Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in an expression of appreciation to Mr. Theodore Gundlach for his years of service to his community and to wish him and his colleagues the very best in the future.

WELCOME TO PRESIDENT NURSULTAN NAZARBAEV

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS
OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, September 26, 2006

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to welcome to the United States, our true friend and strong ally, the President of Kazakhstan, His Excellency Nursultan Nazarbayev.

Since gaining independence in 1991, Kazakhstan has overcome numerous obstacles and challenges to emerge as one of the world’s most dynamic and promising nations. Much of the credit for that should go to President Nazarbayev who led his country through difficult and painful reforms which brought about strong economic and democratic change.

Economically, Kazakhstan is accelerating beyond its neighboring countries and most other countries in the world. It is evident that citizens of Kazakhstan are being offered a better tomorrow because the leadership remains committed in investing in its people and country.

Democratically, the ongoing economic liberalization inspired by President Nazarbayev would not be possible without the establishment of democratic institutions coupled with a civil society unique to the social-political nature of Kazakhstan and its people. The creation of over 5,000 NGO’s, the founding of an independent judiciary, and the institutionalization of a pluralistic, multi-party system are just a few examples of the impressive “resume of freedom” that this nation has built over the last decade. Kazakhstan is setting a noble example of what can be accomplished through democracy.

Democratization and domestic initiatives are intricately linked to foreign policy. Kazakhstan’s dedication to the war on terror is admirable and deeply appreciated by the United States. It is important that the United States and Kazakhstan continue to work together to defeat those who want to destroy our most treasured values.

Today, Kazakhstan is a strong promoter of global peace and stability and I commend President Nazarbayev for taking concrete steps to bring all people of differing beliefs together by initiating the Congress of World and Traditional Religions which has become a respected forum where believers of all faiths can work in partnership to find better ways for a better future.

Additionally, Kazakhstan continues to serve as a model to the global community in its leadership on nonproliferation by voluntarily disarming what was once the world’s fourth largest nuclear arsenal.

Mr. Speaker, Kazakhstan has a rich cultural heritage and a bright future. The people of Kazakhstan should be proud of their achievements and their leader. It is my hope that the United States and Kazakhstan will continue to build bridges, share ideas, and work closely together for years to come. I am confident that President Nazarbayev’s visit to Washington is a strong testament of our growing strategic partnership, and I join many of my colleagues in wishing him a joyful and productive stay in our Nation’s Capital.

THANKING MR. RON KURTZ FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE HOUSE

HON. VERNON J. EHRLERS
OF MICHIGAN
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, September 26, 2006

Mr. EHRLERS. Mr. Speaker, on the occasion of his retirement in September 2006, we rise to thank Mr. Ron Kurtz for 26 years of outstanding service to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Ron began his career at the House working as a Systems Programmer. In that capacity, Ron has served this great institution for the last 26 years as a valued employee of the House Information Resources (HIR) within the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer. Ron has made significant contributions in the implementation and management of the mainframe computing environment and, more recently, as a key member of the Storage Area Network (SAN) management team.

In recognizing Ron’s contributions to the leadership of the House, I want to extend congratulations to Ron for his many years of dedication and outstanding contributions to the U.S. House of Representatives. We wish Ron many wonderful years in fulfilling his retirement dreams.

ENHANCING THE GLOBAL FIGHT TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
OF NEW JERSEY
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, September 26, 2006

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, today I chaired a briefing by the Special Advisor of the House International Relations Committee to examine means to enhance the global fight to end human trafficking.

When I held the first hearing on trafficking earlier this year, one of the major objectives of my visit to Iraq was to ensure that the order on labor trafficking would be enforced. Major General Bruce Moore, the Chief of Staff for our military in Iraq, assured me that compliance was being checked on this. As of the time of our subcommittee hearing, 90 percent of the contracts had been modified, and the military is ensuring that the other 10 percent will be modified and that implementation of the order will be complete.

Also on my trip this weekend, I spoke with State Department officials about trafficking in Kuwait and Germany. According to reports earlier this year, more than 40 Indian youth had been stranded in Kuwait when their passports had been confiscated by unscrupulous job brokers and had been penalized by Kuwaiti police. State Department officials told me that they have launched an aggressive program entitled FALCON for Fostering Awareness of Labor Conditions to let foreign workers know their rights. In Germany, State Department officials described how the German government to ensure that coercion is ended to the extent possible and facilities are established to help prostitutes who want to escape that life.

Mr. Speaker, the three components of the 2000 Act is the requirement that the Secretary of State provide Congress with a list of those countries whose governments are not fully complying with minimum standards to eliminate trafficking...
and are not making significant efforts to do so. These countries, designated as “Tier 3,” may be subject to certain sanctions, including the withholding of non-humanitarian, non-trade-related assistance. These sanctions can be waived if the government makes significant efforts to comply with the minimum standards, or pursuant to a determination by the President that the provision of assistance would promote the purposes of the statute or is otherwise in the national interest of the United States. The President is to submit a notification to Congress no later than 90 days from the submission of the annual report as to the determination made for each Tier 3 country. I have received numerous reports from our government representatives and non-governmental organizations as to how the implementation of this tier ranking and the consequent threat or imposition of sanctions have dramatically impacted the trafficking practices in the relevant countries.

