

the children, spouses and parents they left behind. Let us never forget those who returned, many disabled. If we can remember these worthy veterans on Memorial Day, we ought to honor them on Election Day. Let's do all in our power to put more upcoming Ed Conroy's in City Hall, on the County Council, in our State House, and in the Congress. We have the opportunity to do so with elections coming up in the Fall. They served us so well in war—and they would do as well in preserving the peace.

Our very own heroes—Bill Hickey in World War II, Ed Conroy in Korea, and Captain Jim Graham, Butch Joeckel, and John Clements in Vietnam—they represent the best that America has to offer. They are object lessons themselves. They made history. Hopefully, our young people will be inspired by their example.

If America is to remain great, it may indeed depend on how well we continue to inspire our youth to excel. Our noted Sons of Prince George's County have shown the way.

Thank you—and God Bless America.

IN RESPONSE TO THE NINTH CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS' RULING ON THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2002

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, I am fortunate to have many veterans residing in my district. When I heard of the appalling actions of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals—ruling that the Pledge of Allegiance was unconstitutional—my thoughts turned to them. We are a nation standing strong today because those heroes pledged their allegiance to America with their lives, their tears and their sacred honor. What must our troops in the field today think?

Our Country came into being through a Declaration of Independence that acknowledged that we are endowed by our Creator with the unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. This is clearly an acknowledgement in the very founding document of this Nation that we are indeed "one Nation under God."

When I conclude a constituent letter with "God bless America" is my action unconstitutional? Should that be banned, too? I stand with the tradition that allows the President to put his hand on the Bible, pledge to protect and defend the Constitution and conclude his oath with the words of George Washington, "So help me God."

It is sad that at a time when our country is at war and Americans have a renewed sense of patriotism—and what allegiance to America costs—this court is driving a wedge between us with their absurd ruling. It is my fervent hope that a common sense reading of the Constitution will eventually prevail and that liberal judges will end their war on religion in America.

As countless American leaders of all political stripes have said before me, God Bless America.

NINTH CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS' RULING

HON. CHARLES W. "CHIP" PICKERING

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2002

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Speaker, today the latest in a string of absurd court decisions was handed down from a Federal Appeals Court in San Francisco. This court decided that the Pledge of Allegiance was unconstitutional and cannot be recited in schools.

This is an unfortunate assault on America's tradition of recognizing the role of God in our country's life and as a foundation of our liberties.

This most outrageous decision cannot and will not stand. Our forefathers authored the 1st Amendment to protect Americans from a "national church or national doctrine" not from the Pledge of Allegiance. For far too often the most liberal Members of our courts have abused the 1st Amendment to remove any acknowledgment of God or a higher being from the Federal Government and our daily life.

I would simply remind my colleagues that we sit in a chamber that has the words "In God We Trust" engraved on the wall. From the beginning of our Republic a higher being has been acknowledged by this government and the Pledge of Allegiance simply is consistent with that history and tradition.

It is hardly comparable to note that the Pledge of Allegiance is relative to the establishment of a national religion, church or doctrine.

The court in San Francisco is the most overturned appeals court in the Nation. I am confident that this decision will also be overturned, but to ensure that the Pledge of Allegiance continues to be observed I am introducing legislation to amend the Constitution to ensure the Pledge of Allegiance is constitutionally protected speech.

A RISING NATION, UNDER GOD THIS FOURTH OF JULY

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2002

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, listen again to the words we will hear this Fourth of July: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Given the recent Federal Court ruling about the constitutionality of our pledge of allegiance, will the day come when a Federal Court of these United States will not allow our Declaration of Independence to be read or posted on the walls of our schoolrooms across this land? I pray not.

We must always be mindful that the moral fiber of this Nation was built not upon the law of man, but rather upon the law of God.

"The longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth," said Benjamin Franklin, "that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice—is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid?"

Throughout our Nation's history we have faced many challenges, fought many battles. But from troubled times, we've gained greater victories. To the American, trouble but fuels our soul. Ignites our spirit. Trouble forges our future's strength. September 11th's legacy will be no different.

This Fourth of July, let us pause to give thanks to the almighty—to remember, reclaim, and rejoice in our national spirit born of revolution, our national quest.

In President Jefferson's first inaugural address, he called us "A rising nation, spread over a wide and fruitful land, traversing all the seas with the rich productions of their industry . . . advancing rapidly to destinies beyond the reach of mortal eye."

