York State Assembly in 1938, at the young age of 24, representing a portion of Westchester County. Throughout his 20 years as a member of that chamber, he earned a statewide reputation for his honesty, integrity, and for his thorough understanding of our legislative process.

Malcolm Wilson was known as a superb debater, a skill he honed during his years as a star member of the debate team at Fordham University in the Bronx.

In the years following World War II, I came to know Malcolm Wilson quite well, as he was the coordinator of our Young Republican organization for the 9th Judicial District of New York. In that position, he impressed us all with his leadership and organizational skills.

In 1958, many leaders throughout New York State considered Malcolm Wilson their logical choice for Governor. But the nomination that year was won instead by Nelson Rockefeller, who brought to his candidacy extensive experience in the business world and in the State Department, but none in the legislative process. Accordingly, Rockefeller recognized that Malcolm Wilson would be a superb Lieutenant Governor, due to the universal respect held for him in the legislature and his skill at maneuvering bills into law.

For 15 years, Malcolm Wilson served faithfully as our State's Lieutenant Governor. Often, during the end of that tenure, Malcolm cracked that he was number two "longer than Avis." But no one disputed his dedication to the cause of good government.

Late in 1973, when Governor Rockefeller resigned from office, Malcolm Wilson became the 50th Governor of New York State. While he brought his common sense principles to the Governor's mansion, he was denied election to a full term as Governor the following fall. It was the only time in his career that Malcolm Wilson lost an election.

Upon his passing yesterday, William Harrington, who served a decade as his legal counsel during the Lieutenant Governor years, stated: "When Malcolm spoke, people listened. I don't think there was anyone more learned about state government than Malcolm Wilson."

Mr. Speaker, during my own years as a New York State Assemblyman, Malcolm Wilson served as a great inspiration and was of immense assistance to our efforts. I can well remember that his door was always open to me or to any other legislator who sought his assistance.

In addition to being an outstanding public servant, Malcolm Wilson was a courageous veteran, having served in our Navy during World War II. He served on an ammunition ship and participated in the invasion of Normandy.

Malcolm was also a devoted husband to his wife, Katherine, who he married in 1941 and who died in 1980.

Gov. Malcolm Wilson was also known for his dedication to his faith. He was a trustee at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City and was an active member of St. Denis Church in Yonkers. He was a major sponsor of State legislation to provide secular textbooks and bus transportation to students at parochial schools.

Mr. Speaker, I invite our colleagues to join with me in extending our condolences to his daughters, Katharine and Anne, and to his six grandsons.

Gov. Malcolm Wilson was a giant of New York State history who will long be missed.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON S. 376,
OPEN-MARKET REORGANIZATION
FOR THE BETTERMENT OF
INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNIC-
ATIONS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. CLIFF STEARNS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I think that the compromise before us accurately reflects the consensus of the Congress that we must encourage the privatization of INTELSAT without diminishing competition. I strongly support the satellite reform conference agreement and I urge my colleagues in the House to vote for its passage today.

As many of you know, for the last few years, there has been great disagreement between the House and Senate on how to craft a meaningful satellite communications reform bill. Under the leadership of Chairman BLILEY, Representative TAUZIN and Representative OXLEY, and Senator BURNS, we have reached the point in the debate where there is finally an agreement that can be enacted into law. I believe that the conference agreement achieves the core objectives of everyone who cares about satellite reform without imposing substantial threats to genuine market competition or breaching the Constitution.

When the House passed its satellite reform bill at the end of the first session of the 106th Congress, I expressed some concerns of mine about a provision in the House bill that seemed to place unnecessary conditions on lifting COMSAT's ownership caps. In my opinion, retaining this language would have continued to block the consummation of the Lockheed Martin-COMSAT merger. I am pleased that this issue I raised was addressed by the conferees. The conference agreement now before us does not impose any conditions on

the removal of COMSAT's board and ownership restrictions. Those restrictions are eliminated upon enactment without conditions. This change will enable Lockheed Martin to acquire 100% of COMSAT without further delay. I thank Chairman BLILEY and the other conferees for amending this provision so that Lockheed Martin can more quickly enter the satellite communications market.

I am also pleased that the conference agreement does not contain fresh look and so-called Level IV direct access, which would have been confiscatory and punitive. Extracting those provisions, along with the significant improvements that were made to the House-passed privatization criteria, have put us in the position of being able to pass a compromise satellite reform bill that can be signed into law.

I congratulate my colleagues in the House and in the Senate on a job well done, and I look forward to the enactment of this legislation.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST KATI
MARTON ADDRESSES THE
STOCKHOLM HOLOCAUST CON-
FERENCE ON "REMEMBERING
WALLENBERG"

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, just a few weeks ago in Stockholm representatives of 40 countries—including the Prime Ministers of Israel, Germany and Austria, and the President of Poland—as well as Holocaust survivors and spiritual leaders met to focus attention on the legacy of the Holocaust. This three-day international conference was organized by the government of Sweden as part of an effort to raise awareness among young people about the genocide of six million Jews and two million others, including Roma (Gypsies) and homosexuals, under the Nazi German regime.

All who participated in the conference spoke of the importance of remembering that most heinous tragedy and of fighting against anti-Semitism, racism and bigotry. In his address to the conference, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said: "We must support each other in the teaching of humanity and civil courage, so that normal people shall never again, in the name of some criminal ideology, turn normal places into grim factories of execution."

Mr. Speaker, one of the highlights of this conference was the address by Hungarian-born American journalist Kati Marton entitled "Remembering Wallenberg." As she explained in her outstanding speech, the Swedish humanitarian Raoul Wallenberg was one of the true heroes during this blackest of chapters in the history of humankind. Against almost insurmountable odds, he went to Budapest at the height of the Nazi effort to extinguish the Jews of Hungary, and through courage, intelligence and incredible effort, he was instrumental in saving the lives of as many as one hundred thousand Jews.

Mr. Speaker, Kati Marton is superbly qualified to provide this outstanding appraisal of Wallenberg. She was born in Hungary, and both of her parents were journalists who suffered the Nazi occupation and the Communist

takeover that followed. She and her parents were able to escape to the West, and eventually she came to the United States. Kati is a journalist and author of the first rank. She currently serves as the president of the Committee to Protect Journalists, a nonpartisan nongovernmental organization dedicated to protecting journalists and press freedom throughout the world. She is also the author of Wallenberg: Missing Hero and Death in Jerusalem.

Mr. Speaker, I submit the text of Kati Marton's Stockholm address "Remembering Wallenberg" to be placed in the RECORD, and I urge my colleagues to give it thoughtful attention.

REMEMBERING WALLENBERG

I am immensely grateful for this chance to talk about Raoul Wallenberg.

Fifty-five years after the Holocaust we are still learning things about that shameful chapter in history. The Swedish government's recent admission of its mistakes is both commendable and essential . . . Not only for the sake of historical truth—but to put present and future leaders on notice that they will be held accountable. Sweden did misjudge the character of the evil represented by Hitler . . . but this country also gave the world Raoul Wallenberg . . . one of the Holocaust's few genuine heroes. And today . . . thanks to Sweden . . . we are gathered here to learn not only from the misjudgements of the past terrible century . . . but from its extraordinary moments of humanity . . . If those terrible times are to remain real . . . and cautionary . . . to those who are lucky enough never to have experienced them . . . a great deal of the credit goes to conferences like this one . . . for which I thank the Swedish Government and the American Jewish Committee.

The historians of the Century that has just ended have the responsibility to tell the story of Wallenberg so that the next generation can understand humanity's extraordinary power for both perversity and compassion. Our responsibility is to shape public memory . . . and ultimately to stand against evil by bearing witness.

Since we are here in search of Historical Truth . . . I would like to say a few words about another Swede whose role in the Holocaust and its aftermath has for too long been forgotten or misunderstood . . . buried under rumor and misinformation: Count Folke Bernadotte. Bernadotte's assassination at the hands of Jewish extremists over half a century ago is a tragically prophetic tale . . . as we continue to search for peace in the Middle East.

In many ways, Folke Bernadotte was not the right man for the role of the United Nations first Arab-Israeli mediator . . . not in the overheated emotional climate . . . and volatile military situation . . . which prevailed during that traumatic first year of Israel's life. But—whatever his personal shortcomings or the weakness of his peace effort . . . Folke Bernadotte was a good man who threw caution to the winds and acted out of humanity. In the '40s . . . as now . . . those qualities were in short supply. He deserved better than he got: death at the hands of extremists opposed to any negotiated settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Long before Bernadotte landed in Palestine, he had proved himself a skilled negotiator and committed humanitarian. He was responsible for the War's most unsung, most controversial, and most successful rescue effort inside Germany.

Through many hours of hard nosed negotiations with the notorious Heinrich Himmler . . . Bernadotte extricated 21,000 prisoners . . . including 6,500 Jews . . . citizens

of 20 different countries . . . bound for certain extermination . . . from the Nazi's grasp.

In carrying out his rescue, Bernadotte became the first representative of a humanitarian organization from a neutral country to set foot in one of the Reich's death camps.

Of course, 21,000 souls saved is a tiny number compared to the final death count . . . but it does mock such assertions as the one in the recent book, *The Myth of Rescue*, by Prof. William D. Rubinstein, "that not one plan or proposal made anywhere in the democracies by either Jews or non-Jewish champions of the Jews after the Nazi conquest of Europe could have rescued one single Jew who perished in the Holocaust." Moreover, how would Rubinstein account for the even more spectacular rescue of up to 100,000 Hungarian Jews by Raoul Wallenberg?

The line between the core subject of our conference: the Holocaust and Bernadotte's assassination, is direct and clear. The Holocaust had taught Bernadotte's assassins the bitter lesson of self-reliance in an unforgiving world. Suspicious even of their own country's founding fathers, they believed they alone were fit to determine Israel's future. Israel's leaders—people like David Ben Gurion and Golda Meir . . . the fabled pioneers revered by so many other Jews—were dismissed by Bernadotte's killers as cowards and compromisers.

Israelis today have chosen the pragmatic solution over the biblical one. Today, we can have an honest discussion of Bernadotte's tragic fate—and his very real contribution to the search for peace in the region.

We don't use the world hero much any more . . . we tend to be skeptical about those to whom it is attached. . . . If ever there was a period with a desperate hero shortage it is the Holocaust . . . that chapter of our Century which has changed our view of man and his capacity for inhumanity to his fellow man. . . . There were so few heroes in that bleak period from 1941 until 1945. . . . Heroism is not simply enduring when you have no choice . . . as a prisoner does . . . or an inmate in a camp . . . that is courage. . . . Heroism is of a different order . . . it is when you have a choice and you embrace danger for the sake of others. . . . that is what Raoul Wallenberg did . . . and that is why he is that rare breed: a genuine Hero.

If Sweden made grave mistakes—so too did Washington during the Holocaust. Our leaders had known since 1942 that there were killing camps in Hitler's empire. . . . But Churchill and Roosevelt's only goal was to win the war. . . . They had been persuaded by the military that any large scale effort to save refugees from the Nazis killing camps would divert resources that should be channeled to the War effort. . . . There was also the ever-present poison of anti-Semitism, which still permeated the State Department . . . which, before the war, could have issued life-saving visas to hundreds of thousands of Jews. But, masquerading behind bureaucratic mumbo jumbo, American consular offices dragged their feet until it was too late, though Hitler made no secret of his plan to rid Germany of Jews . . . although at the outset he was willing to let German Jews leave, if they could find sanctuary. When America and the rest of the world was unwilling to take in more than a trickle it confirmed Hitler's view that the world really didn't give a damn about Jews anyway . . . so he proceeded to the Final Solution.

Why did Wallenberg volunteer to walk into the jaws of the Kafkaesque nightmare of Budapest? He had seen the Nazi's brutality, so he wasn't naive about their capacity for inhumanity. He had been to Berlin . . . to Palestine, . . . had seen the Jewish refugees and heard their stories of terror. He thought he

could help. He was young . . . 31, and brave, recklessly brave. He was in part American educated . . . the University of Michigan. . . . so he had a larger view of the world than most Europeans. But we run out of rational explanations for why this well born young man with everything to live for packed a backpack in the hellish summer of 1944 and set off for the country that sheltered the largest Jewish community left in Europe . . . Hungary. He packed a pistol . . . and he packed dollars . . . from American sources: the War Refugee Board which was FDR's creation . . . an attempt to compensate for Washington's dismal record of nonrescue of Jews. Wallenberg knew he would need money to bribe Nazis and Hungarians. He was a coolheaded man. But nothing could have prepared him for what he found in the once graceful city of Budapest . . .

The Jews of the city knew their relatives and friends in the provinces . . . a half a million of them in fact . . . had already taken their final train to Auschwitz. Adolf Eichmann had broken all his prior records for speed and efficiency in rounding up the Jews of the Hungarian countryside . . . including my grandparents. He had to work fast because by now even the most fanatic Nazi knew the War was lost. It would be just a matter of weeks . . . maybe months . . . until the combined force of the Red Army and the Allies brought Hitler to his knees. So the Jews of Budapest played a waiting game . . . and watched their city slowly turn into a Nazi garrison. They lived on rumors. Jews could no longer work, or take public transport, or sit on park benches. They could leave their homes only between 11 am and 5 pm. Many of them were hidden in the homes of Christian friends—waiting . . . for something.

Raoul Wallenberg started his rescue mission on a small scale . . . giving Swedish passports first only to Hungarian Jews who had business dealings with Sweden . . . or Swedish relatives . . . a few hundred. Raoul was testing the waters. The passports seemed to impress the local Nazis. They kept their hands off these freshly minted Swedes.

So Wallenberg got bolder . . . he started printing his own passports . . . which bore the Swedish royal emblem—thousands of them. And as word spread around the terrorized city that they were available, lines of Jews twisted around the Swedish embassy in Buda waiting for the magic passports. Those holding them didn't have to wear the yellow star . . . and were promised repatriation to Sweden. It was a young man's bluff . . . but in the atmosphere of near total anarchy which prevailed in this twilight time . . . the bluff seemed to be working.

With the dollars he was receiving from American Jewish organizations and the U.S. Government, he rented and even bought houses around the city. He declared them diplomatic property . . . flew the yellow and blue flag of Sweden . . . making them technically off limits to the legalistic-minded Germans. By the end of the War 30,000 Hungarian Jews lived in these safe houses.

Wallenberg played for time that summer . . . for the Russians were within earshot of the city . . . and the Allies were making their way to Berlin. He wrote his mother, "I'll try to be home a few days before the Russians arrive in Budapest . . ." Like everybody else, he assumed the Russians would be better than the Nazis. He did not imagine that the Russian liberation would turn into an Occupation.

