

Rhoden, to recognize his service to our Nation and the Navy as he leaves the Pentagon to pursue his first love, commanding a Naval ship.

On behalf of my colleagues in the House and on the Appropriations Committee, I want to take this opportunity to thank him for his distinguished and dedicated service.

It was through his assignment with the Navy's Appropriations Liaison office that I first came to know Commander Rhoden. In this capacity, he served as an invaluable liaison for the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations to me, the members of my committee, and our staff.

In addition to providing timely and accurate information on budget matters, Commander Rhoden also has escorted me and other Members of Congress on several occasions as we traveled both home and abroad to review military operations and confirm the health and welfare of our troops. He provided special insight on matters of national security, naval shipbuilding, and the direct relationship between the two. His candor, intelligence, and steadfast devotion to duty, was always very much appreciated and he was an invaluable asset to me during deliberations regarding funding programs for our armed forces. His perspective on the needs of the Nation with respect to our sea services provided me with the clarity and detail I needed to make important decisions regarding appropriations for the Department of Defense.

In addition to the respect I have for the work Commander Rhoden did in representing the Navy, I also thank him for the calm demeanor and sense of humor he shared with us all. Chris has become a mentor and friend to me and to my family, and for that I will always be grateful. It is this same sense of purpose and professionalism that I am confident will make Commander Rhoden a tremendous role model for those who serve under his command.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize Commander Rhoden for his distinguished service to our nation. My wife Beverly and I have the highest respect for those who serve in uniform, and I appreciate and honor all the men and women who have served, and continue to serve, in defense of freedom. Recalling our national anthem, to our veterans and Armed Forces, I say, we would not be "the land of the free" were we not also the "home of the brave."

Mr. Speaker, My colleagues and I want to express our thanks and appreciation for the special contribution Commander Rhoden has made to the United States Navy. We wish him and his family continued success and the traditional naval wish of "Fair winds and Following seas" as he closes out his service to the Congress and continues toward the pinnacle of Naval service, command at sea of a United States warship.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 24, 2004

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I want to explain why I voted against the Rapid Acquisition Authority for Combat Emergencies Bill (H.R. 4323), when it was added to the suspension calendar for a vote earlier this week.

During the past year, we have seen repeated examples of waste, fraud, and abuse in contracts awarded by the U.S. Defense Department to the Halliburton Corporation and other military contractors that have poorly served our troops and the American taxpayers. Not only do I lack confidence that such procurement sloth has stopped, those of us in Congress who have called for in-depth congressional investigations have been stonewalled.

In light of this dismal track record, Congress should not open the door even wider and provide even greater authority for the Pentagon to award lucrative contracts to contractors without competition and with even less scrutiny and congressional oversight. Nevertheless, H.R. 4323 would waive existing safeguards against war profiteering and other contract abuses.

Congress is already moving to authorize and appropriate up to \$1.2 billion to provide additional equipment for our troops in every instance where critical shortages have been identified. That is one of the important reasons why I voted in favor of the FY 2005 Defense Authorization Bill, when the House passed it last month.

Finally, the supporters of this bill claim it is needed to cut through existing, cumbersome Pentagon acquisition regulations to respond to urgent needs of our troops in combat emergencies. But there is mounting evidence to the contrary. I believe the equipment shortages among some of our troops in Iraq during the past year resulted from poor pre-war planning and serious miscalculations in the Pentagon by the architects of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Quite simply, U.S. Army war planners didn't issue enough purchase orders, before the invasion of Iraq was launched, to ensure that all of our troops on the ground in Iraq had what they needed during the conventional combat phase of this conflict. Those mistakes and the equipment shortages they caused became even more costly since President Bush announced the end of combat in Iraq on May 1, 2003, and the nature of the military threat changed and the armed insurgency expanded. This Congress should act to address those mistakes, not use them as an opportunity to hand out more no-bid contracts.

I believe H.R. 4323 could actually make a bad situation worse.

IN HONOR OF EDWARD LICHT

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 24, 2004

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in tribute to Mr. Edward Licht, Bailiff for the Garfield Heights Municipal Court, as he is being honored as the Regional Court Officer of the Year by the Ohio Bailiff and Court Officers Association.

A life-long resident of Cuyahoga County, Mr. Licht served as a Special Agent with the U.S. Treasury Department for twenty-five years. During his tenure as Special Agent, Mr. Licht assisted in the investigation, apprehension and conviction of criminals involved in major gambling, illegal drug and money laundering operations. For his invaluable service, Mr. Licht was honored with several awards, includ-

ing two Special Achievement awards, One Superior Service award, and an Honorable Mention for Outstanding Community Service award. Since 1999, Mr. Licht has held the position of Bailiff with the Garfield Heights Municipal Court. His unwavering integrity, outstanding communication abilities and strong work ethic continues to uplift all facets of this regional court system.