Mountaineers are always free. We live Jefferson's words. The spirits of Flood ravaged West Virginians fan the flames of future's hope.

"The God who gave us reason," Jefferson said, "did not ask us to forego its use." And truly America has taken his words to heart. We pursue life, liberty and happiness in this great Nation with great passion.

And so it should be.

Next January, our Nation will celebrate the 200th Anniversary of Jefferson's legacy, the Lewis and Clark Expedition, a national quest that has inspired us ever since. Freedom paves the path of our national quest.

As we face new economic realities in West Virginia, we seek not only new industries, but also new economies. From new infrastructure to new technologies, we are working to build a new and brighter West Virginia.

As we face the war on terrorism, we grieve for the terrible toll it has already taken, the lives of West Virginia's precious sons and daughters. Let us remember that their sacrifice was for our quest not to falter or to fail, but rather to set sail and soar.

The rights for which our founding fathers and mothers so valiantly pledged their lives, fortunes and sacred honors—and might I add they did so, and I quote, "with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence,"—require the same from us in times of peace—and in times of war.

Jefferson's last letter, which was read on July 4th 1826 in Washington, DC, the day he would pass from this earth—concluded, "For ourselves, let the annual return of this day forever refresh our recollections of these rights and an undiminished devotion to them."

Our national quest shall endure. We remain a rising nation. The Fourth of July is our constant reminder, and the good Lord, our constant strength, despite what any court, judge, or jurisdiction of this government says to the contrary.

IN HONOR OF VINCENT J. BILARDO, JR.

HON. KAREN MCCARTHY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2002

Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding individual and dedicated public servant from the State of Missouri. On July 26th, Vincent J. Bilardo, Jr. will be ending his current assignment from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Kansas City District in which he has served as the Kansas City Brownfields Federal Showcase Program Director. He will leave a lasting legacy of tireless commitment to the betterment and preservation of our community and region.

Prior to joining the Corps in 1992, Mr. Bilardo began his career in public service with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) where he spent ten years at four different NASA facilities throughout the nation. His assignments included serving as a systems engineer in the Space Station Program at NASA Headquarters, a Space Shuttle propulsion systems engineer at NASA Kennedy Space Center and Vandenberg Air Force Base in California, and as the manager of a branch of fifteen research scientists charged with developing closed loop environmental control systems for future lunar and Mars exploration missions at Ames Research Center.

Mr. Bilardo began his current position with the Kansas City Brownfields Federal Showcase in 1999 which consists of both the City of Kansas City, Missouri and the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas. He has been responsible for developing federal and state grant applications, providing technical assistance to a number of important regional initiatives, and managing several Brownfields redevelopment projects. His efforts have earned the program national acclaim as an award winning initiative that has significantly enhanced regional investment, economic growth, and environmental quality in the communities he serves. Under Mr. Bilardo's leadership the Kansas City Brownfields Federal Showcase has partnered with economic and industrial associations to implement an aggressive strategy to rebuild infrastructure, expand operations, and improve facilities in the region.

The crowning achievement of Mr. Bilardo's tenure has been in his diligent guidance and development of the Kansas City Riverfront Heritage Trail, for which he serves as the Bi-State Program Director. The Kansas City Riverfront Heritage Trail is an 18 mile long, bistate system of bicycle and pedestrian trails, pocket parks, restored ecosystems, and trailheads that has successfully leveraged municipal, state, federal, and private funding resources. Upon completion, the Riverfront Heritage Trail will connect critical riverfront activity centers to provide recreation, promote economic investment, wetland habitat restoration, and feature the rich historical and cultural highlights of our metropolitan area's past including Lewis and Clark's Corp of Discovery expedition and their two stops along the southwestern most bend of the Missouri River. Anyone who has been involved with the Riverfront Heritage Trail is cognizant of Mr. Bilardo's immeasurable contribution to this project and of the fact that it would not be the success it is today without his passion and tireless commitment.

Mr. Bilardo will leave a large void to be filled as he returns in August to NASA's Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia. He will be fondly remembered by his peers and co-workers as a tireless and dedicated leader. Mr. Bilardo's amazing barbeque skills will be sorely missed by everyone who had the pleasure to work with him. It is with deep gratitude and honor that I recognize Vince Bilardo for his remarkable service to the State of Missouri. His devotion is an example to us all.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in thanking Mr. Bilardo and wishing him and his wife Heidi and their two daughters, Kendall and Rachel continued success and happiness in the adventures that await them.