In October 1944, Hungary's ruler, Regent Horthy, tried to bolt from Hitler's grip and declare Hungary's neutrality. Horthy was captured and replaced by a thug from Hungary's indigenous fascists, the Arrow Cross—a man completely loyal to Hitler and ready

to resolve the festering problem of what to do with Budapest's resilient Jews. This was Wallenberg's real testing . . . now he was a man possessed . . . there was so little time. "These are extraordinary and tense times," he wrote his mother, "but we are struggling, which is the main thing. I am sitting by candlelight with a dozen people around me . . . each with a request. I don't know who to deal with first. The days and nights are so filled with work . . ."

The city was in total panic now as the Arrow Cross broke into homes looking for Jews and then marched them to the edge of the frozen Danube to face firing squads . . . or line them up to die on the forced march to the German border.

Wallenberg was at his most resourceful . . . and most frenetic. He befriended the pretty Austrian wife of the Hungarian Foreign Minister and used that relationship to wring concessions from the Hungarian Nazis. He followed the endless columns of miserable humanity marching in rain and sleet the 120 miles to the border. When he could do nothing more he thrust blankets and food at them. But he always tried to pull people from the line. Sometimes he saved dozens this way, or, on a bad day, only one or two. Each life was sacred to him. Nearly one hundred thousand Jews were left in the city. Wallenberg even arranged to meet the Jews' executioner, to attempt to reason with him—Eichmann. "Leave now, while you can", Wallenberg urged Eichmann. Eichmann shook his head. "Budapest will be held as if it were Berlin." Eichmann tried to have Wallenberg killed. A traffic "accident" was arranged but Wallenberg was not in his car.

The siege of Budapest . . . one of the War's bloodiest struggles . . . began in December 1944 and turned the entire city into a battleground. Under the Allies' bombs the City was starving to death . . . living in cellars and praying for the Russians to arrive. The Nazis now rounded up 60,000 Jews who were not sheltered in Wallenberg's safe houses and forced them into a ghetto in the heart of Pest . . . living under conditions of far greater misery than anyone else in the hellish city.

Wallenberg, who always put things in writing (he had post War justice in mind), drew up sort of a contract guaranteeing the safety of the Jews in the ghetto and got an SS General to sign it. When the Arrow Cross men came to start the slaughter, the General blocked their way. Wallenberg had persuaded him that he would personally charge him with genocide before the War Crimes Tribunal that Churchill and Roosevelt had avowed would be convened after the war.

Early in January, the starving, ravaged city was at last "liberated". The Russians looted, pillaged and raped their way across the city . . . unleashing a new brand of terror. Everywhere the Russian soldiers turned there were reminders of the Swede. Who was this one man rescue squad? The fact that more Jews had survived the Hungarian Holocaust than any other was largely the result of his courage. His passports were scattered throughout the city, stories of his exploits were told by survivors.

The Russians came with their own plans for the city and the country. They were not just passing through . . . they were going to construct a Communist State, ruled by a single party, controlled by Moscow . . . it was the end of even the modicum of freedom the Hungarians had known before the War. But that was all carefully kept from the exhausted people . . . including Raoul Wallenberg. He should have at this point stayed underground—hidden like his fellow diplomats until the situation calmed down. But that was not Wallenberg's way. He had survived six months of savage Nazi brutality.

He had begun to believe in his own immortality. He had plans for rebuilding the Jewish community of Budapest. He could not now abandon the people he had just saved.

So, in a supreme act of courage and recklessness, Wallenberg went looking for the Russian High Command. He found them . . . and at that point his good fortune ran out. His reward for saving up to one hundred thousand lives was not the warm homecoming he had dreamed of. In January 1945 Wallenberg began his long journey into the Soviet Gulag. He never returned.

His precise odyssey is a subject to some speculation and some dispute. Some things regarding his fate are indisputable. He was taken to the Lubyanka . . . the dreaded hell hole that is the KGB's headquarters in Moscow. Wallenberg was accused of being a spy . . . the catchall crime in the paranoid Stalinist state. The Soviets claimed he died of a heart attack two years later. But they never produced a body or a death certificate . . . In my research I interviewed former Gulag inmates who swore Wallenberg was alive through the Fifties, Sixties and even Seventies. The trail has gone cold in the last decade . . . and no one can wish this man such a long ordeal at the hands of his captors.

The injustice of this story is almost too much to bear . . . For Raoul Wallenberg had stood up to the two greatest evils of our Century . . . the Nazis and the Communists. He proved that one man acting fearlessly and with great imagination could make the brutes back off.

In a way, Wallenberg's story is a terrible reminder of the world's cowardice. How many people, how many countries, pleaded that there was nothing to be done. Hitler had power and numbers on his side. Wallenberg made liars of them all.

After the last few years of intimate contact with the savage ethnic wars of the Balkans . . . from Bosnia to Kosovo . . . to Rwanda . . . I have seen how quickly demagogues . . . from Hitler to Milosevic . . . can fan the flames of nationalism and hatred among their people . . . turning former neighbors into murderous enemies.

I hear so often in my prosperous, privileged country the question raised, "Why should we get involved in other's problems? Why should we risk our lives to stop genocidal warfare in another country, another continent?" I have a single word answer to those who say, "Let them take care of themselves. There is nothing to be done. It is inevitable." My answer is: Wallenberg.

TRIBUTE TO HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE STAFF MEMBER DOUGLAS H. NECESSARY

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and pay tribute to Douglas H. Necessary, on the occasion of his retirement from the House Armed Services Committee staff after more than 15 years. He will be greatly missed by Members and staff alike.

Doug began his public service in the U.S. Army where he distinguished himself over a 20-year career. He rose from the enlisted ranks, received his commission, and was highly decorated during two combat tours in Vietnam as an infantry officer and retired as a lieutenant colonel. While in the Army, Doug also earned a Bachelor of Science degree

from Auburn University and a Master of Arts degree from the Florida Institute of Technology.

Doug's accomplishments on the committee are numerous. He came to the House Armed Services Committee in October 1984, bringing skills that were especially useful in the areas of military procurement, acquisition reform, and research and development. Since 1993, Doug has served as the lead staff person responsible for those issues while working for both the full committee and for the Ranking Minority Member. Doug guided two legislative initiatives, the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994 and the Clinger/Cohen Federal Acquisition Reform Act of 1996, that were landmark efforts to modernize and rectify a severely troubled military procurement process. Doug also pioneered efforts, in concert with Chairman Ron Dellums (D-CA), to better develop the Department of Defense's Small and Disadvantaged Business initiatives, particularly the Mentor-Protégé program.

Doug had a profound effect on the procurement of all of the Department of Defense's major weapons programs. At various times, he was the committee's staff person in charge of each of the services procurement programs, before becoming the lead staff with responsibility for all of the Department's programs. Doug became the ultimate expert on complex systems such as Ballistic Missile Defense, Theater Missile Defense, the V-22 Osprey, the B-2 bomber, the C-17, the F/A-18, and many others. His expertise was recognized not only by the Members of the House, but was also highly regarded by senior officials in the Department of Defense. His decisions about hardware programs were frequently guided by the awareness that the programs would result in weapons systems that would have to be used by real people, and he brought that kind of common sense approach to all of the issues he worked.

Doug has always integrated the depth of his factual knowledge with a keen sense of the realities that existed in the political and fiscal environment of the time. His advice allowed Members to understand what was important and what was possible. Because we knew what options existed, we were able to significantly advance our legislative initiatives. His work was always thorough and unbiased, and he had a unique knack for being able to explain complex and arcane subjects to novices and experts alike.

Perhaps the hallmark of Doug's career on the Hill was that he never lost sight of the ultimate goals of good government and sound national security policies. Good stewardship of the taxpayers' dollars and doing what was in America's best interests were always the guiding principles in his work. There is no doubt that the country is better off because of his extraordinary efforts.

I know I speak for countless members and staff when I thank Doug Necessary for his outstanding service to the country, to the House of Representatives, and to the Armed Services Committee. His expertise, his honesty, his friendliness, his availability, and perhaps especially his sense of humor, will be sorely missed. We wish Doug well as he moves on to the next phase of his life, knowing that he will make a difference for the better wherever he goes.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN F. HILBRICH AND WILLIAM J. BORAH

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, It is with great pride and honor that I commend Mr. John F. Hilbrich and Mr. William J. Borah for their extraordinary service to their Northwest Indiana and Illinois communities. On Wednesday, March 15, 2000, these men will be honored at the 2000 Legal Community Recognition dinner, a benefit for the Calumet Council, Boy Scouts of America. This event, chaired by David E. Wickland, will be held at the Center for Visual and Performing Arts in Munster, IN.

John Francis Hilbrich, a northwest Indiana native, has dedicated his life to serving his community and his country. After completing his undergraduate work cum laude at the University of Notre Dame, he enrolled in their distinguished law program which he successfully completed in 1951. Mr. Hilbrich was admitted to the bar later that year. He went on to serve in the U.S. Army as a Counter-Intelligence Special Agent from 1951-53. He later became the Lake County Deputy Prosecuting Attorney as well as a member of the Diocesan Council, Roman Catholic Diocese of Gary. Mr. Hilbrich is currently a partner at the Hilbrich, Cunningham, and Schwerd law firm in Portage, IN.

In addition to his impressive career achievements, John Hilbrich has always used his skills to improve his community. He is a charter member on the Board of Directors for the Lake County Bar Association. Mr. Hilbrich is also a member of the Real Property, Probate, and Trust Law section of the Indiana Bar Association. He is a proud member of the National Diocesan Attorney Association and a Regional Director for Bank One.

William J. Borah was born and raised in Calumet City, IL. In 1971, he graduated with a bachelors degree in history from Christian Brothers University in Memphis, TN. He subsequently attended the University of Saint Louis, where he earned his education administration degree as well as a masters degree in history. He went on to receive his Juris Doctor from the University of Memphis School of Law in 1982.

In addition to owning his own law firm where he performs a multitude of tasks, Mr. Borah has taken an active interest in helping youth. He taught History at St. Louis High School from 1971-76, where he received the Superb Teacher Award. From 1976-79 he served as the Dean of Instruction at Frontier Community College in Fairfield, IL. In addition to carrying a full course schedule during his law school years, Mr. Borah served as a Dorm Director at Christian Brothers University.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in commending John F. Hilbrich and William J. Borah for their lifetime commitment to service in Northwest Indiana and Illinois, respectively. Our communities have greatly benefited from their selflessness and dedication.

IMPROVING PUBLIC TRUST IN
GOVERNMENT

HON. TIM ROEMER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call to the attention of my colleagues an address by the distinguished former Member of the House, Lee Hamilton. I had the honor of serving with Lee for a number of years and he was widely respected as a reasoned and perceptive voice on how to improve the image and public understanding of Congress. The topic of his speech, "Improving Public Trust in Government" is especially timely. I encourage all Members to give it careful consideration and submit it for the RECORD.

IMPROVING PUBLIC TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

(By the Honorable Lee H. Hamilton)

INTRODUCTION

I am honored to be speaking at this John C. Whitehead Forum.

John Whitehead is one of the preeminent public servants of our time. He has been a friend for many years, and on countless occasions I have had reason to appreciate his constructive, problem-solving approach to national challenges. He will go into my Hall of Fame of distinguished public servants. His accomplishments in the private, public and nonprofit sectors make him a "triple threat" kind of performer. Our nation is deeply indebted to him for his remarkable service.

It is also a pleasure to be here because I have the highest esteem for the work of your Council. Your goal of improving the performance of government is tremendously important. I always think of such efforts as part of the quest for truth and justice. So I commend and encourage you in your good work.

Your partnerships with other organizations and the private sector help build the kind of large base we need to push for positive change in government performance.

I especially want to thank Pat McGinnis for her extraordinary leadership at the Council. She has done a remarkable job advancing the cause of good governance.

Pat has asked me to speak today about trust in government—with a particular emphasis on the Congress.

I approach the task with trepidation. I am only too aware of the low esteem in which the public holds the Congress—we rank only slightly above drug dealers and other felons. Having served in Congress for 34 years, that reputation does not fill me with confidence about my credibility on the topic of trust in government.

My constituents would often tell me just how awful my colleagues and I were. They would say to me fondly:

"You must be a bunch of idiots up there."

"You are irrelevant. Get out of my life."

"I know you have your hands in the till, Hamilton. Come clean!"

"Hell must be full of politicians like you."

Public distrust of government—always present in our history—has been on the rise over the past few decades. In the mid-1960s, three-quarters of Americans said they trusted the federal government to do the right thing most of the time. In the Council's poll this year, that number was down to 29 percent.

This decline in public confidence in government is deeply worrisome to all of us. It signals a great chasm between the government and the people, and makes it all the more difficult for government officials to carry out their responsibilities.

I. Reasons for public cynicism and distrust

The reasons why Americans are turned off by American politics today are many:

(1) Declining trust generally: Declining trust in government reflects a broader trend in our society of diminished confidence in authority and institutions generally—not just government. Since the 1960s, Americans have become less deferential and more skeptical of authority. Our government's involvement in Vietnam, Watergate, and other scandals contributed to this broad societal change. But many other institutions—including even our churches and synagogues—have suffered a drop in public trust as well.

(2) Changing economy: Even though the American economy has done exceedingly well in recent years, economic anxieties run high for many Americans worried about how to pay for education, health care, and retirement. Workers feel the threats of globalization and technology, and growing income inequality. I have always been impressed how economic pressures bear down on families, in good and bad times. To many people, government seems less relevant and not particularly helpful with their difficult work transitions and burdensome costs. Many Americans see the government as an obstacle rather than a helping hand to achieving the American dream.

(3) Poor leadership: There is disillusionment with the personal flaws of political leaders. This disillusionment is felt most strongly with respect to the misconduct of some of our presidents, but is also felt towards Members of Congress, cabinet members, and many other public officials. Many Americans believe public officials look out for themselves and pursue their own agendas rather than the interests of the people and the nation.

(4) Money and special interests: Americans feel that money and special interests have excessive influence in politics. Most Americans believe their own representative has traded votes for campaign contributions. They know our system of financing elections degrades politician and donor alike, and arouses deep suspicion of undue, disproportionate influence in exchange for the large contributions.

Special interests often contribute to public distrust of government by portraying government negatively—by using overblown rhetoric to convince people they are being endangered by sinister politicians and corrupt government. These groups excel at making themselves look good and the government look bad.