The determinations for 2006 were due on September 1st and it was the intention of the Committee to examine those determinations at the hearing. It was therefore deeply disappointing that the determinations still had not been provided by the President three weeks later. This raises grave concerns that were examined later in the hearing, including whether the Administration is giving due priority to its stated goals to combat human trafficking. This delay past the legislative mandate sends the wrong message to these Tier 3 countries as to the urgency with which this serious human rights violation needs to be addressed. And in this instance, it was a missed opportunity to increase additional pressure on these countries through the attention that would have been focused on them at this important hearing.

We did, however, have the opportunity to inquire about the implementation of the Department of Health and Human Services’ assistance program as mandated by the 2000 Act. The purpose of such programs is to expand benefits and services to trafficking victims in the United States without regard to the victim’s immigration status. Unfortunately, evidence of the need for such assistance within our own country is growing. Just this month, it was reported that a woman from my home state of New Jersey pled guilty to being part of a smuggling ring that brought in more than 20 young women and teenagers from Honduras to work in a bar. These women were virtually imprisoned in apartments, and are alleged to have been beaten, raped, and subjected to forced abortions.

Such horrific stories make us all too aware that this modern form of slavery has silently infiltrated the fabric not only of the U.S., but of virtually every society around the world. It is extremely important that this awareness be amplified, so that public outrage will further motivate those of us in government, shame those who are creating the demand for trafficking victims, and ultimately stop those responsible for perpetrating these human rights violations. We were privileged to have with us at the hearing a prominent public figure who is using his position on the world stage to publicize the reality and prevalence of human trafficking. Not only has Ricky Martin given to Congress the opportunity to promote the cause as a goodwill ambassador for the United Nations Children’s Fund, but he has also established a foundation that is engaged in numerous activities on behalf of trafficking victims and children. As just one indication of his personal commitment to the most vulnerable among us, he visited the affected areas in Thailand following the 2004 tsunami. In April 2005, he entered into a partnership with Habitat for Humanity to construct over 220 homes to provide shelter and safety, particularly for those children orphaned by the disaster.

All three of our witnesses provided the Committee with valuable information and perspectives with which we can indeed enhance our global fight to end human trafficking.

CELEBRATING THE THIRD ANNUAL PRINCE GEORGE’S CLASSIC WEEKEND

HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN OF MARYLAND
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, September 26, 2006

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to welcome visitors from around the country to Maryland for the Third Annual Prince George’s Classic Weekend.

Hosted by the Prince George’s Black Chamber of Commerce (PGBCC), this weekend celebrates black college football, educational achievements, and an invasion of pride, and unity. On Saturday, September 30, 2006 at Bulldog Stadium, the Bowie State University Bulldogs will face the North Carolina Central University Eagles. These are two of the top teams in the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA), the Nation’s oldest black athletic conference, and the game promises to be a first-rate contest.

Mr. Speaker, the Classic comprises much more than one football game, as an entire weekend of events throughout Prince George’s County is planned, beginning tomorrow evening—including a Welcome Reception, services at EbenezerAME Church in Fort Washington, a Black College Showcase, a Battle of the Bands, the Harlem Renaissance Golf Classic, a Fashion Show featuring the work of local and national couture designers, and a Comedy Show.

This exciting weekend would not be possible without the support of numerous individuals and organizations, and I especially want to acknowledge the new President of Bowie State University, Dr. Mickey Burnim; Dr. Calvin Lowe, BSU President Emeritus, BSU Coach Mike Lynn, Jr., PCBCC President Hubert “Petry” Green, and Mike Little, President of the Prince George’s Classic.

I want to welcome all participants to our state for the Third Annual Prince George’s Classic weekend, and I urge my colleagues to join me in wishing them a wonderful celebration.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION
HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK OF ILLINOIS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, September 26, 2006

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, on Monday September 25, 2006, I missed the following votes: Rollcall No. 471: H.R. 5059, To designate the Wild River Wilderness in the White Mountain National Forest in the State of New Hampshire, and for other purposes.; Rollcall No. 472: H.R. 5062, To designate as wilderness certain National Forest System land in the State of New Hampshire; and Rollcall No. 473: H. R. 6102, To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 200 Lawyers Road, NW in Vienna, Virginia, as the ‘Captain Christopher P. Petty and Major William F. Hecker, III Post Office Building’. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on Rollcall No. 471, Rollcall No. 472, and Rollcall No. 473.

RECOGNIZING OCTOBER AS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

HON. JERRY MORAN OF KANSAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, September 26, 2006

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the month of October as national domestic violence awareness month. Though we have made great strides in bringing attention to the tragedy of domestic violence, more than 4 million Americans continue to find themselves victims of physical, psychological and sexual abuse. Domestic violence crosses every line of ethnicity, geography, and income. Abuse occurs in every single community in our country—every community—and it must be fought in every community.

It wasn’t very long ago that family violence was considered just that—a family matter. A