

Dr. Joseph Skhra, an ordained Roman Catholic Deacon, was the Director of the Family Medicine Department and Director of Pastoral Care for many years at the now-closed St. Michael's Hospital. Betts Skhra, a scholar and leader in her own right, holds two degrees in nursing, worked within the field for many years, and was the long-time chairperson of the St. Michael's Community Board. Moreover, Betts Skhra is a founding member of Broadway School of Music and the Arts.

Their collective faith and deep sense of spirituality has healed, and continues to heal, the bodies, and more importantly, the heart and soul of the working class people of this neighborhood. They both continue to provide spiritual guidance to the elderly at Lourexis, Alexia Manor and Mead House. Additionally, the Skrha's continue their advocacy on behalf of University Settlement, The Broadway School of Music and the Arts, Our Lady of Lourdes Church and School, and the Cleveland Sight Center.

The Skrha's community service and heart are an inextricable facet of the light that brings comfort, hope and possibility along the streets and within the homes of our North Broadway community. Their leadership and dedication has made a permanent, positive difference within the lives of countless individuals and families—including mine.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor and recognition to Dr. Joseph and Mrs. Betts Skhra, for creating a symphony of love and strength that continues to resound within the hearts and minds of their children, grandchildren and the countless individuals whose lives they've touched along their journey. I offer to both of them my gratitude and admiration for being invaluable role models for many of us whose paths have crossed with theirs as they continue to inspire us all to reach for our dreams, to live in service to others, and to never forget where we came from.

COMMENDING CHAIRMAN TAYLOR AND YOUNG

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 2004

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend both Chairman TAYLOR and Chairman YOUNG for their efforts to eliminate Federal funding of land acquisitions in the FY05 Department of Interior appropriations bill. I, along with several of my colleagues, have been fighting this battle for some time, and I am pleased with today's results. Federal land acquisitions have been the reason for my opposition to the Interior appropriations bill in the past, but now I can support this legislation.

I offered legislation that accomplishes almost exactly what Chairmen TAYLOR and YOUNG are proposing in the FY05 Interior appropriations bill. H.R. 1517, The Land Reinvestment Act, simply eliminates Federal land acquisitions by zeroing out the land and water conservation fund's Federal expenditures. I want to note that State side assistance will remain untouched and I again commend my colleague's actions for keeping that program funded.

The Federal Government is the nation's largest single landowner. The FY05 Interior

appropriations bill sends a clear message that Congress will no longer tolerate Federal land grabs. I am very pleased by my colleagues efforts and look forward to supporting this legislation.

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF VICTIM ADVOCATE ACT

HON. CAROLYN C. KILPATRICK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 2004

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, since women were allowed to serve in combat, we have been stunned from time to time by stories of sexual assault and abuse within military circles. In response to numerous reports of female troops deployed in Iraq being sexually assaulted by fellow soldiers, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld established a task force to review its policies and programs concerning sexual assault and the treatment and support of victims.

Several weeks ago the Sexual Assault Task Force reported its findings, and it put a spotlight on serious deficiencies in the way the military has handled sexual assault cases. For example, the Department of Defense has no system for tracking reports of sexual assault; a lack of privacy and confidentiality dissuades victims from reporting incidents of sexual abuse; DoD lacks uniform policies and program to coordinate care and support for sexual assault victims; and there is no commonly accepted definition of sexual assault.

The Secretary's Task Force report does a good job of identifying shortcomings in its management of sexual abuse cases, but it is wanting in arriving at hard solutions for eliminating the problem. For that reason, I am introducing legislation today that would authorize the establishment of the Office of Victim Advocate at the Secretary level.

The DoD Office of the Victim Advocate would provide access to services for victims and survivors associated with the military. Moreover, it would establish policies procedures and practices by which the privacy and confidentiality of persons seeking assistance for assaults and abuse inflicted upon them by military personnel can be protected. The Office would review complaints of persons and investigate the ones where victims may be in need of or benefit from services of a victim advocate. The proposed Office would evaluate the delivery of services by the various military departments and coordinate the services provided by those departments.