(5) Negative campaigns: Americans dislike the dirty, negative election campaigns that have become so common. They are turned off by personal attacks, and the view held by many politicians that to win a close race you must tear down your opponent. Americans disapprove of the way politicians attack other politicians' motives and criticize the very institutions they are seeking to join and lead. Candidates run for Congress today by running against Congress and often against government, too. It is really rather easy for a candidate for Congress to go before any audience in America and make himself look frugal, wise and compassionate and the Congress look extravagant, foolish and cold-hearted.

(6) Partisanship: There is a widespread belief that politics has become too partisan, too sharp-edged, too mean-spirited. The messy political process and the constant bickering signal to many Americans that partisan considerations take precedence in Washington over sound policy formulation.

(7) Performance of government: Large numbers of Americans are simply disappointed by the performance of govern-

ment. They think it spends their money wastefully, is ineffective, or too intrusive. In a survey taken a couple years ago, 42 percent of Americans couldn't name a single important achievement of the federal government over the past 30 years.

(8) Media: The role of the media in politics exacerbates public disdain of government. The media accentuate differences and conflicts between politicians. I can remember many times when I was rejected for a TV talk show because my views were too moderate. The media focus on the personal lives of politicians, on style rather than substance, entertainment over education. Since the 1960s, newspaper and television coverage has become increasingly negative, cynical and adversarial.

So it is not surprising that many people think there is nothing right with our political system at all.

II. Consequences of skepticism

What are the consequences of this public distrust and skepticism of government?

Skepticism is healthy: To an extent, skepticism is healthy. Voters should not take everything politicians say at face value, or blindly trust everything the government does.

Skepticism is part of our American heritage. We can trace it back to the battle for independence, which was triggered by a growing disillusionment with British rule. The Constitution is based on assumptions of wariness of government and the need for checks and balances to restrain the branches.

Skepticism indicates an attitude of questioning, of independence of thought, of challenging the status quo. It suggests to our leaders that people will not believe them if they do not fully explain their views, or, of course, if they lie or act deceitfully. In this sense, it serves us well.

Too much skepticism is unhealthy: The program arises when skepticism becomes so deep that Americans have no trust in government.

The effectiveness of our public institutions depends on a basic foundation of mutual trust between the people and public officials. When skepticism turns to cynicism, our political system works only with great difficulty.

If politicians' character and motives are constantly attacked, reasoned debate and consideration of their views becomes impossible. The dialogue of democracy, upon which our system depends, comes to an end.

Often when I was meeting with a group of constituents, I could feel a curtain of doubt hanging between them and me: I took the positions I did, they believed, because of this or that campaign contribution, not because I'd spent time studying and weighing the merits of issues. I would often ask myself what I had done to prompt such profound doubt about my motives and actions. For whatever reason, those constituents had given themselves over to cynicism, and cynicism is the great enemy of democracy. It is exceedingly difficult for public officials to govern when their character, values and motives are always suspect.

III. What to do?

So how can we improve public trust in government?

I want to focus on what government—especially the Congress—can do.

Some of the factors contributing to the decline in public trust are not easily changed. The government cannot readily affect the negative tone of the media or the broad decline in confidence in authority and institutions.

But there is much that government can do to restore and build public trust.

1. *Improve the way government works*

The most basic and important way to restore confidence in government is to make the government work better and cost less—to make it more responsive, accountable, accessible, and efficient.

On this subject, let me say a few words about the role of the Congress.

In a number of ways, current practices of the Congress help alienate people from the political process, and weaken trust in government.

Several trends have made Congress less deliberative, less transparent, and less accountable.

Omnibus legislation: Congress is increasingly unable to pass its spending bills on time, and then makes major legislative decisions through huge omnibus measures that are shaped in a great hurry and in secret by a limited group of congressional leaders and staff. 5 of 13 appropriations bills were dumped into one omnibus bill this year, totaling \$385 billion and composed of 2,000 pages. These bills—often gauged more by weight than the number of pages—are—from the standpoint of good process, if not content—an abomination.

Riders: Congress increasingly loads appropriations bills with legislative riders dealing with controversial policy measures that should be dealt with in other committees. These devices short-circuit deliberation and accountability.

Earmarks: There has been a proliferation of appropriations "earmarks," which target federal money to specific projects favored by individual Members. Many earmarks are just wasteful pork barrel spending inserted into an appropriations bill by a powerful Member, often without the knowledge or consent of his colleagues or the executive branch—on everything from the production of fighter aircraft to manufacturing chewing gum.

Circumventing committees: It has become common practice to bring bills directly to the House and Senate floor without full committee consideration. In 1995, for instance, a major Medicare reform package was crafted in the Speaker's office, rather than the appropriate committee which had jurisdiction over it. This practice excludes the main sources of policy expertise, cuts short deliberation, expands the influence of powerful lobbying groups, and places decisions more tightly in the hands of the congressional leadership and their staff.

Restrictive rules: Restrictive rules for the consideration of bills in Congress undermine debate. He who controls the rules of procedure almost always controls the results. Procedures are often used that sharply restrict debate, reduce the amendments and policy options that can be considered, and greatly advantage the leadership.

Scheduling practices: Selecting practices in the Congress weaken accountability. There is typically a rush of major legislation in the closing days of a session. Major policy choices are made with little advance notification, often late at night, and with inadequate information. The Congress now works a 2½ to 3 day week, except in the closing days of a session. The result is too little time for committee deliberation and floor consideration.

Senate filibusters: Senate filibusters, or the threat of them, have become too common. On many issues, the Senate no longer operates by majority rule because 60 Senators are needed to prevent an individual Senator from blocking consideration of legislation. Thirty years ago, filibusters were rare, and primarily occurred on issues of major constitutional importance. Today, the filibuster may be the single most important way in which the majority will is frustrated,

and the greatest source of institutional gridlock in Washington.

Congress should make reforms to remedy these practices and make itself more efficient, accountable and transparent. It should:

Streamline and strengthen the committee system;

Reduce the use of omnibus legislation, riders and earmarks;

Adopt fairer rules and a more reasonable schedule; and

Diminish the number of Senate filibusters.

Campaign finance reform: Also critical to restoring trust in government is enacting campaign finance reform. Poll after poll shows that most Americans believe our campaign finance system corrupts the political process, and should be reformed. If Congress enacts serious campaign finance reform, it will make itself more accountable and boost public trust.

Oversight: Congress should also do a better job of performing its important task of overseeing executive branch operations. Monitoring executive branch implementation of legislation is one of the core responsibilities of Congress. If done properly, congressional oversight can protest the country from the imperial presidency and bureaucratic arrogance. It can maintain a degree of constituency influence in an administration, encourage cost-effective implementation of legislation, ensure that legislation achieves its intended purposes, and determine whether changing circumstances have altered the need for certain programs.

But in recent years, congressional oversight has declined and has shifted away from the systematic review of programs to highly politicized investigations of individual public officials—looking at great length, for instance, at Hillary Clinton's commodity transactions or charges of money-laundering and drug trafficking at an Arkansas airport when Bill Clinton was governor. These personal investigations, while sometimes necessary, have been used excessively. They exacerbate partisan tensions and reduce the time and political will available for rooting out flaws in public policy.

A renewed commitment to congressional oversight will show that Congress is taking its responsibility seriously and help restore public confidence in the institution.

Tackle issues that concern voters most: Congress, and the government in general, can also strengthen public trust by tackling the big issues that concern voters most. In recent years, public confidence in Congress rose as Congress took tough steps to reduce the government's deficit and balance the federal budget. Today, the public is most concerned about the long-term outlook for Social Security and Medicare, education, and health care. In each of these areas, most Americans are looking to the government to act in a substantial and productive way. If the government addresses these issues, even if with only partial success, public perceptions of government will improve.

2. *Improve public understanding of government*

Yet improving the way government operates is not enough. We also need to do a better job explaining to Americans what the government does—how it works, why it is important, how it affects their everyday lives. We need to clear away misperceptions, and strengthen public appreciation for the political process. So we need to make government reforms, but we also need to educate people about the government's activities and importance.

I have often been struck by the extent to which Americans have incorrect assumptions about government spending and programs.

For instance, Americans frequently complain about the large amount of money our government spends on foreign aid, which they think is around 20 percent of the total federal budget and say should be closer to 10 percent. It is small wonder, then, that foreign aid is a much criticized program. Yet only one percent of the federal budget actually goes to foreign aid.

We should better explain to people that most government spending goes to programs, such as national security, Social Security and Medicare, that are widely popular and beneficial to Americans. Support for the federal government improves considerably when people appreciate the influence of government and are informed about the government's role in improving health care for seniors, insuring food safety, discovering medical cures, and protecting the environment.

We should also work to improve public understanding of the way our system works. We should emphasize that the political process is adversarial, untidy and imprecise. Politicians may not be popular, but they are indispensable. Politics is the way that we express the popular will of the people in this country. At its best, our representative democracy gives us a system whereby all of us have a voice in the process and a stake in the product.

While we should work to make government as efficient as possible, we should explain that legislative deliberation and debate—even heated debate—and delay, are important parts of the legislative process. Delay occurs because the issues before the government are very complicated and intensely debated. It's an incredibly difficult job making policy for a country of this vast size and remarkable diversity. It's the job especially of the Congress to give the various sides a chance to be heard and to search for a broadly acceptable consensus. The founders established our system of checks and balances so that policies could not be rammed through the government with little debate or deliberation.

The Council for Excellence in Government, of course, plays a critical role in the area of public education about government. I have been trying to contribute to the effort through The Center on Congress, which I direct at Indiana University. The central mission of the Center is to help improve the public's understanding of Congress—its role in our country, its strengths and weaknesses, and its daily impact on the lives of ordinary Americans. Through newspaper columns, a website, videos, radio segments, and other media, we seek to explain to ordinary people the role and importance of Congress.

Finally, we must also include a dose of civic responsibility. Citizens must understand their own responsibility to be involved in the political process. I was particularly pleased the Council's poll found that a majority of Americans believe citizen engagement is the single most important change necessary to improve government.

My observation is that participation is the best antidote to cynicism. A person who is deeply involved in fighting for a better school board, a safer railroad crossing, or a more effective arms control treaty, is rarely cynical.

Effective government is a two-way street. Our system of government simply does not work very well without popular support and participation.

Freedom is not free.

IV. *Optimism*

I've recommended a lot of changes today, but let me not mislead you. Like you, I have concerns about declining trust in government. But I am confident that our political system still basically works. It has a remarkable resilience and underlying strength.

Our government needs reforms, and we need to work to rebuild confidence in government, but we do not need a radical overhaul of our institutions.

Given the size and diversity of our country, and the number and complexity of the challenges we confront, it seems to me that representative democracy works reasonably well in America. The system may be—and at times is—slow, messy, cumbersome, complicated, and even unresponsive, but it has served us well for many years, and continues to do so.

Just think about the condition of our country today. In general I think America is a better place today than it was when I came to Congress almost four decades ago.

The Cold War is over, and we are at peace.

Our economy is thriving and is the envy of the world.

We have greatly improved the lot of older Americans with programs like Social Security and Medicare.

Women and minorities have had new doors opened to them as never before.

The Internet has brought a world of knowledge to the most remote classrooms and homes.

And, most important of all, this is still a land of opportunity where everyone has a chance, not an equal chance unfortunately, but still a chance to become the best they can be.

We must be doing something right.

As I look at the government today, I'm not cynical, pessimistic or discouraged. I'm optimistic about the institutions of government and about the country. I am confident that our government will continue to meet the important challenges we will face in the coming years.

This was indeed the most encouraging finding in the Council's poll this summer—that despite their distrust, Americans still believe that government has an important role to play in the next century, particularly in defense, education, helping senior citizens, medical research, reducing violence and cleaning up the environment. Americans still recognize the importance of government, and look to government to better their lives and our nation.

So the opportunity for improving the relationship between government and the people is clearly there for all of us to seize.

Thank you.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE OHIO VALLEY CHAPTER OF THE ASSOCIATED BUILDERS AND CONTRACTORS AND OSHA

HON. ROB PORTMAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the partnership the Ohio Valley Chapter of the Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. recently forged with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). These two groups have mutually recognized the importance of providing a safe work environment for our nation's construction workforce.

I am pleased to see the federal government and the private sector working so closely toward a common goal—worker safety and health. As part of this innovative partnership, participating contractors from the Ohio Valley chapter will voluntarily improve their current

safety and health programs and adhere to a more stringent set of standards. In return, OSHA will recognize contractors who have demonstrated exemplary safety records.

According to the agreement, ABC and OSHA will take positive steps together, such as: maintaining an open communications policy at the regional, chapter, and national levels; sharing knowledge of the best industry technology, innovations, and practices that improve safety; cooperating in the development and improvement of safety programs; ensuring that policies and practices are effective, consistent, and fair; and promoting the principles of good faith and fair dealings.

This agreement is good for ABC contractors, OSHA, and most importantly, workers on the job site. I firmly believe that commonsense partnerships such as these, characterized by cooperation and communication, will best serve those it was meant to help—the worker.

MOTHER NATURE WAITS ON NO ONE

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, oil prices have tripled since the end of 1998 and are higher than they have been in nearly a decade. Today in response, I am cosponsoring legislation that is an aggressive response to the reduction in oil produced by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) nations. This legislation would direct the Administration to file a case with the World Trade Organization (WTO) against oil-producing countries. Article XI of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) prohibits members of the WTO from setting quantitative restrictions on imports or exports. I believe oil-producing countries' production limits fall within this Article, therefore these countries have violated the rules of the WTO. With the majority of oil-producing nations already members of the WTO or in the process of applying for membership, a complaint filed by the United States would have an immediate impact on the current and future behavior of these countries.

This particular crisis has to be investigated. I consider these actions a shameful display of ingratitude on the part of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, after Americans put their lives on the line to safeguard the stability and oil fields of these nations in the Gulf War.

I was pleased with Secretary Richardson's efforts to meet with oil industry representatives and OPEC members, but I frankly think that the cautious approach that the White House is taking is still too little and too late. We know that actions will speak louder than words.

The people that I represent in Monroe County, New York, have the dubious distinction this year of having had more snow than any place else in the United States. My constituents were then especially hard hit by the high heating oil and diesel fuel costs this winter. Now, the rest of the country is being affected by the soaring cost of gasoline. These enormous oil price increases pose a significant threat to our nation's continued economic growth by increasing the likelihood of inflation and the costs of doing business.

So, on behalf of all my constituents today who are still shoveling snow, paying their heating oil bills and now paying these high gas prices, I want to say to my colleagues and to everyone in this Congress that quick action is needed now. Mother Nature waits on no one.

