

provide access or improve health are to my constituents and the self-employed is great.

Sunkist's recent announcement, the rise in the number of uninsured, and the fact that patients, physicians, and other providers have waited too long for reforms are all compelling reasons why patient protection legislation must be enacted soon. Because the House legislation includes many common-sense improvements in patient access, coverage, and liability, along with the important AHP and medical savings accounts provisions, I urge that a conference on this bill be called immediately.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MACK TIMBERLAKE

HON. J.C. WATTS, JR.

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 12, 2002

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay homage to a dedicated man, husband, father and servant of God, Mack Timberlake. Bishop Timberlake died at the age of fifty-two on January 29, 2002. As senior pastor of the Christian Faith Center in Creedmoor, North Carolina, Mack's creed was to live life to the fullest while fulfilling the vision God has given us.

I extend my dearest sympathies to Mack's wife, Brenda, and their six children. She, like Mack, has devoted her life to serving our Lord and His children. Together, Mack and Brenda have authored seven books.

Bishop Timberlake and I worked together on promoting the faith-based initiative. It is sad that he will not be able to see the fruits of his labor, but I am certain he would be glad to know we are closer with each passing day to making that idea a reality. Serving the least of our brethren is a noble goal Mack never lost sight of. When I continue to work on this endeavor, I will most certainly think of him.

The career of Mack Timberlake was quite extensive. He served as regent on the Board of Trustees for Oral Roberts University, was given an honorary Doctorate of Divinity from Jameson Christian College, wrote a monthly column for "Gospel Today," was the superintendent of nearly 300 students at the Christian Faith Center Academy, co-owned a boutique and served on the Board of Governors for the National Faith Based Initiative.

It is always difficult to say goodbye to a loved one. But it is always a blessing to have known someone who made a difference in people's lives. Mack Timberlake did indeed live life to its fullest while preaching the Gospel and working to make our country, one nation under God, a better one. For that, we are all blessed.

A TRIBUTE TO DAVE LESSTRANG

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 12, 2002

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like today to express my gratitude and appreciation for the hard work and dedication of Dave LesStrang, who for the past 17 years has been a highly-valued member of my of-

fice, first as press secretary, and then as deputy chief of staff and legislative director.

Dave LesStrang came to work for me in 1985, a newly-minted 21-year-old college graduate, filled with the zeal and fervor that can only come from participation in college political groups like the Young Americans for Freedom. We hired him as a press secretary, hoping he would grow into the job over time.

It didn't take long for Dave to show the flair for organizing and completing big projects that has marked his career as a congressional staff member. One of my constituents, Hulda Crooks, completed her 21st climb of Mt. Whitney at the age of 89. When I congratulated her, I remarked that I would like to join her if she wanted to try again at 90. She said "sure," and within a few days called to ask if I was getting ready for the hike. I asked Dave to take on the job of organizing the event. He spent long hours working out details and convincing major media of its importance—with the result that the Los Angeles Times carried my photo on its cover for one of the few times in my career in the House.

Years later, Dave helped me convince the Interior Department to name a mountain near Mt. Whitney as Crooks' Peak in honor of that outstanding lady.

Dave indeed grew into the job as press secretary. He is an excellent writer, and over the years has produced thousands of press releases, speeches, constituent letters and other important correspondence that often defines the character of a congressional office. Members of the media praised my office for providing clear and dependable information, a highly valued reputation that we gained in no small part because of Dave's efforts.

He also came to intimately know the needs and character of the Inland Empire and High Desert areas of California, which I have represented for the past two decades. He has personally taken on the cause of an untold number of constituents, ensuring that federal agencies meet their responsibilities and provide top service. A typical example occurred just last year: One of my constituents asked for help in gaining recognition for her father, a pioneer engineer in space technology, from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Dave not only got NASA's attention, he helped convince the agency to award the constituent's father the Distinguished Service medal, the highest to be given to civilians.

Dave's willingness to go the extra mile and get spectacular results was also evident on a number of larger-scale projects.

When I was named as chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development and Independent Agencies, I was committed to finding ways for more people to reach the American dream of owning their own home. I decided that it would be a powerful symbolic gesture for members of Congress to help build some houses for low-income residents of our nation's capital.

I asked Dave to take on the project, and it soon blossomed into one of the most high-profile charitable efforts ever attempted by House members. Working with Habitat for Humanity, and with the enthusiastic support of Speaker Newt Gingrich and Fannie Mae, Dave organized the Houses That Congress Built, a nationwide campaign that saw nearly all 435 house members personally help build homes in their districts. The effort provided a tremen-

dous boost for the effort to provide affordable homes to low-income Americans. And true to his spirit of going above and beyond, Dave has personally volunteered for hundreds of hours on his own working on Habitat for Humanity houses.