The Defense Department can be more aggressive in its handling of sexual abuse cases and that is the goal and mission of the Office of the Victim Advocate. I am hopeful that my colleagues on the House Armed Services Committee will assign this issue a high priority within the Office of the Secretary of Defense and support this legislation.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION SHORTCOMINGS

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 2004

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member commends to his colleagues the following editorial from the May 27, 2004, Lincoln Journal Star. The editorial highlights some of the shortcomings of the Transportation Security Administration and its baggage screening system. Clearly, the creation of a large, new Federal force is not necessarily the best way to address legitimate security concerns.

[From the Lincoln Journal Star, May 27, 2004]

NUCLEAR PLANT SPECIAL FORCE QUESTIONABLE

An alarmed Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham wants more and tighter security at government facilities that have radioactive material that could be fashioned into nuclear devices.

No argument here. The dangers of lax security at such sites are too awful to contemplate and too real to dismiss.

According to an account from The Associated Press, Abraham, in calling earlier this month for reforms, cited poor performance in mock security exercises and other failings—cheating on readiness tests, lost keys—by guards from private contractors.

Chief among Abraham's solutions to the problems he found: a federal police force to guard the facilities and an elite force to protect areas with the most sensitive nuclear weapons material.

Sounds impressive, until you consider how the last special force set up for national security has done.

That force—the hardworking men and women of the Transportation Security Administration—still hasn't proved that it can reliably protect the nation's commercial airports.

To be sure, they're trying.

Since the agency started work Nov. 19, 2002, it geared up with some 60,000 people to screen passengers and their luggage. Congress has since limited that number to 45,000, so the agency has raised and lowered staffing at airports here and there to meet demand.

The agency professionals have confiscated thousands of banned objects from often bewildered, sometimes bemused travelers: guns and garrotes; straight razors and knitting needles; tin snips and butter knives.

There is also little doubt the agency has thwarted dangerous incidents long before they reached any newspaper's front page and for that it should be honored and thanked.

But the Transportation Security Administration's still young and still learning some hard lessons. Among them that shake public faith:

In November, a college student secreted box cutters through airport checkpoints and onto at least two planes. He sent an e-mail to federal authorities saying he had put the items aboard two specific Southwest Airlines flights. The objects were not found until five weeks later.

In November, an Eppley Airfield baggage screener was charged with dealing cocaine after 8 ounces of cocaine, 7 grams of crack cocaine and manufacturing equipment were found in his Omaha home. According to the AP, between 1993 and 1997 the man was convicted of six misdemeanors including obstructing an officer and disorderly conduct.

In October, it was reported that written tests given potential baggage screeners never

asked applicants to show they could identify dangerous objects inside luggage. In addition, the investigation by the Homeland Security Department—overseer of the Transportation Security Administration—showed that some screeners hired by the government to check baggage for bombs were given most of the answers to tests.

Also in October, the head of the Transportation Security Administration acknowledged that box cutters can get through airport checkpoints. But the chief, James Loy, blamed the lack and sophistication of technology, not his screeners.

There may be no way to prove that creating Loy's agency was necessary. But it is easy to prove that it has been costly.

The question is: Can Energy Secretary Abraham prove that a new, specialized force to protect nuclear facilities will be any more successful than the contractors already overseen by his department's specialized bureaucracy, the National Nuclear Security Administration?

And if that agency is incapable, will a new expensive bureaucracy do any better?

Other federal agencies have elite forces available—the Secret Service and FBI are but two. Could their highly trained men and women be given another mission, supported by their bureaucracy?

Surely the money saved could be spent on creating and providing the technology that Abraham says is lacking for airport screeners, technology that might well benefit the forces protecting the nation's nuclear weapons and power plants.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO ANDREW GEBBIE

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 2004

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Pastor Andrew Gebbie, a man who has made a great impact on the city of Grand Junction, Colorado. As a minister, Andrew has served both the members of his church and his community, and has become one of Grand Junction's truly cherished citizens. It is my privilege to recognize the work of this exceptional man.

Andrew was born in a small village on the outskirts of Hamilton in central Scotland. At eighteen, he was fascinated by aeronautics and went to Queen Mary's College in London, but after a year felt called to the ministry and transferred to a local seminary. After spending a few years living in Belfast, Northern Ireland, a friend in Canada told him of a pastoral position that had become available in Grand Junction. After being granted legal immigration status in a very short period, Andrew and his family moved to America. He began working as pastor of the Orchard Mesa Christian Church, which he and his wife Doris pastor together. Andrew also works as the billing administrator and patient records supervisor for Hospice and Palliative Care of Western Colorado. In his spare time, Andrew enjoys teaching students in the community how to rope climb at Camp Cedaredge located on the Grand Mesa.

