

development resources to Kentucky's K-12 instructors. KET's GED on TV program has helped 11,400 adults in Kentucky—and literally millions more across the country—to earn their high school diploma.

KET is also leading the way in the industry's digital conversion, pioneering datacasting services for Kentucky communities in partnership with Federal, State and local agencies—particularly in the area of public safety, weather alerts, and homeland security. This initiative is serving as a model for similar efforts around the country.

Virginia Fox has been an innovator in distance learning throughout her prestigious career. She was a founding member of the congressionally-created Independent Television Service (ITVS) Board and created the first national ITV satellite schedule, serving more than 23 million students annually with distance learning curricula. She also founded the Satellite Educational Resources Consortium, the first public broadcasting/Department of Education interstate consortium for distance learning.

Virginia Fox's career is highlighted by numerous personal as well as professional accomplishments. She broke the glass ceiling by becoming the first female CEO of a national organization in public broadcasting. She has served on the board of the Public Broadcasting Service and chaired the Public Television Outreach Alliance. She received an honorary doctorate from her alma mater, Morehead State University, and earlier was named Appalachian Woman of the Year by that same institution. This year, she was inducted into the Kentucky Journalism Hall of Fame and received the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's Lifetime Achievement Award.

A seventh-generation Kentuckian, Virginia Fox proves once again that the great Commonwealth of Kentucky has an abundance of human resources. It has been my privilege to work with her during my tenure in Congress to ensure that America's children will continue to benefit from the finest educational programming available, and that they will enter formal schooling "Ready to Learn". She has demonstrated the power of television to educate, inform and inspire.

Mr. Speaker, the education of our children is one of our greatest responsibilities. Virginia Gaines Fox must be commended for her innovation, her vision, and her dedication to education. Her leadership will be sorely missed, but her retirement is richly deserved, and we wish her the very best that life has to offer.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE NETWORK

HON. WILLIAM J. COYNE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 22, 2002

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to let my colleagues know about an important education initiative that is currently under way in western Pennsylvania. This initiative is the School Performance Network, an organization dedicated to disseminating best practices in education to teachers, and to encouraging connections and shared resources among educators.

The School Performance Network today consists of 33 public school districts and 3 di-

ces from 14 different counties in western Pennsylvania. The organization's mission is to "assist schools and districts in the development and use of systems, tools, and practices that help educators improve learning." The SPN attempts to improve educational outcomes through the pursuit of "total performance."

Total performance is a phrase used to describe a philosophy espousing continuous effort to promote greater student learning and achievement. This approach focuses on setting high achievement standards and developing a curriculum that meets them. Total performance seeks to use these standards and performance data to modify teachers' instructional approaches. It also seeks to ensure that teachers and principals take full advantage of available resource like religious and civic organizations—and that they use the available resources strategically to maximize performance improvements. This approach also endeavors to establish a culture that supports collective effort and accountability. Finally, it emphasizes establishing partnerships to enhance and extend student learning opportunities.

The School Performance Network provides schools with access to research that highlights the best teaching methods, as well as to colleagues with similar goals and different experiences. This organization also brokers external partnerships and promotes Cooperative Learning Teams that collaborate across geographic and political boundaries.

The stimulus for this initiative came from the Heinz Endowments. This philanthropic institution recognized that isolation limited the ability of individual schools to improve student achievement. In the course of a 1996 program review of school efforts to promote "total performance," the Endowment's education staff, having made a number of grants to regional schools in order to improve education results, concluded that even greater progress could be made by promoting communication among these schools. The Endowment provided funding in 1998 to develop plans for establishing such a network. Subsequently, in early 2000, a pilot program consisting of 8 school districts was undertaken. Later that year, the pilot program was successfully concluded and the School Performance Network began expanding its membership.

I want to commend the Heinz Endowment for its vision in establishing the School Performance Network. I want to commend Dr. Mary Catherine Conroy Hayden for her leadership of the School Performance Network. And I want to thank the School Performance Network and its many partners for their efforts to improve the quality of education in this country.

Mr. Speaker, this regional collaborative effort holds tremendous potential for implementing education reform nation-wide. I urge my colleagues to explore the possibility of establishing similar efforts in their own communities.

HONORING FORMER PRESIDENT
JORGE QUIROGA RAMIREZ OF
THE REPUBLIC OF BOLIVIA

HON. J. DENNIS HASTERT

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 22, 2002

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I, along with the co-chairmen of the Speaker's Task Force for a Drug Free America, want to recognize Jorge Quiroga Ramirez, former President of the Republic of Bolivia, for his years of steadfast support, commitment and leadership in the fight against illegal drugs.