Most of the colleagues from California will remember Dave for the other major success he helped accomplish in recent years: The organizing of our delegation into an effective, cooperative force for the people of California.

When I became chairman of the California Republican Congressional Delegation in 1995, there was little cooperation even among members of my conference, let alone across the aisle in our delegation. Members were divided by personalities, geography and partisanship, and the entire delegation had not come together on an issue since it had been grown beyond 50 members in 1980. Dave helped to reverse that historical trend. As the only staff member serving all California Republicans, he spent hundreds of hours meeting with staff from other California offices and personally walked miles in our congressional buildings winning signatures for delegation-wide letters. Within a year, we had the first letter signed by all 52 members—a feat that is now repeated regularly as our members have learned the value of working together on behalf of our state.

Since he became my legislative director in 1999, Dave has helped me complete many major projects serving our district. Congress has agreed to the expansion of the Army's National Training Center at Fort Irwin, completing a decades-long effort in support of the world's finest training facility. The Seven Oaks Dam has been dedicated along the Santa Ana River, providing flood control protection for millions of people in Southern California. And the new national parks in our desert are becoming good neighbors for the constituents who live around them.

I have always felt that members of my staff are like members of my family, and it has been a pleasure to watch Dave mature in his personal life even as he has become a consummate professional in his job. We were delighted when he met and married Elaine Dalpiaz nine years ago, and thrilled again when he and Elaine became parents to Matthew nearly two years ago.

Mr. Speaker, after 17 years in my office providing these invaluable services to my constituents—and indeed to all Californians and Americans—Dave LesStrang is moving on to a new career working for the EMC Corporation, a cutting-edge firm providing data storage to help protect the records of private industry and government. Please join me in thanking him for his dedication and years of service, and in wishing him and Elaine well in all of their future efforts.

HONORING THE STUDENTS OF THE GRANT HIGH SCHOOL WE THE PEOPLE CLASS

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 12, 2002

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, On May 4-6, 2002, more than 1,200 students from across the United States will visit Washington,

D.C. to compete in the national finals of the We the People . . . The Citizen and the Constitution program. This is the most extensive educational program in the country developed specifically to educate young people about the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

I am proud to announce that a class from Grant High School in my congressional district will represent the state of Oregon in this national event. These young scholars have worked diligently to reach the national finals and through their experience have gained a deep knowledge and understanding of the fundamental principles and values of our constitutional democracy.

The three-day national competition is modeled after hearings in the United States Congress. The hearings consist of oral presentations by high school students before a panel of adult judges on constitutional topics. The students testimony is followed by a period of questioning by the judges who probe the depth of their understanding and ability to apply their constitutional knowledge.

Administered by the Center for Civic Education, the We the People . . . program provides students with a working knowledge of our Constitution, Bill of Rights, and the principles of democratic government. It is inspiring to see these young people advocate the fundamental ideals and principles of our government in the aftermath of the tragedy on September 11. There are the ideals that identify us as a people and bind us together as a nation. It is important for our next generation to understand these values and principles that we hold as standards in our endeavor to preserve and realize the promise of our constitutional democracy.

The class from Grant High School is currently preparing for their upcoming participation in the national competition in Washington, D.C. I wish these young "constitutional experts" the best of luck at the We the People . . . national finals. They represent the future leaders of our nation.

NEW YORK FIREFIGHTER'S TRIBUTE AT NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 12, 2002

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I was honored to attend the annual National Prayer Breakfast last Thursday morning, Feb. 7, and to hear the moving words of Joseph Finley, a member of Tower Ladder 7 of the Fire Department of New York, among the first responders to the World Trade Center on September 11.

I want to share his inspiring remarks with our colleagues, which includes the names of the heroes from his firehouse who made the ultimate sacrifice that fateful day.

In a letter to me, he called the prayer breakfast an "incredible experience" for his wife Maryellen and himself, but it was also "bittersweet." As he noted, "We wouldn't have been there to experience it if not for September 11th."

He also said, "It was inspiring and reassuring to see that the leaders of our nation

have a genuine devotion to God. I believe this will help make our great country an even better place for our children."

Mr. Speaker, Joseph Finley's remarks follow:

Mr. President and Mrs. Bush, it is an honor to be here with you and all of these distinguished guests. I am humbled and privileged to be representing the courageous firefighters of New York City. I am sad, however, for the reason for my participation. I wish that September 11th had never happened.