Mr. Speaker, Andrew Gebbie has used his Christian Faith to serve his Grand Junction community, and has touched many lives. I say to his wife Doris and the rest of his family that they should be proud of Andrew both for his

obedience in following his faith, and for all the hours he has given back to his community. I am honored to share with this body of Congress and this nation the works of Pastor Andrew Gebbie. Thank you for your service.

REGISTER-HERALD EDITORIAL ON PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 2004

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, my hometown newspaper, the Register-Herald, of Beckley, WV, hit the nail on the head today with its editorial, "Pledge: Issue still unresolved," as the Supreme Court sidestepped a chance to help cement the moral foundation of our Nation. It used a technicality to overturn a decision by a lower court that had declared the use of the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance unconstitutional.

For well over 200 years the moral fiber of this Nation has been built not upon the law of man, but rather upon the law of God. The Supreme Court held in its hands the people's eloquent expression of what many of my fellow West Virginians already know, that only under the watchful eye of God can all we hope for be accomplished and all we dream of come true. And, though the dismissal was welcomed, the Court's reason for the dismissal wasted an opportunity to forever strengthen our national character.

The Register-Herald best summed up the missed opportunity by our Supreme Court with the editorial that follows:

PLEDGE

ISSUE STILL UNRESOLVED

The words "under God" can stay in the Pledge of Allegiance, says the Supreme Court, whose Monday ruling actually resolves next to nothing.

Instead of taking on the substance of the issue, the court ruled on whether the man who brought the case in the first place had proper standing. He doesn't, the court said.

Three justices did indicate that they see no violation of the Constitution in the pledge's language. Good for them. The First Amendment aims to keep Congress from establishing a state religion, which would require a great deal more effort from Congress than inserting a couple of words in the pledge a half-century ago. Children cannot be compelled to recite the pledge or even listen to it if they don't wish to.

The Supreme Court will sooner or later have to delete the phrase or else rule in its defense, an action requiring only this: respect for constitutional language and a grain of common sense.

REMEMBERING MRS. ANN OLESKY

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 2004

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on June 13, 2004, the town of Immokalee, Florida lost one of its most admired and revered members of the community. At the age of 61, Mrs. Ann Olesky passed away nearly one week after under-

going major heart surgery. An avid environmentalist, Mrs. Olesky has been credited by many as the catalyst for the conception of the Lake Trafford restoration project.

As part owner of the Lake Trafford Marina and Campground, Mrs. Olesky recognized the importance of maintaining and preserving South Florida's natural environmental habitat. Eight years ago, Mrs. Olesky realized that both the environment and the community would be best served if a large scale dredging and cleanup project were to be implemented at Lake Trafford. It was Mrs. Olesky's strong drive and commitment to Immokalee which ultimately drove her to embark on a grass roots campaign which culminated with the securing of funds for the project.

In addition, Mrs. Olesky was well known through the community for her active role in civic and community life. During many Christmas celebrations, Mrs. Olesky could be seen taking part in Christmas Around the World, a yearly educational program that seeks to educate young children about the environment. Through these programs, Mrs. Olesky played an active role in raising community wide awareness of the environmental challenges facing South Florida.

Mrs. Ann Olesky will be forever remembered by the people of Immokalee for her great devotion and love for the people and community of Immokalee. While sadly, Mrs. Olesky will be unable to see the completed fruit of her eight years of labor, it is without question that her efforts will be remembered for many generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me in expressing my deepest sense of condolence to the family of Mrs. Ann Olesky, as well as to the people of Immokalee. Mrs. Ann Olesky will be greatly missed.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING BERNICE BUEHLER ON HER 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 2004

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker:

Whereas, Bernice Buehler is celebrating her 100th birthday today; and

Whereas, Bernice Buehler is a long-time active participant in the social and civic life of the community; and

Whereas, Bernice Buehler has exemplified a love for her family and friends and must be commended for her life-long dedication to helping others in her community.

Therefore, I join with the residents of the entire 18th Congressional District of Ohio in wishing Bernice Buehler a very happy 100th birthday.

REMEMBERING L.T. "HERBY" BALLEW

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 2004

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I am honored today to pay tribute to a business associate, good