A TRIBUTE TO KRISTEN THALMAN—A DEDICATED PUBLIC SERVANT

HON. EDWARD R. ROYCE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a distinguished American, Kristine Thalman.

She dedicated her career to public service in city government and she ensured that our local citizens received the services they expect from their municipalities.

She has been the Intergovernmental Relations Director for the City of Anaheim California, for the last thirteen years of her career. She retires this month. Her career at Anaheim has been admired by many of us here in Congress.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Kris for her assistance to me since I am pleased to have part of the City of Anaheim in my Congressional District.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that this Thursday is Kris' birthday and certainly greetings are also in order at this time.

THE ORDEAL OF ANDREI BABITSKY

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, a small bit of good news has emerged from the tortured region of Chechnya, where the Russian military is killing, looting, and terrorizing the population under the guise of an "anti-terrorism operation."

Andrei Babitsky, the Radio Liberty correspondent who had disappeared in Chechnya in early February after Russian authorities had "exchanged" him to unknown persons in return for some Russian prisoners of war, has emerged in Dagestan and is now in Moscow recuperating from his ordeal. Mr. Babitsky's courageous reporting from the besieged city of Grozny had infuriated Russian military authorities, and he was arrested in mid-January and charged with "participating in an unlawful armed formation."

Prior to his release, Mr. Babitsky had spent time in the notorious Chernokozovo "filtration" camp where the Russian military has been detaining and torturing Chechens suspected of aiding the resistance. Following his arrival in Moscow, Mr. Babitsky provided a harrowing account of his incarceration at the Chernokozovo prison, and especially the savage treatment of his fellow prisoners. It is another graphic reminder that for all the fine words and denials coming out of Moscow, the Russian military has been conducting a brutal

business that makes a mockery of the Geneva Conventions and the code of military conduct stipulated in the 1994 Budapest Document of the OSCE.

Mr. Speaker, last month President Clinton stated that Russia's Acting President Putin is a man the United States "can do business with." With this in mind, I would suggest for the RECORD excerpts from Mr. Babitsky's interview with an NTV reporter in Russia. If Mr. Putin is aware of the state of affairs at Chernokozovo and condoning it, I would submit that our business with Mr. Putin should be extremely limited. If he is not aware of the truth, then his authority over Russia is a chimera, and we might better deal with the real rulers of Russia.

Babitsky's statement follows:

[From Hero of the Day NTV Program, 7:40 p.m., Feb. 29, 2000]

INTERVIEW WITH RADIO LIBERTY
CORRESPONDENT ANDREI BABITSKY

BABITSKY. On the 16th I tried to leave the city of Grozny through the settlement of Staraya Sunzha, a suburb of Grozny which at the time was divided into two parts. One part was controlled by federal troops and the other by the Chechen home guard.

I entered the territory controlled by the federals and it was there that I was recognized. I was identified as a journalist, I immediately presented my documents. All the subsequent claims that I was detained as a person who had to be identified are not quite clear to me. I had my passports with me, my accreditation card of a foreign correspondent.

Then I was taken to Khankala. Not what journalists who had covered the first war regarded as Khankala but to an open field. There was an encampment there consisting of trucks used as their office by army intelligence officers. Two of my cassettes that I had filmed in Grozny were taken from me. They contained unique frames. I think those were the last video pictures ever taken by anyone before Grozny was stormed. Those, again, were pictures of thousands of peaceful civilians many of whom, as we now know, were killed by federal artillery shells.

I spent two nights in Khankala, in the so-called Avtozak, a truck converted into a prison cell. On the third day I was taken to what the Chechens call a filtration center, the preliminary detention center in Chernokozovo.

I believe I am the only journalist of those who covered the first and the second Chechen wars who has seen a filtration center from the inside. I must say that all these horrors that we have heard from Chechens who had been there have been confirmed. Everything that we read about concentration camps of the Stalin period, all that we know about the German camps, all this is present there.

The first three days that I spent there, that was the 18th, 19th and the 20th, beatings continued round the clock. I never thought that I would hear such a diversity of expressions of human pain. These were not just screams, these were screams of every possible tonality and depth, these were screams of most diverse pain. Different types of beatings cause a different reaction.

Q. Are you saying that you got this treatment?

A. No, that was the treatment meted out to others. I was fortunate, it was established at once that I am a journalist, true, nobody knew what type of journalist I was. Everybody there were surprised that a journalist happened to be there. In principle, the people there cannot be described as intellectuals.

They decided that there was nothing special about this, that such things do happen in a war. As a journalist I was "registered", as they say, only once. They have this procedure there. When a new detainee is being taken from his cell to the investigator he is made to crawl all the way under a rain of blows with rubber sticks.

It hurts but one can survive it. This is a light treatment as compared with the tortures to which Chechens are subjected day and night, those who are suspected of collaborating with the illegal armed formations. There are also cases when some testimony is beaten out of detainees.

Q. What is the prison population there?

A. In my opinion . . . I was in cell No. 17 during the first three days. In that cell there were 13 inhabitants of the village Aberdykel (sp.—FNS). Most of them were young. Judging by their stories, I am not an investigator and I could not collect a sufficiently full database, but in such an atmosphere one very rarely doubts the veracity of what you are told. Mostly these were young men who had nothing to do with the war. They were really common folk. They were treating everything happening around them as a calamity but they were not taking any sides. They were simply waiting for this calamity to pass either in this direction or that direction.

Beatings as a method of getting testimony. This is something that, unfortunately, is very well known in Russian and not only Russian history and tradition. But I must say that apart from everything, in my opinion, in all this torture, as it seemed to me, a large part is due to sheer sadism. In other words, an absolutely unwarranted torturing of people.

For instance, I heard . . . You know, you really can't see this because all this happens outside of your cell. But the type of screams leaves not doubt about what is happening. You know, this painful reaction. For two hours a woman was tortured on the 20th or the 19th. She was tortured, I have no other word to explain what was happening. That was not a hysteria. I am not a medic but I believe that we all know what a hysteria is. There were screams indicting that a person was experiencing unbearable pain, and for a long period of time.

EXPRESSING SORROW OF THE HOUSE AT THE DEATH OF THE HONORABLE CARL B. ALBERT, FORMER MEMBER OF CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA

SPEECH OF

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 8, 2000

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Speaker Carl Albert passed away Friday, February 4, 2000, after a distinguished career during which he shepherded the nation through some of its most difficult years. The people of the Thirtieth Congressional District of Texas pay tribute to this great American and join the nation to express sincere sorrow regarding his passing.

Beginning in the Eightieth Congress, Speaker Albert spent the next thirty years representing the citizens of the Third Congressional District of Oklahoma in the U.S. Congress and helped create a new era of American opportunity. He supported civil rights and antipoverty legislation. Speaker Albert pro-

vided invaluable leadership to the House of Representatives as majority leader during the Eighty-seventh through Ninety-first Congresses. As leader of this legislative body during the Ninety-second through Ninety-fourth Congresses, Speaker Albert fostered a lasting legacy.

Speaker Albert successfully steered the nation through difficult times and ensured a fair forum for democratic discussion on issues ranging from the impeachment of President Richard Nixon to the war in Vietnam. He provided the nation with stability and security while he was first in line to succeed the President of the United States, in 1973 and again in 1974.

Speaker Albert personified great American values throughout his life. He rose from childhood poverty to become a Rhodes Scholar, winner of the Bronze Star, and a distinguished U.S. Congressman.

During a time when we sometimes let partisanship get the better of us, we should look at Carl Albert as a symbol of the most esteemed values of the U.S. Congress. I join the nation in paying tribute to an exemplary citizen, who was during his lifetime and continues to be an inspiration in the greatest traditions of domestic representation.

THE AFFORDABLE DRINKING WATER ACT OF 2000

HON. JOHN A. BOEHNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Affordable Drinking Water Act of 2000. This legislation provides a new and creative way to bring safe drinking water in a cost-effective manner to those rural Americans who will struggle to meet this most basic need.

Under the bill, the government, working in partnership with nonprofit entities, would assist low to moderate-income individuals secure financing for the installation or refurbishing of individual household water well systems. The legislation authorizes a public/private partnership that allows homeowners of modest means to bring old household water well systems up to current standards, replace systems that have met their expected life, or provide homeowners without a drinking water source with a new individual household water well system.

The Affordable Drinking Water Act is a targeted approach. Only low to moderate income Americans who request assistance with their drinking water needs are eligible. The traditional federally subsidized long-pipe water systems run water lines across the countryside in front of homes that are experiencing drinking water problems, but also homes that are not. The current system serves customers without adequate financial means but also many that do not need financial help. This lack of targeting federal dollars is often a waste of scarce resources. This legislation creates a financing option to install individual wells where they make the most economic sense.

This bill also provides assistance to the drinking water delivery option many rural Americans prefer. In a recent national survey, more than 80% of well owners prefer their individual household water well systems to other

drinking water delivery options. Only 8.3% said they would rather have their drinking water from a water utility company. This legislation gives consumers the ability to pay for new or refurbished individual household water well systems with convenient monthly payments, like other utility bills.

It is my understanding, Mr. Speaker, that organizations like the National Ground Water Association, a group that has a long and distinguished record preserving and protecting America's precious ground water resources, strongly endorses this legislation. It is my hope that other organizations and communities that support common sense, innovative approaches to providing affordable, safe water to rural Americans will also endorse the Affordable Drinking Water Act of 2000.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation that provides a cost-effective alternative to meeting the drinking water needs of rural America.

IVANPAH VALLEY AIRPORT PUBLIC LANDS TRANSFER ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JIM GIBBONS

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1695) to provide for the conveyance of certain Federal public lands in the Ivanpah Valley, Nevada, to Clark County, Nevada, for the development of an airport facility, and for other purposes:

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Chairman, I include the following letters of support for H.R. 1695, the Ivanpah Valley Airport Public Lands Transfer Act.

AIRPORTS COUNCIL
INTERNATIONAL,
Washington, DC, March 7, 2000.

DEAR MEMBER OF CONGRESS: Airports Council International-North America urges your strong support of H.R. 1695, the Ivanpah Valley Airport Public Lands Transfer Act. This legislation would enable the Clark County, Nevada Department of Aviation to buy 6,500 of federal land for a new airport to serve Las Vegas.

The number of air passengers traveling in the United States is expected to increase from less than 700 million to over a billion in just a few short years. We need to add airport capacity across the nation to accommodate this growth.

Air traffic at Las Vegas McCarran International airport grew 11 percent last year alone, creating the prospect of significant future delays if new runway and terminal facilities are not built. Las Vegas is currently the tenth busiest airport in the nation with connections to over 50 other cities. Delays in Las Vegas will mean delays in other cities as well.

The FAA Reauthorization package agreed to by the conferees this week provides airports with much of the funding they require to meet tomorrow's needs. In order for this important work to be done, airports such as Las Vegas must be able to overcome the environmental opposition to their expansion projects. Existing airports all across the nation are facing congestion in terminals and on runways. New airport capacity is needed today.

We urge you to support H.R. 1695.

Sincerely,

JEFFREY GOODELL,
Vice President, Government Affairs.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF AIRPORT EXECUTIVES,
Alexandria, VA, March 3, 2000.

Hon. JAMES GIBBONS,
*U.S. Representative, Cannon House Office
Building, Washington, DC.*

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE GIBBONS: The U.S. House of Representatives will shortly be considering H.R. 1695, which would permit Clark County, Nevada to purchase 6,500 acres of federal land in the Ivanpah Valley for a future commercial airport site. Your support, and that of your colleagues, is critical to ensuring the continued economic vitality of Southern Nevada well into the 21st Century.

Passenger traffic at McCarran International Airport has been increasing for the past 16 consecutive months. During that period, passenger enplanements have risen by over 11 percent. Continued growth, at even a moderate rate, will bring the Airport to its effective capacity by 2012. The Clark County Department of Aviation estimates it will take at least seven years to plan, design and construct the new airport. I think you will agree that prompt congressional action is critical.

The Ivanpah Valley is the best location for a future second airport to serve the Las Vegas metropolitan area. The proposed location is 35 miles from the heart of the Las Vegas valley, between Jean and Prim, Nevada. Also, it is bounded by Interstate Highway 15 and main line of the Union Pacific Railroad, giving the new airport excellent and essential multimodal/intermodal surface access opportunities.

Thank you again for your support and assistance. If further information is desired, please do not hesitate to contact Randall H. Walker, Director of Aviation at (702) 261-5150.

Sincerely yours,

TODD HAUTLI,
*Senior Vice President for
Policy and Government Affairs.*

LAS VEGAS
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF IVANPAH AIRPORT
LAND SALE

Whereas, visitors from outside the state directly and indirectly account for more than half the state's economic activity thereby constituting the economic lifeblood of Nevada; and

Whereas, airline passengers constitute nearly 50% of the visitors to the Las Vegas Valley and this percentage is likely to increase as Las Vegas adds to its presence as a gateway for international travelers; and

Whereas, McCarran International Airport has a capacity to handle 55 million passengers annually. In 1999, over 33.6 million passengers used McCarran and growth projections indicated the Airport could reach its capacity by the end of this decade; and

Whereas, having explored numerous options, the Clark County Department of Aviation believes the Ivanpah Valley offers the only feasible location for a second airport to service commercial air cargo and passenger traffic; and

Whereas, the County has committed to pay the Bureau of Land Management fair market value for the property, conduct an airspace analysis to minimize overflights of the Mojave National Preserve, and draft a thorough Environmental Impact Statement prior to initiating construction of the Ivanpah Valley Airport; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce endorses and supports the Department

of Aviation's efforts to acquire Ivanpah Valley land for an airport; and be it further

Resolved, that the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce as the representative of more than 6,000 member businesses in Southern Nevada, encourages the House of Representatives to pass H.R. 1695, providing the Bureau of Land Management with the authority to sell the identified land in the Ivanpah Valley to Clark County; and be it further

Resolved, that copies of this Resolution be transmitted to Nevada's Congressional delegation.

DONALD L. "PAT" SHALMY,
President General Manager.

MIRAGE RESORTS,
Las Vegas, NV, March 1, 2000.

Hon. JAMES GIBBONS,
*U.S. Representative, Cannon House Office
Building, Washington, DC.*

DEAR CONGRESSMAN GIBBONS: The U.S. House of Representatives will shortly be considering HR 1695 which would permit Clark County, Nevada to purchase 6,500 acres of federal land in the Ivanpah Valley for a future commercial airport site. Your support, and that of your colleagues, is critical to ensuring the continued economic vitality of Southern Nevada well into the 21st Century.