THE EMERGENCY DIRECTED RAIL SERVICE ACT

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2002

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce the Emergency Directed Rail Service Act. This legislation is intended to prepare the nation for the possibility that Amtrak will follow through on its threat to shut down. This bill is part of my effort to make sure the country is as prepared as possible should that shutdown occur.

Members are no doubt aware that Amtrak is in an extremely desperate financial situation. Amtrak contends it needs \$200 million in additional cash or it will cease operations on or about July 1, 2002. Although the Administration is currently considering an Amtrak application to use the Railroad Rehabilitation and Infrastructure Financing (RRIF) loan and loan guarantee program, it is doubtful Amtrak qualifies under the statute, under the formal regulations that govern the program, or under the informal rules imposed by the Department of Transportation and the Office of Management and Budget.

Similarly, although I would support an appropriation under the right conditions to help Amtrak in the short-term while the Congress and the Administration address Amtrak for the long-term, it is unclear whether the appropriations process will be able to provide Amtrak any funds before July 1, 2002.

I am particularly concerned about the effect on freight movements in the Northeast and on commuter operations around the country and consequently on our national economy. An Amtrak shutdown could adversely affect the economy in the Northeast United States because considerable freight would not be able to get to its destination, especially plants where the Northeast Corridor is the only rail access. Moreover, commuters in the Northeast and around the country may not be able to get to work either because the commuter authority operates on Amtrak infrastructure or because the commuter authority uses Amtrak employees to operate or maintain its trains.

Accordingly, on Monday I wrote Linda Morgan, the Chairman of the Surface Transportation Board, and asked whether the Board had the power to direct freight and commuter service that would be adversely affected by an Amtrak shutdown.

Ms. Morgan responded yesterday that the STB was unclear whether it would have the power to direct freight and commuter service in the event of an Amtrak shutdown and that its emergency powers have "never been tested before in this context . . . and . . . could be challenged in court."

This country needs someone to have the power to address the fallout on freight railroads and commuters if Amtrak shuts down. The legislation I introduce today does just that. It makes it clear that the STB has the authority it needs to act in the event Amtrak ceases service.

In particular, the bill would give the STB the authority to order the continued maintenance, signaling, and dispatching of the Northeast Corridor.

It would give the STB the authority to use federal funds to compensate the entity that conducts these services and to indemnify it with respect to any increased liability exposure.

It would also authorize the STB to direct service and to provide interim financial assistance to commuter operations around the country affected by an Amtrak shutdown.

Further, current law requires that to the extent possible the Amtrak employees who already perform the work should do the work required by the directed service.

A final word of caution. I realize this bill addresses provisions of law relating to the STB and that there are interests out there who will want to attach other STB-related amendments to it. I call on them not to do so. This bill addresses a potential national transportation disaster and is limited solely to the STB's emergency directed service powers. In this case, we must put the national interest above all others.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ENHANCED PROTECTION OF OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE ACT OF 2002

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2002

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Enhanced Protection of Our Cultural Heritage (EPOCH), Act of 2002.

The legislation that I am introducing today will increase the maximum penalties for violations of three existing statutes that protect the cultural and archaeological history of the American people, most notably, American Indians. This bill also includes language that will make any attempt to sell Native American human remains a criminal act. The United States Sentencing Commission recently recommended the statutory changes contained in this bill and these changes complement the Commission's strengthening of Federal sentencing guidelines to ensure more stringent penalties for criminals who steal from public and tribal lands. I am pleased that my colleagues, Representatives HAYWORTH and Representative MARK UDALL have joined me in co-sponsoring this important bill.

Looting of cultural remains is not a new problem but it has developed into a professional business. Today, the casual hiker who lifts an arrowhead or a potshard has become less of a problem because of increased awareness about the impact of removing such items. Instead, we are witnessing carefully planned and prepared theft by well-equipped professional looters. Professional looters have devastated individual Indians and tribal communities. These communities can do little but sit by and watch as their culture is erased, site by site as professional looters steal anything that may have value on the black market—including ancestral remains. The lack of severity in the current laws does little to deter these individuals from looting over and over again.

The three statutes that this bill amends currently impose a 5-year maximum sentence,