

COMMENDING NAHRO

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 8, 2008

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) and their partners in the non-profit, governmental, and private sectors for embarking on their 2008 Housing America Campaign.

The affordable housing issues that the Housing America Campaign raises affect every Congressional district in this country. The statistics are grim: 750,000 Americans are homeless on any given night and 3½ million experience homelessness at some point in each year. I'm worried that these numbers will only increase as the foreclosure crisis continues.

More than 15 million American families now pay more than half of their income for housing. Too many of these families also make less than 50 percent of their area's median income and yet still are stuck on waiting lists for government assistance. Where I live in Seattle there are thousands of families on waiting lists for Section 8.

In Seattle the "fair market rent" established by HUD is over \$900 a month for a 2-bedroom apartment. In order to be able to afford this, without paying more than 30 percent of their income on rent, someone in Seattle would have to be making \$37,000 a year or about \$18/hour, which is more than double the minimum wage in Washington State and about triple the current Federal minimum wage.

I am relieved that the House has taken meaningful action to address the affordable housing shortage by passing legislation to create an Affordable Housing Fund. This critical fund will provide about \$500 million per year to finance construction, maintenance, and preservation of affordable housing throughout the country.

In addition, the House has passed legislation that increases the loan limits for government-backed loans, helps homeowners in trouble refinance their home loans and to provide funding to revitalize neighborhoods where foreclosures have been rampant, and to modernize and expand the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit.

We have more work to do in Congress and it will probably require an administration with a greater commitment to addressing the affordable housing crisis in the U.S. But we should all be grateful to NAHRO and their partners for sounding the alarm and raising awareness both in the Congress and around the country. They make our jobs much easier.

I look forward to continuing to work with the Housing America Campaign as we fight for affordable housing opportunities for every family in this country.

RECOGNIZING MR. JACK HOPKINS

HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 8, 2008

Mr. UPTON. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Mr. Jack Hopkins of Kalamazoo,

Michigan, for his 25 years of distinguished service to the Kalamazoo Community Foundation and the greater Kalamazoo area.

Jack began working with the Kalamazoo Community Foundation in 1983 and was named its president/CEO in 1994. Under his esteemed leadership, the foundation's assets have grown exponentially, allowing millions to be invested in the local community. At the same time, Jack has volunteered with more than 30 local nonprofit organizations dedicated to enhancing the economic vitality and cultural richness of the Kalamazoo region. Further accomplishments include his work to help create the Arts Fund of Kalamazoo County, establish an active Youth United Way program, and initiate the Community Foundation's BetterTogether/Kalamazoo social capital initiative.

Apart from his work in Kalamazoo, Jack has also been a leader at the regional and national levels. He was the first chair of the Council on Foundations' Community Foundation Leadership Team and board vice chair of the Council of Michigan Foundations. He has also served on the board of the Community Foundations of America and was former chair of Michigan Community Foundations Ventures.

The Kalamazoo Community Foundation was established for the betterment of the greater Kalamazoo community. Jack's personal and professional legacy is one that exemplifies this mission. Jack Hopkins has been a truly exceptional asset to the Kalamazoo community.

Once again, I would like to personally congratulate and thank Jack for his many years of service. Southwest Michigan is and will forever be a better place to live and work because of his contributions.

IN HONOR OF JASON DALE LEWIS

HON. CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 8, 2008

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Madam speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of Jason Dale Lewis, who was killed in combat just over a year ago on July 6, 2007, in Baghdad. Petty Officer 1st Class Lewis called Brookfield, Connecticut, his home, along with his wife Donna and their three children.

Just 30 years old, Petty Officer 1st Class Lewis was a uniquely skilled member of an elite Navy SEAL unit. Highly decorated, he earned the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, the Navy "E" ribbon, two Good Conduct Medals, the Navy and Marine Corps Overseas Service ribbon, the Expert Rifleman Medal, and the Expert Pistol Shot Medal. Petty Officer 1st Class Lewis was truly an elite among elites.

A year has passed since Jason left us. But the example he set, for his family, for his community, and for his Nation, will last forever. Our society is beset by those who live lives defined by unmet, wasted potential. That wasn't a problem for Jason. He knew how great he could be, as a man, as a father, and as a SEAL. And in 30 short years, he achieved that greatness.

As Americans, we hold dear the values of honor, courage and commitment. Petty Officer 1st Class Lewis embodied those characteris-

tics on and off the battlefield. His valor in defense of his country and his unceasing love for his community and family lend credence to the notion that the fullest lives are those lived for the greater good.

INTRODUCING THE ENERGY EFFICIENT AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY AUTOMOBILE TAX CREDIT ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 8, 2008

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Energy Efficient and Environmentally Friendly Automobile Tax Credit Act, legislation that will help Americans reduce pollution and the amount they pay for gas. My legislation accomplishes these important goals by providing Americans a tax credit of up to \$2,000 when they sell or trade in a car and obtain a vehicle that has at least a 20 percent higher average fuel economy than the sold or traded-in car. The bill also creates a Federal tax deduction for any State or local taxes paid on the purchase of the more fuel-efficient automobile and makes interest on loans to purchase the more fuel-efficient automobile tax deductible.

This legislation will help Americans cope with high gas prices by making it easier for them to obtain more fuel-efficient cars. I hope my colleagues would agree that Congress should provide free market incentives to make it easier for Americans to exchange their current cars for cars that create less pollution.

Providing tax deductions and tax credits to make it easier for Americans to purchase fuel-efficient automobiles is a win for American consumers, a win for the environment, and a win for those of us who favor free market solutions to pollution and high gas prices. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

A TRIBUTE TO MATTIE STEPANEK

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 8, 2008

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute today to Mattie Stepanek, an extraordinary young man who touched thousands of people with his messages of hope and peace.

Mattie was afflicted with dysautonomic mitochondrial myopathy, a form of muscular dystrophy, which took his life at age 13 in 2004. Despite his illness, Mattie dedicated his life to promoting hope, peace and tolerance through his role as a national goodwill ambassador for the Muscular Dystrophy Association and through his advocacy for people with disabilities through his inspiring words of poetry.

Mattie is remembered for his kindness, grace and vitality. He saw his disease not as a hindrance but as a vehicle to reach out to the hearts of many. He shared his message of peace and tolerance with school children, business leaders, medical personnel, religious groups and so many others throughout the world. Indeed, his message touched people of