Passenger traffic at McCarran International Airport has been increasing for the past 16 consecutive months. During that period, passenger enplanements have risen by over 11%. Continued growth, at even a moderate rate, will bring the Airport to its effective capacity by 2012. The Clark County Department of Aviation estimates it will take at least seven years to plan, design and construct the new airport. I think you will agree that prompt congressional action is critical.

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Thank you again for your support and assistance. If further information is desired, please do not hesitate to contact Randall H. Walker, Director Aviation at (702) 261-5150.

Sincerely yours,

PUTNAM MATHUR.

MGM GRAND,
Las Vegas, NV, March 1, 2000.

Hon. JAMES GIBBONS,
*U.S. Representative, Cannon House Office
Building, Washington, DC.*

DEAR CONGRESSMAN GIBBONS: The U.S. House of Representatives will shortly be considering HR 1695 which would permit Clark County, Nevada to purchase 6,500 acres of federal land in the Ivanpah Valley for a future commercial airport site. Your support, and that of your colleagues, is critical to ensuring the continued economic vitality of Southern Nevada well into the 21st Century.

Passenger traffic at McCarran International Airport has been increasing for the past 16 consecutive months. During that period, passenger enplanements have risen by over 11%. Continued growth, at even a moderate rate, will bring the Airport to its effective capacity by 2012. The Clark County Department of Aviation estimates it will take at least seven years to plan, design and construct the new airport. I think you will agree that prompt congressional action is critical.

The Ivanpah Valley is the best location for a future second airport to serve the Las Vegas metropolitan area. The proposed location is 35 miles from the heart of the Las Vegas valley, between Jean and Primm, and

is bounded by Interstate Highway 15 and main line of the Union Pacific Railroad, giving the new airport excellent and essential multimodal/intermodal surface access opportunities.

Thank you again for your support and assistance. If further information is desired, please do not hesitate to contact Randall H. Walker, Director of Aviation at (702) 261-5150.

Sincerely yours,

WILLIAM J. HORNBuckle,

*President and
Chief Operating Officer.*

DEL WEBB CORPORATION,
Henderson, NV, March 1, 2000.

Hon. JAMES GIBBONS,
U.S. Representative, 100 Cannon House Office
Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN JIM GIBBONS: As you are well aware, the House of Representatives will shortly consider H.R. 1695, which will permit Clark County, Nevada to purchase 6,500 acres of federal land in the Ivanpah Valley for a future commercial airport site.

I'm writing to encourage your support, and that of your colleagues, for this important piece of legislation. It is our belief that this bill is critical in order to ensure the continued economic vitality of Southern Nevada for decades to come. In just the last 16 months McCarran International Airport has seen an 11% increase in passenger traffic and will reach its effective capacity by the year 2012. Given the time constraints and requirements to plan, design and construct such a complex structure, the ability to acquire the site through immediate passage is crucial.

As a company that develops large tracts of land into master-planned communities, we're well acquainted with the limited land availability in the Las Vegas area and we believe the Ivanpah Valley is the best location for a future second airport. Also, immediate freeway access makes it an ideal location.

Additionally, we support the Clark County Department of Aviation's attempt to purchase these needed lands from the BLM. It is our understanding that they will pay for these lands at an agreed upon value based upon appraisals acceptable to both the BLM and the airport.

Therefore, we join with other community business leaders and agencies in encouraging your active support of this legislation. We are prepared to assist in moving this legislation forward.

I look forward to seeing you again in the near future.

Sincerely,

SCOTT HIGGINSON,
*Vice President,
Government Affairs.*

THE CITY OF HENDERSON,
Henderson, NV, August 5, 1998.

Re S. 1964 and H.R. 3705.

Hon. JIM GIBBONS,
Longworth House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN GIBBONS: I would like to let you know that I am in full support of the above referenced legislation. As you know Henderson's Sky Harbor Airport currently is a reliever airport of small aircraft from the McCarran air space and air traffic. As this region continues to grow, our modes of effective and efficient transportation become an increasingly important part of maintaining and improving our economic strength.

The Clark County Department of Aviation staff has identified the Ivanpah Valley Airport as the prime location for future air transportation into this region. This new airport is absolutely critical for the Depart-

ment of Aviation to fulfill its mission of never allowing the lack of airport infrastructure to be an impediment to people coming to visit Las Vegas, the Grand Canyon or other destinations in this region. I would like to thank you for your efforts to date regarding this legislation and would encourage you to continue to make every effort to seek passage this session.

Legislation of this type is visionary and will help ensure a bright future for Southern Nevada.

Sincerely,

JAMES B. GIBSON,
Mayor.

HOTEL EMPLOYEES & RESTAURANT
EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION,
Washington, DC, March 7, 2000.

Hon. SHELLEY BERKLEY,
Longworth House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSWOMAN BERKLEY: On behalf of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union I want to convey support for enactment of H.R. 1965, the Ivanpah Valley Airport Public Lands Transfer Act. This bill will facilitate the purchase of federal land approximately 35 miles south of Las Vegas for the construction of an additional airport to serve southern Nevada. The phenomenal growth of the Las Vegas economy has in turn triggered double digit growth at McCarran International Airport.

It is vitally important that the transportation infrastructure be able to keep pace with growth in the hotel industry. This bill is important if the tourist based economy of Las Vegas is expected to continue to provide good paying employment opportunities. I urge you and your colleagues in the Congress to enact H.R. 1965 without amendment to pave the way for a second airport for southern Nevada.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

JOHN W. WILHELM,
General President.

NEVADA SERVICE
EMPLOYEES UNION,
Las Vegas, NV, March 3, 2000.

Hon. JAMES GIBBONS,
U.S. Representative, Cannon House Office
Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN GIBBONS: On behalf of Nevada Service Employees Union, SEIU, Local 1107, we are writing to communicate our support for the enactment of H.R. 1965, the Ivanpah Valley Airport Public Lands Transfer Act.

This bill is of extreme importance to the community and is strongly supported by the membership of NSEU, SEIU, Local 1107.

It is our belief that the Ivanpah Valley is the best location for a second airport to serve the Las Vegas metropolitan area.

It is our further belief that the construction of this additional facility is critical with respect to ensuring the continued economic growth of Southern Nevada in that the additional airport will be able to accommodate the needs of Southern Nevada's vital industries.

Accordingly, we urge your colleagues to enact H.R. 1965.

Thank you in advance for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

VICKY HEDDERMAN,
President.
THOMAS M. BEATTY,
Executive Director.

SOUTHERN NEVADA BUILDING &
CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL,
Las Vegas, NV, March 2, 2000.

Hon. JAMES GIBBONS,
U.S. Representative, Cannon House Office
Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN GIBBONS: The U.S. House of Representatives will shortly be considering HR1695 which would permit Clark County, Nevada to purchase 6,500 acres of federal land in the Ivanpah Valley for a future commercial airport site. Your support, and that of your colleagues, is critical to ensuring the continued economic vitality of Southern Nevada well into the 21st Century.

This bill is very important to the construction industry and is strongly supported by the Southern Nevada Building and Construction Trades.

Passenger traffic at McCarran International Airport has been increasing for the past 16 consecutive months. During that period, passenger traffic has risen by over 11%. Continued growth, at even a moderate rate, will bring the Airport to its effective capacity by 2012. The Clark County Department of Aviation estimates it will take at least seven years to plan, design and construct the new airport. I think you will agree that prompt congressional action is critical.

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Thank you again for your support and assistance. If further information is desired, please do not hesitate to contact Randall H. Walker, Director Aviation at (702) 261-5150.

Sincerely yours,

JACK JEFFREY.

INTRODUCTION OF CORAL REEF CONSERVATION LEGISLATION

HON. ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I am pleased to rise today with my good friend from New Jersey, the Chairman of the Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans Subcommittee, Mr. SAXTON, to introduce bipartisan legislation to authorize a coral reef conservation program.

For many people, coral reefs are distant marine environments that they might never come in contact with unless they are fortunate enough to go on a tropical vacation. For too long now, as a Nation we have enjoyed the biological wealth provided by coral reefs, but failed in our obligations to devote the resources necessary to protect these vital treasures. While these precious ecosystems appeared to be in balance until not long ago, today human activities have significantly altered that balance—much to the detriment of the corals, and much to the demise of people who depend on coral reefs to sustain their communities and economies.

Unlike many other members of Congress, I come from a place where the coral reefs are essential to the very fabric of everyday life. Until recently, those of us from the Pacific islands have literally lived off our reefs and the surrounding local lands. We have recognized

for generations that coral reefs form the fundamental building block of an intricate marine food chain, providing nutrients, food and habitats for a tremendous diversity of fish and other marine animals. And intuitively, we have all come to appreciate that without healthy coral reefs, our abundance of marine resources might soon come to a sudden end.

Unfortunately, the sad reality is that we have discovered that the coral reefs we depend on are under numerous threats. These threats come from many sources, including polluted run off, increased siltation, mining, and destructive fishing practices, notably the use of dynamite and cyanide, to name only a few. We have even come to appreciate that the decline in coral health could be linked to global climate change, and events such as El Nino.

But with recognition of the problem, and with increased resources to address it, we can begin to reverse the degradation of our coral reefs and achieve a sustainable balance towards the long-term conservation of these important marine ecosystems. Several recent activities, including the initiation of the International Coral Reef Initiative, the development of U.S. Coral Reef Initiative and the International Year of the Coral Reef, were all good beginnings. And just last week, the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force published a national action plan to conserve coral reefs. It is vital that we continue this positive momentum.

As the Senior Democrat on the Subcommittee on Fishery Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans, I have enjoyed working collaboratively with Chairman SAXTON and his able staff to address my concerns and issues raised by other Democrats in order to develop this consensus legislation.

The legislation we introduce today addresses many of the priorities I consider essential to any comprehensive coral reef conservation bill. Perhaps most significant, the legislation would codify the Coral Reef Task Force established under Executive Order 13089 to give this panel the authority it needs to address the myriad of problems confronting coral reefs today.

Importantly, this legislation would require the Task Force to initiate fundamental baseline research and management activities, most notably, the mapping of all coral reef resources in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The bill would provide to the Task Force, through a National Program coordinated by the Department of Commerce, up to \$5 million per year for 4 years to initiate this and other baseline activities, especially the development of comprehensive coral reef monitoring and assessment programs. It is expected that scientists and resource managers will gain from this previously unavailable information new insights regarding how human activities and other environmental factors are contributing to the degradation of coral reef ecosystems, and optimistically, how this degradation might be reversed. To ensure the continued comment from a broad range of interests involved in the management of coral reefs, it is anticipated that those Regional Fishery Management Councils established under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act which have corals within their jurisdiction, would be involved.

Of equal significance, this legislation would also authorize a coral reef conservation grant program to assist States and local commu-

nities in the protection, conservation and sustainable use of their coral reef resources. The bill would provide up to \$10 million per year for 4 years for coral reef conservation grants and it is expected that these grants will help improve local capabilities, raise local public awareness, and promote the long-term conservation and restoration of coral reef ecosystems. I am also pleased that this legislation would ensure the equitable distribution of grant funds to applicants in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea.

Allow me to close by simply saying that while this bill is not perfect, it is a fair and honorable compromise. The bill would establish a targeted, focused and locally-driven coral reef conservation program; importantly, a program grounded in science and built upon the ground-breaking and successful work of the Coral Reef Task Force. I commend Chairman SAXTON for his leadership and commitment to coral reef protection, and I thank my Democratic colleagues on the Fisheries Subcommittee who have worked with me throughout these negotiations.

A TRIBUTE—GARFIELD COUNTY 1999 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take this moment to recognize the career of one of Garfield County's community leaders, and recipient of the Garfield County 1999 Employee of the Year award, Judy Blakeslee. In doing so, I would like to honor this individual who, for many years, has exhibited dedication and experience to the Sheriff's Department of Garfield County.

As a Civil Deputy for the last 18 years, Judy handles restraining orders, evictions, garnishment of wages and custody orders in the county. Before becoming a Civil Deputy, Ms. Blakeslee spent her first year as Garfield County's Animal Control Officer. She took her role as a Civil Deputy to another level. She would go out of her way to aid displaced and needy families to the best of her ability.

As a Civil Deputy for the last 18 years, Judy handles restraining orders, evictions, garnishment of wages and custody orders in the county. Before becoming a Civil Deputy, Ms. Blakeslee spent her first year as Garfield County's Animal Control Officer. She took her role as a Civil Deputy to another level. She would go out of her way to aid displaced and needy families to the best of her ability.

Judy Blakeslee has more than proven herself as a valuable asset to the Sheriff's Department of Garfield County, therefore, receiving this award. This achievement recognizes her compassion, professionalism and dedication to her County.

It is with this, Mr. Speaker, that I say thank you to Judy Blakeslee on a truly exceptional career as a Garfield County employee. Ms. Blakeslee's dedicated service stands out and sets a standard for those who follow.

In conclusion I would note that as a police officer and attorney-at-law I had the privilege to work with Judy. I felt fortunate to have her as a friend and as a coworker.

CONGRATULATING THE U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the attention of the House to a recent article in the Chicago Tribune about one of our oldest friends . . . the U.S. Government Printing Office. I have a real appreciation of the GPO, having started as a printer's apprentice in 1968 as a member of Houston Typographic Union Local 87.

The article is profuse in its praise of the GPO, stating that while the agency usually "wears a low profile," the service that it provides the Congress and the Nation is absolutely crucial in our democratic system of government. In noting the vast range of publications the GPO handles—from the daily CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to the Findings of Fact in the Microsoft case—the article describes how the GPO has moved from a traditional ink-on-paper factory to a widely heralded provider of Government information over the Internet.

It is a success story that is worthy of everyone's attention.

A generation ago, the GPO had a workforce of 8,500. Today, there are about 3,300, yet not only does the GPO continue to print government publications, it is now a key player in the world of online government information. The incredible success of cutting staff by more than 50 percent while expanding services to Congress and the Nation is virtually without comparison.

The GPO's expert use of technology has made this achievement possible—technology which has transformed the way the GPO processes printing, and technology which makes it possible for the public to download more than 20 million publications a month from the GPO's online service, GPO Access.

Mr. Speaker, this is an incredible achievement, and I include the text of this excellent article for all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

We are fortunate, indeed, to have an agency of this caliber, with its expert workforce and its record of savings and technological achievement, working in support of the Congress and the American people.

[From the Chicago Tribune, Tues., Mar. 7, 2000]

FROM THE STARR REPORT TO WHITE HOUSE
MENUS, GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE IS
PAPERWORK CENTRAL

(By Glen Elsasser)

WASHINGTON—In a fortresslike complex near Capitol Hill, Kenneth Fatkin occupies the front lines of government. Though safely distanced from the frenzy of politics, he still confronts the handiwork of legions of federal agencies, Congress and the White House, handiwork that affects the lives of millions of Americans.