Most of us first met Jorge Quiroga in the early days of the Administration of former President Hugo Banzer, when he served as Vice President of Bolivia. He came to Washington early on in his tenure to seek U.S. support and backing for Bolivia's "Dignity Plan"—a five year strategy to remove Bolivia from the international narcotics circuit. At the time he assumed office in August of 1997, Bolivia was the world's second largest producer of cocaine with nearly 113,000 acres of coca under cultivation.

The Dignity Plan that was presented to the U.S. Administration and the Congress was the product of a well-conceived political strategy designed to build domestic consensus within Bolivia against the drug trade. Late in 1997, civic, religious, labor, indigenous, private sector and political leaders met together under the leadership of then-Vice President Quiroga, in what was called the National Dialogue, a series of discussions and consensus-building meetings around four pillars: Opportunity (economic issues), Equity (social development), Integrity (institutional strengthening) and Dignity (fight against drugs). This last pillar, focused on how to move Bolivia out of the international drug trade circuit by 2002.

As a result, the Dignity Plan began its implementation by the end of 1997, with ambitious goals centered on four areas: Interdiction, Eradication, Alternative Development and Prevention.

We in Congress have occasionally heard foreign leaders make eloquent statements about their plans to reduce drug cultivation and work with the U.S. to end this scourge—plans that ultimately were not successful. Bolivia proved how such a program can be truly successful.

There were two things about the Dignity Plan that we found appealing. First, it was the product of an extensive discussion within Bolivian civil society, seeking to eliminate the drug trafficking stereotype for which this Andean country was known. Second, we found in Vice President Quiroga an honest and sincere individual whose commitment to Bolivia's future as a drug free country mirrored our own commitments here at home. Vice President Quiroga was precisely the kind of straight-talking, action-oriented leader that we believed was required to take real and meaningful action. A great many of us signed on to the Dignity Plan and did our best to provide political and financial support.

Over the past five years, as Vice President of Bolivia and later as President, Jorge Quiroga implemented the Dignity Plan with stunning success. This past August, President Quiroga turned over the Office to his democratically elected successor, the Honorable

Bonzalo Sanchez de Lozada. It is with great satisfaction we now take a look back at former President Quiroga's efforts and see how successful the Dignity Plan has been and what our investment in his vision earned.

Since the outset of the Dignity Plan in late 1997, the government of Bolivia has eradicated more than 130,000 acres of illegal coca.

The annual cocaine production in Bolivia has fallen by 70 percent.

In the past five years, nearly \$3.0 billion in Bolivian cocaine was taken off the international market.

Alternative development programs in the Chapare, Bolivia's primary coca growing region, have taken hold and are providing stable and meaningful income to former coca growers. Today there are more than 290,000 acres of legal agricultural crops under cultivation in the Chapare.

In these areas, family incomes are rising, proving that the transition to legal agricultural activity can be successful.

In the law enforcement area, nearly 5,000 coca base labs were seized and destroyed and over 58 metric tons of drugs, including cocaine base, cocaine and others, were seized.

I am pleased to report these results to Congress to show that with the proper combination of leadership and political will, the battle against illegal drugs can be won. I am hopeful and optimistic that the Honorable Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada, the new President of Bolivia, will pick up and continue where former President Quiroga left off, ensuring Bolivia remains a shining example of success in the Western Hemisphere.

Lastly, I wish to say thank you to President Quiroga, with whom many of us have worked so closely during the past five years. We have no doubt that his leadership, vision and commitment to Bolivia were essential to the remarkable success of the Dignity Plan program. He should take great pride in his extraordinary record of success in the drug war and know that he has many good friends in the U.S. Congress who are grateful.

H.R. 4546

HON. GENE TAYLOR

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 22, 2002

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, as the House considers passage of the conference report to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003, I would like to recognize the contributions of an outstanding member of the staff of the House Armed Services Committee. His name is George Withers. Of all of the people I have come to know in my 13 years on Capitol Hill, I can truly say that I have not met a finer person than George Withers.

As a professional staff member of the Armed Services Committee since 1993, I have had an opportunity to work closely with George. Over these many years, I have come to appreciate his knowledge of the legislative process, judgment, professionalism and wisdom.

Although he has a heart of gold, and a smile that is genuine as a sunrise, he was indeed mistaken for a very prominent elected official who is not known for his smile. One of

the highlights of George's career on Capitol Hill was when President George W. Bush, upon meeting him, noted his resemblance to the Vice President and remarked, "How's your heart?"