Prior to that tragic day, the greatest loss of firefighters at any one time in the entire United States occurred in 1966, when 12 firemen lost their lives in the 23rd Street Fire in Manhattan. My father, Lieutenant John Finley of Ladder 7, was one of them. I was 10-years-old.

When people run out of a burning building, we firemen run in. That's what we do. But none of us thought, when we joined the fire department, that we would some day be called upon to fight in a war—a war against terrorism.

For the New York City firefighter, there is an inconsolable wound in our hearts that will never heal. Three hundred forty-three of my "brothers" were murdered. Nine men from my firehouse are gone. We will never forget the evil that has been unjustly unleashed upon us.

When the Twin Towers collapsed, the Fire Department called in every single firefighter in the city. Thousands of us converged on the World Trade Center. Burning paper rained down, grit scratched our eyes, the thick smoke made us cough. Everything was covered in gray ash. The huge plume of smoke was mind-boggling. Our footsteps were muffled by the layers of dust and paper. There was an eerie silence. Who could imagine downtown Manhattan, in the middle of the day, with no one around and we were the only sign of life. The silence was beyond description. No sounds, no sirens, no survivors, just ash, flames and smoke. As we trudged through the wreckage, unable to speak, I literally thought the world was coming to an end.

It was surreal. There were no words to speak, except the prayer in my heart, which said "Lord Jesus, have mercy upon us."

In the midst of that brooding silence and despair and the wreckage of the Towers—something absolutely amazing happened. Church bells started to ring all over downtown. And we realized that we were not alone. Those ringing bells became a poignant reminder of hope.

Our neighbor, the New York Yankees' Chaplain, has stopped by our firehouse almost every day since 9-11. He helped us to remember that we have been left with a great legacy of courage, faith, hope and love. Scripture says "greater love hath no man than to lay down his life for his friends."

One century ago, Edward Crocker, chief of the Fire Department of New York, said:

"I have no ambition in this world but one, And that is to be a fireman.

The position may, In the eyes of some, appear to be a lowly one;

But those who know the work which a fireman has to do believe his is a noble calling.

Our proudest moment is to save...lives.

Under the impulse of such thought the nobility of the occupation thrills us and stimulates us to deeds of daring, Even of supreme sacrifice."

Mr. President, I was personally heartened by your own words when you said, "Grief and

tragedy and hatred are only for a time. Goodness, remembrance and love have no end."

As a child who lost my own father in the line of duty, I am here as proof that we can get through the anguish and the grief. By returning to the Lord, we will survive. With His help, we will prevail.

And now, an Old Testament reading from the book of Hosea, Chapter 6, verses 1 through 3:

"Come, let us return to the Lord.

He has torn us to pieces

But he will heal us;

He Has injured us

But he will bind up our wounds.

After two days he will revive us;

On the third day he will restore us,

That we may live in his presence.

Let us acknowledge the Lord;

Let us press on to acknowledge him.

As surely as the sun rises,

He will appear;

He will come to us like the winter rains,

Like the spring rains that water the earth."

Amen. Thank you.

The following men from my firehouse were among the 343 firefighters who made the supreme sacrifice on September 11, 2001, at the World Trade Center in New York City:

Battalion Chief John Moran
Captain Vernon Richard
Lieutenant Kenneth Phelan
Firefighter George Cain
Firefighter Robert Foti
Firefighter Charles Mendez
Firefighter Richard Muldowney
Firefighter Douglas Oelschlager
Firefighter Vincent Princiotta

TERRORISTS IN PHILIPPINES MUST RELEASE MARTIN AND GRACIA BURNHAM

HON. TODD TIAHRT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 12, 2002

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, today marks the 262nd day that Martin and Gracia Burnham have been held captive by Muslim terrorists in the Philippines.

As we are riding Afghanistan of the notorious Taliban, let me introduce you to another organization that has been terrorizing the world and Americans since 1991.

The Abu Sayaf group, known as the ASG, is the smallest yet most radical of the Islamic separatist groups operating in the Southern Philippines. They have known ties to Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda organization. Some ASG members have studied or worked in the Middle East and developed ties to mujahidin while fighting and training in Afghanistan. Activities of the group include bombings, assassinations, kidnappings and extortion payments to promote an independent Islamic state in the Southern Philippines.

ASG has been blazing a bloody trail of murders, abductions, rapes, mutilations, arsons, and other heinous crimes that is possible to match in terms of callous cruelty. I am pleased that we have sent troops to the Philippines who will advise their military. Together with the Philippine government we have an obligation to rid the world of these "evil does" and free our fellow Americans from this interminable nightmare.