Amid shelves of reference books, Fatkin on a recent morning was scanning a set of proposed rules from the Federal Aviation Agency about the takeoff and landing of airplanes. Despite the abstruse language, he quickly marked up the page.

Fatkin works for the Government Printing Office, an agency that considers itself the largest supplier of government informational materials in the world. Those materials include everything from Independent Counsel

Kenneth Starr's case against President Clinton to a "My Wetlands Coloring Book" for kids.

It also prints the Federal Register, which 100 proofreaders including Fatkin work around the clock to produce. Five days a week, the register provides a complete update of government rules, executive orders, presidential proclamations and proposed regulations.

Within the monstrous federal bureaucracy, the Government Printing Office generally wears a low profile, but a brief moment of fame came in 1998 when, under deadline, heavy security and massive publicity, the GPO published the Starr report. In all, the report and its two supplements took up five volumes totaling more than 8,000 pages.

The sale of the report, which detailed the president's relationship with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky, drew lines of purchasers outside its main bookstore and gave TV viewers a rare glimpse of the GPO headquarters.

More recently, the GPO played a crucial role in circulating the long-awaited findings in the ongoing Microsoft antitrust case. Within two hours after U.S. District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson had announced his initial ruling at 4:30 p.m. on Nov. 4, printed copies were available at the GPO bookstore and the electronic version was ready on-line. A printed copy of the 207-page document, and an electronic disk, had been sent to the GPO immediately after his decision.

Another GPO staple is the Congressional Record, which chronicles the daily proceedings in Congress and prints debates verbatim. Requiring all-night production, an average copy of the Record runs 200 pages and must be available on the floor of both houses by 9 a.m. when Congress is in session.

Among the GPO's other key functions is printing the federal budget, which this year was accompanied by five related publications totaling 2,808 pages and weighing 12 pounds. The 2001 budget was also available immediately on CD-ROM and on the Internet.

The GPO prints congressional bills and reports, passports and Civil Service exams, the last of which is done under tight security at the Denver plant. It turns out postal cards, congressional stationery, White House invitations and menus, and the Supreme Court briefs of the Justice Department.

It also runs 24 bookstores in major cities, including Boston, Chicago, Columbus, Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, San Francisco and Seattle. The subjects of the publications for sale cover an eclectic mix of titles and are reasonably priced.

Take, for example, the publications recently displayed in the window of the GPO bookstore near the White House.

A number of the titles are clearly self-help and offer practical advice on a variety of problems—"Eat Right to Lower Your Blood Pressure," "A Working Woman's Guide to Her Job Rights," "Marijuana: Facts Parents Need to Know" and "Safe and Smart: Making the After School Hours Work for Kids." All cost less than \$10.

Other titles clearly appeal only to wonks, such as "Investigating the Year 2000 Problem: The 100 Day Report," a summary of findings by the Special Commission on the Year 2000 Technology Problem.

History is also well represented in the offerings: "Boston and the American Revolution," "Rise of the Fighter Generals, 1945-1982" and "The Three Wars of Lt. Gen. George Stratemeyer: His Korean War Diary." There are also art books such as "Language of the Land: The Library of Congress Book of Literary Maps" and titles obviously geared to children, like "My Wetlands Coloring Book."

The GPO maintains a list of its monthly bestsellers, and among the 1999 winners were "21st Century Skills for 21st Century Jobs," "Buying Your Home: Settlement Costs and Helpful Information," "Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents" and the "The Constitution of the United States and the Declaration of Independence."

Overseeing the operation is Michael DiMario, who was named public printer by President Clinton in 1993. He is the nation's 23rd public printer, chief of an agency that dates to the Civil War era but has changed substantially with technology.

"The computer has changed everything and is now fundamental to the printing process," said DiMario, a lawyer who has worked in various posts since joining the GPO in 1971. The only linotype operator left in the 33-acre facility is the one who sets type for book titles in gilt.

"In the late 1960s we moved into electronic photo composition, and the computer was used to compose data for printing," he said. "Today our presses are controlled by the computer."

Even though the computer now does much of the work, however, human skills—such as a broad knowledge of government, its lingo and methods of lawmaking—remain critical to the editing process.

By DiMario's count, the GPO handles 50 percent of the government's printing needs. Notable exceptions are the nation's currency, postage stamps, Treasury securities and certificates, done by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing; and the classified documents of intelligence agencies.

Since 1993, pursuant to a new federal law, the GPO has made the Congressional Record and other government publications available in an electronic format. In 1997, for example, the GPO and the Commerce Department teamed up to offer free Internet access to the Commerce Business Daily, which keeps tabs on government contract and subcontracting opportunities, small business and other set asides, special notices and sales of surplus U.S. property.

Today thousands of publications are available electronically—far surpassing the number of print titles available for sale in the GPO bookstores. In fact, PC Week magazine in 1999 rated the GPO as one of the nation's top technology innovators.

Every month, DiMario estimates, 20 million GPO publications are downloaded from the Internet. During the first hour after the release of the Microsoft ruling, 152,000 successful connections were made on the GPO's popular Internet information service.

"The GPO has about 100,000 titles on-line that are on our own server here, and we provide links through our Web site [www.access.gpo.gov] to an additional 60,000 titles from other agencies," he said. "That's a moving target, and it is growing."

The GPO's publications are also available in electronic and traditional print formats at some 1,350 federal depository libraries. These are located at most colleges and universities, many public libraries and state and local government libraries.

Switching to electronics and decentralizing production has caused a massive reduction in the number of employees at the GPO complex, for many years ranked as the world's largest printing plant. This record, DiMario concedes, now probably belongs to private-sector companies such as Chicago's R.R. Donnelley & Sons.

"When I came here in the early 1970s, we had 8,500 employees," recalled DiMario. "Now we have 3,300 employees. Primarily the change occurred early when we retired the traditional letterpress operations. This transition continued, especially after Congress required the agency to acquire as much of its printing as possible from the private sector."

In recent years the GPO has contracted out 70 to 75 percent of its printing. "We have 10,000 contractors on a bid list to do this work," said DiMario, "and about 3,000 participate on a regular basis through the central office or the 20 regional and satellite printing procurement offices."

During the early years of the Reagan administration, labor relations at the GPO were stormy, with proposed furloughs and pay cuts as high as 22 percent. Things are much quieter now; prominently displayed on DiMario's office wall is an award from the Printing, Publishing and Media Workers Sector of the Communications Workers of America citing him for "maintaining equitable management relations."

Fatkin has seen the GPO go through many of these changes. Hired by the GPO in 1971, his job at first was to repair linotype machines. "Everything switched over after the computer hit big time in 1981," recalled Fatkin, who describes himself as a printer-proofreader. "There was a lot of ongoing retraining. The trouble today is that new people come in who can type 100 words a minute [on a computer] but don't know type faces and sizes. You learn that as an apprentice printer."

MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, at a time of unprecedented economic prosperity and growth, many American families are left behind. Those families work hard and play by the rules. They deserve a raise. But many of my colleagues on the other side are standing in the way of giving 10 million workers a raise in the minimum wage. Instead, they insist on sending to the President a bill to raise the minimum wage that is tied to a tax giveaway to the rich. As a result, we will see the economic gap expand even more. I applaud the President for making it clear that he will veto this dreadful bill.

This is not a minimum wage increase bill; it is a maximum giveaway to the wealthy. Under their \$120 billion tax cut, the wealthiest 1% of all taxpayers, or those earning more than \$319,000 a year, would get 73% of the total tax cut. This is not a surprise. The leaders of the other party have demonstrated many times during the past year that they would rather pass bills that benefit special interests and the rich instead of hardworking families.

A minimum wage worker earns \$10,700 a year. That means a single mother on minimum wage with two kids earns \$2,600 below the poverty line. Many of my colleagues on the other side would prefer to give her 33 cents a year over 3 years. Their tax plan gives millionaires \$6,128 a year. Is this what Republicans meant by compassionate conservatism?

Sixty percent of minimum wage earners are women; nearly 75% are adults; 3/5 are the sole breadwinners in their families; and more than 50% work full-time. Those who have to take care of our children at daycare centers and our parents at nursing homes deserve better. They deserve more than \$5.15 an hour. A raise in the minimum wage is about economic fairness and social justice. It is a small step in ensuring that all Americans share in our nation's economic prosperity and growth. I urge

my Republican colleagues to stop playing politics with the economic welfare of 10 million hard working people.

HONORING LIEUTENANT RICHARD BEIRNE AS IRISHMAN OF THE YEAR

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to join West Haven's Irish community as it honors Lieutenant Richard Beirne as Irishman of the Year. His outstanding record of service, both professional and volunteer, serves as an example to us all.

Lieutenant Beirne has dedicated his lifetime to the West Haven community, devoting himself to improving the lot of our children and families. He began his career as a volunteer fireman in 1975, and was inducted as a career firefighter with the West Shore Fire Department in 1980. Few things are more important than feeling safe in our homes and workplaces. Whether hosing down flames, rescuing a child from a burning house, or waiting for our call, firefighters are there to protect us and provide us with the peace of mind we need to sleep at night. For twenty-five years, Lieutenant Beirne has shown a commitment to protect our community. There are no words that can express our sincere thanks and appreciation for his service.

Beyond his commendable professional career, Lieutenant Beirne has an unparalleled record of community involvement. A member of several service organizations, Lieutenant Beirne has made a tremendous effort to promote Irish-American culture. In addition, Lieutenant Beirne currently serves as the Vice President of Local 1198 Professional Firefighters Union AFL-CIO, he is working to ensure that firefighters—hard working men and women—are assured livable wages, quality health benefits, and secure pensions to support themselves and their families. Despite all of these commitments, Lieutenant Beirne still finds time to volunteer as the EMT for the Pop Warner Football League. Providing this service at practices as well as games, he ensures the safety of every child participating in the league. Lieutenant Beirne has shown an incredible level of commitment to his community. He has been a mentor to many youngsters and serves as an inspiration to us all.

Today, a community will gather to honor Richard Beirne as Irishman of the Year. I cannot think of a more deserving individual to be given such a title. I am pleased to join with his wife, Susan, children, Patrick and Katie, friends and the entire West Haven community in congratulating him on this very special honor. My best wishes to Richard and his family for continued health and happiness.

A TRIBUTE TO LEVERT HOAG A WONDERFUL AMERICAN

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I wish to take this moment to recognize the remarkable life and significant achievements of one of Pueblo's leading ladies. Though she is gone, she will live on in the hearts of all who knew her and be remembered for long years by many who didn't.

LeVert Hoag, married to the late Pueblo chieftain publisher, Frank Hoag, Jr., died at the age of 87. She was known as an outgoing, enthusiastic, kind and warm person. Mrs. Hoag had a deep interest in the community, from the time she moved there in 1935. She was an integral part to Pueblo, helping out anywhere she could to make the Pueblo community a better place to live.

She was the chairman of the first Service League Follies in 1937, member of the Pueblo Community College Foundation, sponsor of the Hoag Theater, member of the Pueblo Hall of Fame and was also active in the United Way, the Pueblo County Tuberculosis and Health Association and the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Mrs. Hoag also served on the board of the Pueblo Civic Symphony and was also an honorary chairman of the Pueblo Metropolitan Museum.

LeVert Hoag is someone who will be missed by all of us. Those who knew of her will miss spending time with her. We, as a society, have lost someone who was rare to begin with. Mrs. Hoag made the ultimate sacrifice to help a total stranger. Hopefully we can all learn from the example that LeVert Hoag set. And, perhaps, we can all try to become a little bit more like her.

RECOGNIZING THE FORMATION OF THE CONGRESSIONAL RURAL CAUCUS

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, this week marks the official rebirth of the Congressional Rural Caucus. I am so pleased to have the opportunity to recognize the efforts of Representatives EVA CLAYTON of North Carolina, JO ANN EMERSON of Missouri, JERRY MORAN of Kansas, and EARL POMEROY of North Dakota to re-establish this important Caucus, and to thank the dozens of organizations and associations which have helped during the planning process and will continue to work with the Congressional Rural Caucus in the days ahead.

I am very excited to be a member of this new caucus. A number of years ago, I served a term as Chairman of the previously organized Congressional Rural Caucus. That group was extraordinarily valuable as an outlet for Members representing rural districts to discuss issues and work together to commu-

nicate the particular needs and concerns of rural America to the Congress as a whole. After several years of inactivity, I am glad that like-minded Members will once again have a bi-partisan organization that focuses on bringing the priorities of rural America to the forefront in the Congress.

In addition to recognizing the new membership of the Congressional Rural Caucus, I would like to say just a few words about one of the groups that has recently assisted with the organization of the Caucus and has for decades worked to improve life in rural America—the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

One of our nation's greatest achievements during the last century was the electrification of rural America. Before the third decade of the 20th Century, only about 10 percent of America's rural population enjoyed the benefits of electricity. The rest chopped wood, pumped water by hand or carried it from a stream, washed and rinsed the laundry in tubs in the yard. Life without electricity was especially hard on women. They aged early and died young because of the hardships of rural living.

Rural electrification provides us with a wonderful example of American ingenuity and federal cooperation. The people of rural America who needed electric service came together as cooperatives to organize and run their own electric utilities, and the government provided loans that most bankers, then or today, could not have provided prudently.

Electricity—and the Rural Electrification Administration and the vision of Congress—made a huge difference. Today, more than 99 percent of rural Americans can watch television in the comfort of an all-electric home, can enjoy the efficiencies of all manner of appliances—from toasters to air-conditioners, from grain dryers to milking machines and refrigeration.

Because now most rural Americans have electric service, some would say the job is done. I would say the job is just begun. Rural America today faces a different set of challenges. Electric cooperatives have deep roots in their communities, and they have a stake in improving the quality of life, the economics, the health and education of their communities. Electric cooperatives have traditionally provided services well beyond basic electricity, from something as simple as lighting the little league field to something as complex as providing distance learning in rural schools, Internet access, water and sewer, satellite television, economic and community development. They could do more; they would do more. We need to consider how rural Americans across the country could benefit by harnessing the talent of rural electric cooperatives in new ways in this new century.

I look forward in the coming months and years, as a member of the Congressional Rural Caucus, to addressing our new rural challenges. Again, I would like to thank the co-chairs of the Caucus and all of the organizations that have worked to bring the Congressional Rural Caucus back to life. Together I think we can be a positive force to bring true and consistent prosperity and a high quality of life to rural Americans.