Around the world, there are likely many members of our nation's military who are watching this broadcast. George Withers was a Navy Aerographers Mate Third Class (AG3) with an Aircrew designation. He flew with VW-1 and VQ-1 flying WC-121 and EC-121 aircraft out of Danang during the Vietnam War. He also deployed and flew out of Agana, Guam; Cubi Point, Philippines; South Korea, and numerous other locations in the Western Pacific. A large number of those flights were electronic intercept missions over the Tonkin Gulf. During his distinguished service in the Navy, he earned the Bronze Star and completed 86 penetrations into the eye of typhoons as a typhoon-tracker.

George's service in Vietnam took place to the advent of the "all volunteer force". This was a time when folks often "had to be there" rather than "volunteered to be there". Since they had to be there, it was pretty obvious from those who were there that our nation didn't pay nearly enough attention to what they wanted their barracks or housing to look like, what there mess halls served for meals, or what they wanted in the way of recreational opportunities. George has spent the better part of his career on Capitol Hill correcting those mistakes, and seeing to it that they never happen again.

To the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines, who are living in new quarters or work in new facilities, it has been made possible with the great assistance of George Withers. If you're in one of these new facilities in South Korea, Germany, Ecuador, Mississippi, or serving anywhere in the world, credit for the quality of your quarters is often given to a Congressman or a Senator. However, I know for a fact that none of these important quality of life improvements for our nation's military personnel could have happened without the dedication and hard work of a great American named George Withers.

George, on behalf of the men and women in uniform, your friends here on Capitol Hill, and the countless other people that you have helped throughout your many years of military and public service, thank you. God Bless you in your retirement. You will be sorely missed.

NATIONAL JOURNAL STORY, "BUSH'S QUIET PLAN"

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 22, 2002

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit the following National Journey story, "Bush's Quiet Plan," for the RECORD. It clearly describes how this administration is rolling back our key environmental protections.

[From the National Journal, Nov. 23, 2002]

BUSH'S QUIET PLAN

(By Margaret Kriz)

The Bush administration is quietly but systematically working to make the 32-year-old environmental law that's considered the Magna Carta of national environmental policy less of an impediment to development.

Environmentalists charge that, by routinely bypassing or greatly speeding up the preparation of environmental impact statements required under the National Environmental Policy Act, the Bush White House is chipping away at the very foundation of the Nation's environmental protections.

President Bush has taken steps aimed at expediting or even eliminating the environmental impact studies that federal regulators have long been required to conduct before any major development project—whether it involves a new dam by the Army Corps of Engineers or logging in a national forest—can be undertaken on federal property or with federal funds. Industry lobbyists applaud the administration's actions because, in their view, environmental impact statements have largely served as a weapon for anti-development zealots to wield in court.

Environmentalists contend that the administration's efforts to shorten the reach of the law known as NEPA are part of a continuing campaign to put resource development and business interests ahead of resource protection and environmental quality. "The Bush administration views NEPA as an obstacle, not a tool," says Sharon Buccino, a senior attorney at the Natural Resources Defense Council. "To the extent that they're removing these activities, like logging projects, from the NEPA process, they're cutting the public out of the process."

NEPA is merely a full-disclosure statute: It forces regulators to make assessments and share them with the public, but it doesn't block projects that would harm the environment. Yet environmental groups have often been able to use the government's NEPA-mandated environmental impact statements in conjunction with the other environmental laws, such as the Endangered Species Act or the Clean Air Act, to persuade courts to stop or significantly modify controversial projects.

Under NEPA, all government agencies—from the Interior Department to the Navy to the Small Business Administration—must study the environmental implications of major projects before undertaking them. Private companies that receive federal funds or use federal lands also fall under NEPA's umbrella.

Business lobbyists cheer Bush for using his broad administrative authority to limit the public's ability to challenge industry projects on federal lands. Supporters of the administration's approach argue that environmentalists have abused NEPA by filing thousands of essentially nuisance lawsuits that stem from a philosophical objection to, say, drilling for oil on federal land, rather than from objections to the potential consequences of a specific drilling proposal.

"A lot of challenges being raised are part of a larger strategy to oppose energy development in this country," contends Lee Fuller, vice president for government relations at the Independent Petroleum Association of America.

NEPA's defenders charge that regulators are already producing slipshod impact assessments in their rush to comply with Bush administration demands for faster action. "Asking them to do [the assessments] more quickly raises more opportunity for litigation," because careless work would leave the government open to charges of not having complied with NEPA, warns Jonathan Adler, an environmental law professor at Case Western Reserve University.

The controversy over the accelerating attempts to rein in NEPA centers on several administration actions:

A Forest Service proposal—leaked by environmentalists and slated to be formally released later this year—would allow federal