NRA RHETORIC

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, Shame, shame, shame. The NRA's leadership has once again shamed our nation, the American people, and its own members. Wayne LaPierre, the NRA's Executive Vice President, on national television, suggested that the President of the United States promotes violence for his political gain. LaPierre said, "I've come to believe that he needs a certain level of violence in this country. He's willing to accept a certain level of killing to further his political agenda and his vice president too."

To all the parents who lost a son or daughter to gun violence, LaPierre is telling them to blame the President and not the guns. I would not be surprised to hear the NRA's leadership blaming school grief counselors of inciting more school shootings so they can have more business.

How can the NRA leadership ignore the fact that thirteen children die each day from gun violence? How can they ignore the fact that a majority of Americans want Congress to pass sensible gun safety measures? How can they lay blame on a President who supports background checks at gun shows, a ban on the import of large-capacity ammunition clips, and the sale of child safety locks with every handgun?

It's time for the NRA leadership to wake up and smell the gunpower in our communities and classrooms, and step out of the way of meaningful gun safety legislation. I submit the following New York Times editorial entitled "Desperate Rhetoric from the NRA," for the RECORD.

[From the New York Times, Mar. 14, 2000]
DESPERATE RHETORIC FROM THE N.R.A.

Americans have become used to hearing nutty talk from leaders of the National Rifle Association. But Sunday's outrageous assertion by the group's executive vice president, Wayne LaPierre, that President Clinton is "willing to accept a certain level of killing to further his political agenda" deserves special condemnation.

Mr. LaPierre made his sick suggestion that the president relishes having gun tragedies to exploit in an interview on ABC's "This Week." He was there to push the N.R.A.'s demonstrably false line that the nation already has enough gun laws on the books if only the administration would enforce them. Thanks largely to the N.R.A.'s lobbying, those laws do not adequately address issues of supply, distribution, design or child access.

In a new advertising campaign the N.R.A.'s president, Charlton Heston, accuses Mr. Clinton of engaging in lying and scare tactics to win support for gun control measures bottled up in Congress. But for dishonesty, it is hard to beat the N.R.A.'s own whopper in trying to portray the group as a friend of the reasonable gun safety measures it has been fighting to defeat or water down.

The sparring came just days after Mr. Clinton's meeting with key Congressional leaders at the White House failed to produce progress in freeing a modest gun control package from the House-Senate conference committee where it has been stalled for months. The sticking point remains the strong gun-show provision that cleared the Senate last May over the N.R.A.'s vehement

opposition. This provision would extend to gun-show sales the same background check requirement that now applies to guns purchased from licensed dealers.

Two Democratic senators, Charles Schumer of New York and Richard Durbin of Illinois, are planning to step up the pressure by attaching gun control amendments to other legislation coming to the floor. This will force recorded votes on matters with broad public support, like mandatory trigger locks and background checks of buyers at gun shows, flea markets and Internet sales.

Only two weeks ago a 6-year-old killed a classmate with a handgun, one of many reasons gun regulation promises to be an issue in the long political campaign ahead. The chief obstacle to saner gun control remains the obstructionism of the N.R.A., whose extremist views and rhetoric should offend Americans fed up with all the gunfire.

CONGRESSIONAL RURAL CAUCUS

HON. ALLEN BOYD

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. BOYD. Mr. Speaker, today more than one hundred of my colleagues and I celebrate the formation of the Congressional Rural Caucus. Our bipartisan group will serve as a unified voice on behalf of rural Americans. One in every four Americans, or 62 million people, reside in rural areas and an additional 15 million Americans live in small cities and towns. Unfortunately, too often the logistical difficulties rural residents face prevent their concerns on issues like education, healthcare and agriculture from being heard. Our caucus hopes to share with our colleagues in Congress the unique needs of rural citizens and remind them of the important contributions rural America makes.

One of the most important concerns facing rural areas is the current agriculture crisis. While the majority of the United States has enjoyed a decade of unprecedented economic prosperity, our nation's family farmers have not benefited from this abundance. In the wake of NAFTA and the implementation of a national farm policy destined for failure, America's farmers have suffered, and many are on the verge of bankruptcy. This economic distress has impacted not just farmers, but the entire rural community.

Ensuring our farmers have the opportunity to compete with international growers on a level playing field is more than an issue of protecting the way of life of rural Americans; it is an issue of national security. No one wants our country to be dependent on third world nations to supply our evening suppers, but if we fail to act now, when our farmers are in need, that scenario could become a reality.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Congressional Rural Caucus to develop a viable alternative to the 1996 Freedom to Farm Act. Now that we are united, our caucus has the strength in numbers to turn Congress's attention to this important issue.

HONORING THE O'NEILL SCHOOL OF IRISH DANCING

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to thank the O'Neill School of Irish Dancing for taking part in the New Haven's St. Patrick's Day Parade during their visit to the United States. It is an honor for New Haven to host them at this annual celebration.

In my hometown of New Haven, Connecticut, St. Patrick's Day is a very special holiday. Every year the parade committee works diligently to sponsor a group from Ireland to participate in the celebration. This year we are honored to have the O'Neill School of Irish Dancing join us from Bornacoola, representing communities from Leitrim and Longford Counties in Ireland. In all, 57 boys and girls, ages 8 to 15 will travel to the U.S. to perform in the New Haven Parade and will be featured in the big parade in New York. These exceptionally talented young people will be performing a combination of traditional Irish step-dancing with pieces from the popular shows of Riverdance and Lord of the Dance. Our community certainly shares the excitement in their attendance.

Even more impressive than their young talent is the commitment and dedication they have put into making this trip possible. Inspired by the excitement of performing, these young people managed a variety of fund-raisers to finance the trip. With tremendous community support and enthusiasm, both in Ireland and in the States, they achieved their goal and were able to raise enough money for the trip. They are truly a remarkable group of youngsters.

On behalf of the New Haven community, I am pleased to welcome the O'Neill School of Irish Dancers—we are certainly thrilled to host them during their visit. My sincere appreciation to the many people who have helped them join us for the upcoming celebration. I would like to extend my very best wishes for continued success. Happy St. Patrick's Day!

THE OCCASION OF THE CONGRESSIONAL RURAL CAUCUS KICK-OFF

HON. EVA M. CLAYTON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, not long ago I made a statement on the Floor of the House that, I believe, underscores the pressing need for a new and revived Rural Caucus.

I noted that, at the Farm Resource Center, a national crisis line for farmers, those seeking help can not get through.

The line is always busy. Small farmers and ranchers are struggling to survive in America. In fact, small farmers and ranchers are a dying breed. And, because they are a dying breed, quality and affordable food and fiber for all of us is at risk.

Passage of the 1996 Farm Bill sounded the death knell for many of our Nation's farmers and ranchers.

Farmers and ranchers, able to eke out a living from the land in past years, now find it almost impossible to break even. Most are losing money and fighting to stay in the farming business. And, the crisis line is busy.

We are all aware of the problems tobacco is having.

But, in North Carolina, according to a recent news report, the state's top farm commodity, hogs, have experienced a fifty percent drop in prices since 1996. Wheat is down forty-two percent. Soybeans are down thirty-six percent. Corn—thirty-one percent; peanuts—twenty-eight percent.

Turkey and cotton prices are down twenty-three percent, since 1996.

In fact, my friends, at the time I made my remarks, there was no commodity in North Carolina that makes money for farmers. And, the crisis line is busy. In 1862, the year the Department of Agriculture was created, ninety percent of the population farmed for a living.

Today, American producers represent less than 3 percent of the population.

By 1992, there were only 1.1 million small farms left in the United States, a 45 percent decline from 1959! North Carolina had only a little over 39,000 farms left in 1992, a 23 percent decline. In 1920, there were over 6 million farms in the United States and close to a sixth—926,000 were operated by African-Americans. In 1992, the landscape was very, very different.

Only 1 percent of the farms in the United States are operated by African-Americans.

One percent—18,816, is a paltry sum when African-Americans comprise 13 percent of the total American population.

In my home state of North Carolina, there has been a 64 percent decline in minority farmers, just over the last 15 years, from 6,996 farms in 1978 to 2,498 farms in 1992.

All farmers are suffering under this severe economic downturn.

Just before I made my remarks on the Floor, I spoke with a farmer who was working off the farm—not to earn extra money—but, to earn enough money to save his small farm.

He made no money from the farm, in fact he lost money.

Taking a job off the farm was the only thing he could do to save his farm and pass it on to his children.

The man is seventy years old.

And, the crisis line is busy.

Mr. Speaker, when next you drive through a state where the food and fiber for America is produced—the least expensive and best quality food and fiber in the world—take note of the farm, and the people who are trying to make their living from the land.

It will take us, Congress, to relieve the pressure on the national crisis lines.

Farmers and farm families deserve a chance—a chance for the dwindling number of farmers and ranchers who feed and help clothe us at prices that are unmatched around the world.

I am reminded of the story that the former Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, Kika De LeGarza, would tell.

While touring a nuclear submarine, he asked the Commander how long could it stay submerged.

After some reluctance in responding to what the Commander considered top secret information, he finally told the Chairman, "As long as the food lasts."

Food, my friends, is vital to America's defense and national security.

And, the crisis line is busy.

Before the "Freedom to Farm" Bill of 1996, the farm price safety net was shield against uncertain and fluctuating commodity prices.

When that Bill was being considered, we referred to it as "Freedom to Fail." I am sad to report that our admonitions have been far too accurate. We must now correct that error.

If we do nothing about the real problems facing these hard-working citizens, they may not be there at a later time.

And, that will hurt all of us, because we too, as human beings, can stay only as long as the food lasts.

That is why we need a Rural Caucus, and that is why we are here today.

A TRIBUTE—LOUIS BRACH WAS TRULY A HERO

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I want to ask that we all pause for a moment to remember a man who we have lost, Louis Brach. Though he is gone, he will live on in the hearts of all who knew him and be remembered for long years by many who didn't.

Mr. Brach was a former mayor, city councilman, as well as, an entrepreneur in Grand Junction. He was known as a wonderful businessman and had the gift of recognizing opportunity well ahead of others. As the owner of Brach's Market, he would go out of his way to tend to all of his customers. When he moved to Grand Junction at the age of 5, he knew that he was destined to make a difference.

Louis Brach is someone who will be missed by many. His friends and family will miss the man that they all enjoyed spending time with. The rest of us will miss the man who exemplified the selflessness that so few truly possess. But, when we lose a man such as Mr. Brach, being missed is certainly no precursor to being forgotten. And, everyone who ever knew him, will walk through life differently for it.

RECOGNITION OF JO-ANNE F. WILKIE

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jo-Anne Wilkie of St. Clair, Michigan for her inexhaustible efforts to further her community's appreciation of the arts.

For the past fifteen years, Jo-Anne has served as the Executive Director of The Art Center in Mount Clemens, Michigan. She has worked relentlessly to expose our community to the fine arts, as well as to preserve the historic center for generations to come. Under Jo-Anne's direction the center has truly prospered, and her work on the "Art in Public Places" program has made a tangible contribution to the lives of thousands by bringing fine art out of the confines of museums and into the streets and parks of our community.

Jo-Anne's work in Mount Clemens is only one chapter in a life that has been devoted to serving her community. Before coming to Mount Clemens, Jo-Anne was an elementary school vocal music teacher, the Founding Executive Director of the Downriver Council for the Arts, and the General Supervisor of Arts and Special Programs for the City of Indianapolis Department of Parks and Recreation. For her extraordinary commitment and hard work, Jo-Anne was awarded the key to the City of Indianapolis.

Jo-Anne is now being honored by the Daughters of Isabella Queen of the Skies Circle No. 683, and I ask that you join with me in commending Jo-Anne Wilkie for her inspiring devotion to the improvement of our community through the arts.

HONORING THE LATE WALTER HALL

HON. NICK LAMPSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great sadness to honor Walter Hall, who passed away on Sunday afternoon at age 92. Walter Hall, known by many as "Mr. Democrat" was a man who not only talked the talk, but walked the walk. He was a true visionary with a vision of a better life for all Americans.

He spent his life fighting for equality, justice, and opportunity. Walter was at the forefront of the civil rights movement, he spoke out eloquently about his belief that all men were created equal. He led the charge to abolish the poll tax, supported equal rights for women, and worked for the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

He was a community activist who believed in opportunity for all, and was always looking to the future of the Southeast Texas-Gulf Coast area. He negotiated with the city of Houston to supply clean drinking water to Galveston County cities, and helped build the first water and sewer facilities in League City, Hitchcock, La Marque, Dickinson, Alta Loma, Kemah and Friendswood. He is credited with bringing NASA to the Clear Lake area, for the location of the Mainland Medical Center, and for the expansion of the seawalls of Texas City and Galveston. Throughout his long and successful career as a banker he provided opportunity to many through small business loans.

He was a man of humble beginnings who became a man of great fortune and power. He served as a mentor for many young people interested in politics, and was a close friend of President Lyndon B. Johnson and Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn. "Mr. Democrat" was a liberal Democrat and proud of it. Walter was a tremendous influence on the political community in Texas, and those in the political arena often sought his advice. He was actively involved with Lyndon Johnson, Ralph Yarborough, Jack Brooks, myself, and numerous other national, state, and local public officials.

Walter was a family man. He married his high school sweetheart Helen, had three sons, 8 grandchildren, and 5 great grandchildren. In 1999 he donated Helen's Garden to the City of League City, a park in the Historical section

of town featuring 100 year old Butler Oaks, to honor his late wife and to protect the oak trees. His hobbies included hunting and fishing, activities he could pursue with his family in tow.

Mr. Speaker, despite all his clout, Walter Hall remained a man of the people, honest and forthright. His was of the utmost character, and his attributes of selflessness and commitment to others are rare gifts that the Southeast Texas-Gulf Coast area was lucky to have. His work and his dedication to the people of this great country is unparalleled. Walter will be sorely missed.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HENRY W. MCGEE POST OFFICE BUILDING BILL

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce H.R. 3909, designating a United States Postal Service facility in the First Congressional District of Illinois as the "Henry W. McGee Post Office Building."

Henry McGee, the first black Postmaster of Chicago, gave 44 years of outstanding and exemplary service to the Post Office Department, now known as the U.S. Postal Service. He began his career in 1929 as a temporary substitute letter carrier and ended it in 1973 as General Manager of the eight metropolitan districts of Chicago.

For this reason alone, I think it is more than fitting to honor his service and commitment to excellence, by naming the post office facility at 4601 South Cottage Grove Avenue as the "Henry W. McGee Post Office Building." But Mr. McGee's accomplishments do not end here and neither should the praise.

Mr. McGee coordinated the arrangements for the 1939 convention of the National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees and in 1945 he served as president of the Chicago branch of the National Alliance. In 1948, Mr. McGee was appointed by the postmaster to manage the employment office, later becoming the manager and overseeing the conversion to career employment for a large number of female employees.

Continuing to strive for excellence, Mr. McGee acquired his bachelor of science degree from the Illinois Institute of Technology, and earned a promotion making him General Foreman. Later, he became Superintendent of the largest finance station of the Post Office Department. In 1961, Mr. McGee received a master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Chicago, while concurrently being promoted to Personnel Manager for the Chicago region of the Post Office Department, which encompassed Illinois and Michigan. Five years later, Mr. McGee became the first black Postmaster of Chicago.

Abraham Lincoln said: "... in the end it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years."

I am honored to submit this legislation saluting 90-year-old Henry McGee, a praiseworthy and admirable man. I urge my colleagues to support this worthwhile measure.

A TRIBUTE TO FRUITA MONUMENT HIGH SCHOOL'S WILD CAT DEBATE TEAM

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize the accomplishments of an outstanding student organization, the Fruita Monument High School Speech and Debate Team. In doing so I would like to honor the following individuals on the team for their superb contributions to the speech and debate team: Juli Carrillo, Ginger Jacobson, Jenna Birkhold, and Eric Slater.

The stellar performance by the team is a direct indication to why they qualified for the national competition, to be held in Portland, OR. Their love of argumentation and debating issues helped them become victorious. They have proven to be an asset to their school and community.

It is with this, Mr. Speaker, that I say congratulations to the Fruita Monument's Speech and Debate team on a truly exceptional accomplishment.

HONORING ANTHONY GENTILE

HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I commend and submit the following article to my colleagues:

Anthony Gentile has spent his life serving people. In 1965 he traveled to nine countries in Europe with Ohio Governor Jim Rhodes on a trade mission and was honored with an Executive Order of Ohio Commodore. In 1967, he was named "Citizen of the Year" by the Wintersville, Ohio Chamber of Commerce. Also that year, he was one of forty-two American Delegates to the Fifth International Mining Congress held in the Soviet Union. In 1977, he was the recipient of an honorary degree "Doctor of Humane Letters" by the Franciscan University of Steubenville as well as the Conservation and Reclamation Award for the State of Ohio, the only award given by the Governor.

Additionally, Mr. Gentile is a past member of the Board of Franciscan University of Steubenville and has served on the Board of the Union Bank in Steubenville, Ohio. He is currently listed in the World Who's Who in Commerce and Industry and Who's Who in Finance and Industry. Despite all of these efforts, he also finds time to devote to the cause of cancer research.

Mr. Gentile is married to the former Nina A. DiScipio. The couple have been married for fifty-six years and have four children.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring Anthony Gentile. His lifelong service and commitment are to be commended. I am proud to call him a constituent and a friend.

CONGRESSIONAL RURAL CAUCUS

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to speak out for our rural American communities and to join my colleagues, Mrs. CLAYTON from North Carolina, Mr. MORAN from Kansas, Mr. POMEROY from North Dakota to celebrate the formation of the new Congressional Rural Caucus.

This morning we held a press conference to formally announce the formation of our new Congressional Rural Caucus. We were joined by several Members of the Rural Caucus, the Speaker of the House DENNIS HASTERT, former Representative Glenn English from Oklahoma who was representing the National Rural Network, and many Americans who live and work in our rural communities across our great nation.

Those attending the press conference expressed such strong support for our initiative to review the Congressional Rural Caucus. It really says to me that there is a great deal of support for our rural American communities. That there's a real recognition of just how important rural America is to our nation. It tells me that we're on the right track here with our Rural Caucus. And there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that our Rural Caucus can and will help communities achieve real results.

Since last August my colleagues, Mrs. CLAYTON from North Carolina, and Misters MORAN from Kansas, and POMEROY from North Dakota, have been hard at work laying the ground work for the Rural Caucus. And we've been hard at work recruiting Members to join and take an active part in the Rural Caucus. We set a goal of 100 Members by our kick-off date. We not only met our goal, we surpassed it. To date, there are well over 110 bipartisan Members of the Rural Caucus. And more Members are joining every day. We've all joined together to raise a loud voice for rural America on Capitol Hill. Think about it. With nearly a fourth of the House on board, that's one heck of a loud voice. And the list just keeps growing.

To my Rural Caucus colleagues I want to say "thank you." Thank you for standing up and speaking out for your rural communities. Together we can make a real difference for all of rural America, and I look forward to the work that lies ahead of us.

Now to be honest, we couldn't have done this alone. It took a lot of work and assistance and support from the many, many organizations of the National Rural Network. To all of the groups who have supported our efforts for the Rural Caucus, thank you. Because of your experience, your knowledge, and your living connections with rural America, you all are an integral part of the success of the Rural Caucus. And I look forward to working with you on all that lies ahead.

Now I want to briefly talk about why I think the Rural Caucus is so important and why I think it's needed here on Capitol Hill. You may know that about one in every four Americans—that's 62 million people—live in rural America. That's also about the same number of people who live in inner cities. And an additional 15 million people live in small cities and towns.

These 77 million Americans share many of the same problems of big city residents—such as poverty, high unemployment, and chronic underemployment. But rural Americans face unique challenges because they are dispersed over hundreds and thousands of miles. And despite the similarity of some of the issues faced in urban and rural America, rural communities consistently get the short end of the stick when it comes to federal funding. And this is across the board in all agencies and all sectors—from economic development, to health care, to education and everything in between and beyond.

Now I represent a very rural district in Southern Missouri. And if you visited my district, I think many of you'd be amazed to see that while the American economy has been booming, communities in my district—like so many of our agricultural and rural communities across the nation—are being left behind.

The past several years have been very hard on American producers. And the hard times on the farm and ranch don't stop at the gate. These hard times impact rural main street, from the local shops, to the communities, schools and homes. The fact is, our rural communities are faced with a Catch-22 situation. They don't have the infrastructure needed to attract new and high-tech businesses. At the same time, they don't have the resources needed to invest in the infrastructure that can attract new and high-tech businesses.

The bottom line is that we simply must do all we can to ensure that rural communities have the tools they need to turn their challenges into real opportunities for growth and prosperity in the 21st century. Rural America is just too important to our nation to not do all we can. The Congressional Rural Caucus can play an important part in seeing this goal become a reality. After all, our rural American communities are our past, our present, and our future.

MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL POMEROY

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, virtually every day we hear reports of our booming economy and the unprecedented economic expansion. Unemployment and inflation rates are at historic lows. Today we will debate the merits of a one-dollar pay raise for the American worker—a pay raise the American people overwhelmingly support, need and deserve.

The 1990s brought our nation's CEOs a 481% rise in pay while the average American worker saw an increase of only 28%. If the minimum wage earner's pay had increased at the same level as the CEOs, they would be now earning nearly \$46,000 a year.

In order to have the same purchasing power of the 1968 minimum wage, the current minimum wage would have to be raised to \$7.49 per hour. Further, the one-dollar wage increase we are debating would only restore the real value of the minimum wage to 1982 levels. As it stands, a working parent with two children will earn \$10,700 a year at the current minimum wage—\$3,200 below the poverty line.

When we debated the last minimum wage increase in 1996, many of my colleagues voiced fears that it would reduce the number of jobs in the workplace, particularly for those harder-to-place employees or welfare recipients moving back into the workforce. It is clear that in the four years since Congress passed the last wage hike, the opposite occurred: nearly 10 million new jobs were created, the unemployment rate dropped and employers are actually having trouble finding enough workers to fill job openings.

Mr. Speaker, this increase is about raising the standard of living for more than 10 million hard-working Americans. It is time that we stop delaying and pass this increase in the minimum wage.

TRIBUTE TO KRISTINE ELLIOT-THALMAN

HON. GARY G. MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. GARY MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a fine public servant, Kristine Elliot-Thalman, who will be retiring this month from her distinguished career at the City of Anaheim, California. As part of her service to the City, especially for the last 13 years, she has headed intergovernmental affairs matters involving local, state, and federal initiatives that are so important to Anaheim's vital needs.

Mr. Speaker, I am especially honored to bring Kris Thalman to the attention of the U.S. House of Representatives, because on the very same day as her retirement, she is having a birthday as well and congratulations are doubly in order.

My colleagues in Congress, many of whom have had the pleasure to know and work with Kris through the years, wish her Godspeed in whatever endeavors she may choose in the future.

HONORING MICHELLE KATHERINE MIHIN

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a special member of the staff of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Michelle Katherine Mihin, who is leaving us this week to return to her home in Ohio and accept a position with the Charles Schwab organization, an exciting and richly deserved opportunity.

Originally from Youngstown, OH, Michelle came to the Washington area to attend Marymount University where she earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science. Of particular relevance to us, Michelle was active for a number of years in, and served as President of, Marymount's Society for Political and Government Awareness. After graduation she stayed in the area and worked as an intern in the office of her Ohio Congressman, our colleague, JIM TRAFICANT.

Shortly thereafter in 1996, Michelle joined the Committee to work as a staff assistant

with both our Aviation and Railroad Subcommittees. During her time with us, she has earned a solid reputation for excellence and dedication in her work. What has especially impressed us is the initiative she has taken to reach beyond her assigned responsibilities. Michelle has always been ready to volunteer and see what jobs needed to be done and plunge in to help to do them no matter what the issue or hour of the day. As an avocation, she has become our unofficial "Social Director". If there is an occasion to celebrate or a staff member to bid farewell, Michelle is always ready to volunteer and put her organizational talents to work. Above all, we will miss the sparkle, enthusiasm and the laughter she brings to the Committee.

On many occasions I have quoted one of those gems of wisdom where the thought stays with you but the author's name does not: "Success is getting what you want, happiness is wanting what you get"—Michelle has earned both. I join with all Michelle's friends on the Committee in wishing her every success and happiness in her future endeavors.

IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND COST EFFICIENCY OF THE MEDICARE SYSTEM: SUPPORT REIMBURSEMENT FOR CERTIFIED REGISTERED NURSE FIRST ASSISTANTS

HON. MAC COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, today, I am pleased to introduce The Certified Registered Nurse First Assistant (CRNFA) Direct Reimbursement Act of 2000, which will provide equity in reimbursement for certified registered nurse first assistants who provide surgical first assisting services to Medicare patients.

Having received more advanced education and training in first assisting than any other non-physician provider, CRNFAs serve a vital role, directly assisting physicians with surgical procedures. Additionally, CRNFAs and RNFA's are the only providers—aside from the rare physician making house calls—who sometimes provide post-operative care by actually visiting patients at home following surgery. Thus, not only do CRNFAs have more clinical experience and education than other non-physician providers, but they also provide continuity of care to patients enabling higher quality and better patient outcomes.

CRNFAs also provide the additional benefit of cost efficiency. Health claims data from the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) reveal that physicians file more than 90% of the first assistant at surgery claims for Medicare reimbursement. Physicians receive 16 percent of the surgeon's fee for serving as a surgical first assistant. Under this legislation, CRNFAs will receive only 13.6 percent of the surgeon's fee for providing first assistant services. Furthermore, CRNFAs are equally as cost-effective as other non-physician first assisting providers who currently are reimbursed at 13.6 percent of the surgeon's fee for first assisting. Use of CRNFAs would, therefore, be a high quality yet cost-effective alternative for the nation's health care delivery system, affording additional flexibility to surgeons, hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers.

In closing, I would like to express my appreciation for the hard work of the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN) and its president, Patricia Seifert, RN, in bringing this issue forward. As a provider of health care, the CRNFA is a viable solution for controlling rising health care costs. Working in collaborative practice with surgeons, CRNFAs are cost-effective to the patient and to the health care delivery system. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting equity for certified registered nurse first assistants by co-sponsoring The Certified Registered Nurse First Assistant Direct Reimbursement Act of 2000.

HONORING MICHAEL VICK

HON. ROBERT C. SCOTT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I take this time to acknowledge the accomplishments of one of Newport News, Virginia's hometown heroes, Michael Vick, who recently led the Virginia Tech Hokies to this year's Sugar Bowl. His leadership and humanity during this exciting battle of champions continue to make a lasting impression on the minds of many in Newport News and indeed throughout Virginia.

Michael's talent on the field is more than evident. His remarkable athletic achievements as quarterback for the Hokies included being named Big East Conference Offensive Player

of the Year and Rookie of the Year, Player of the Year by Virginia's sports information directors for the Division I all-state football team, and being named to the all-state team. To top off this impressive list, Michael led the Nation in pass efficiency and earned third place in the Heisman Trophy balloting.

Although Michael has gained national prominence for his athletic achievements, he remains well aware that he is a role model to young people in the local community. As a graduate of Warwick High School in Newport News, he returns often to speak with young students. Michael encourages them to set goals and work hard to achieve success. In doing so, he displays humility and an appreciation for his own accomplishments. These are the same skills he champions on the field and in the classroom at Virginia Tech where he is a sophomore studying criminal justice.

The City of Newport News will join with Michael's family and friends to salute him and celebrate his accomplishments throughout the weekend of March 17. These activities include a student assembly at his alma mater, where his high school football jersey number will be retired. The program also includes a recognition dinner and a community rally.

In a time where we are inundated with negative media accounts of our Nation's youth and sports figures, Michael shines as a positive example that hard work, determination and perseverance do, in fact, equal success. Newport News will long remember his outstanding role as an athlete and a gentleman while leading the Hokies to a national championship game. I join with the citizens of Newport News, Virginia in looking forward to Michael's continued legacy of success.

A TRIBUTE—RECOGNIZING RACHEL OWEN

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize the accomplishments of one of Colorado's bright youth, and participant in the JASON Project in Houston, TX, Rachel Owen. In doing so, I would like to honor this teenager for her academic accomplishments.

As a student in middle school, Rachel became very active in the Science Outreach Center in Carbondale, CO. She then became an Argonaut in the JASON Project and from there, was chosen to attend a program at NASA in Houston. She is the first student from the Roaring Fork Valley to participate in this program.

Rachel is active in the Kids Teaching Kids program through the Science Outreach Center. She is also an exemplary student, receiving A's throughout her academic career. Her peers and teachers recognized her great accomplishments and held a pep rally in her honor.

It is with this, Mr. Speaker, that I say thank you to Rachel Owen on a truly exceptional accomplishment at the age of 14. If we had more citizens like her, I am certain that we would live in a very harmonious place.