Beyond his significant professional contributions, Mr. Licht continues to volunteer his time and talents within our community. He continues to be an active member of the Democratic Party within our community. A long-time member of the Cuyahoga County Democratic Party, Mr. Licht currently serves as Deputy Treasurer. He has also been very active in the Independence Democratic Party for many years, as a member and an officer. Moreover, Mr. Licht continues to make an impact upon the lives of many as a volunteer probation officer with the Bedford and Garfield Heights court systems. His positive outlook and kind nature, combined with his sense of compassion and wonderful sense of humor, continuously serves to uplift those around him.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor and recognition of Mr. Ed Licht, upon being selected as the Regional Court Officer of the Year. Mr. Licht's professional contribution to our federal and regional justice system—reflected by strong ethics and a high level of integrity, continues to be significant and invaluable. Moreover, Mr. Licht's concern for his community and commitment to the democratic process continues to instill strength and integrity throughout the Democratic Party, and serves to strengthen our entire community.

HONORING EXEMPLARY EDUCATOR KATHY PUTMAN

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 24, 2004

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Kathy Putman, an exemplary educator, who is retiring after forty years in the classroom at John F. Kennedy High School in Fremont, California. Immediately after graduating from San Jose State University, Kathy's career in education began at Kennedy High School.

She was among the first instructors when the new high school was opened in 1965. Teaching Government and Economics to high school seniors at Kennedy High School is the only job Kathy has ever had. She was only a couple of years older than her first students. Over the decades, she has taught many children of former students in her class.

For years Kennedy High School had a contest for "Most Popular Teacher." Kathy won so often the contest was discontinued. Each year her yearbook is filled with the penned thoughts of adoring students. Thousands of young Fremont students have passed through her classroom where the walls are covered with photographs and notes from former students. Assuming Kathy had 200–300 students a year, for 40 years, this adds up to between 8,000–12,000 students she has touched during her career.

I, along with former Congressman Don Edwards, California Attorney General Bill Lockyer

and a host of political and civic leaders have been privileged to speak to students in Kathy's government classes. She was a true believer in exposing her students to firsthand experiences in government. She encouraged student involvement and referred her students to my office for internships.

I have never met a more experienced, committed or enthusiastic teacher. Kathy is a model for all educators to follow. I commend her on her 40 years of outstanding service. Kathy has left an indelible mark on her students and the community of Fremont and her contributions will be long remembered and felt with utmost respect.

CREATION OF THE FHA

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 24, 2004

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, 70 years ago this month, Congress approved the National Housing Act that created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and President Roosevelt signed into law on June 28, 1934.

The value of FHA can not be overstated. For decades it has insured mortgage loans to help over 33 million families own their own home. The FHA has continuously been a critical resource in helping make home ownership available and more affordable. In fact most recent data shows, the nation's homeownership rate soared to an all time high of 68.1 percent. I have long been a supporter of the FHA program and believe that it is critical for unlocking the door to homeownership for so many Americans.

Mr. Speaker, my Congressional district has the unique distinction of being home to the first FHA Insured Mortgage approved for a home in the United States.

Let me take you back to the 1930's. Our country was in the midst of the Great Depression. It is estimated that in 1933 there were 1,000 foreclosures per week! In my home state of New Jersey homeownership rates were declining. In fact, between 1930 and 1940 they fell 9 percent. A loaf of bread cost about nine cents and a dozen eggs went for 27 cents. In Morris County, the average rental paid \$55 a month for a large house.

Mr. Speaker, it was during this economic climate that President Roosevelt signed the National Housing Act into law with the intention of broadening home ownership, protecting lending institutions and stimulating the economy.

James A. Moffett was appointed the first FHA Administrator and it is under his leadership that on December 18, 1934, the Newkirk family received the first FHA Mortgage for the completion of construction of their house at 30 Hopper Avenue in Pompton Plains, Morris County, New Jersey.

Pompton Plains is located in the Eastern part of Morris County and is part of Pequannock Township. At that time, Pequannock was 7 square miles of land, had 2,104 residents and was comprised mostly of farmland and apple orchards. Today Pequannock Township is home to approximately 14,000 residents.

Mr. Newkirk purchased the land at 30 Hopper Avenue and built a home for his wife, son

and himself. It is estimated that the land and house cost just under \$10,000. The FHA loan, at \$4,800 covered approximately 50 percent of the cost of the house.

Since the house was built, it has changed hands three times and is now owned by Trevor and Catherine Smallwood who purchased it on July 3, 2003 for \$470,000.

Today this house still stands at 30 Hopper Avenue. While 70 years have passed the house looks much the same, a structure rich in history, standing for the dream of homeownership, a dream that we continue to work to ensure every American can achieve.

Mr. Chairman, I ask you to join me in recognizing and celebrating this truly historic house and all that it stands for.

FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL PLANNING SAVED 100,000 LIVES IN CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 24, 2004

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I have already asked my colleagues today to recognize the bravery of firefighters who saved 40,000 homes in last year's devastating wildfires. But I would now like to also pay tribute to an unprecedented effort at planning and organization by federal, state and local officials that allowed the evacuation of 100,000 people threatened by fire—without a single injury or a major hitch!

Many of the heroes of this planning effort were on the front lines fighting the Old Fire, which eventually burned 91,000 acres and destroyed nearly 1,000 homes in October 2003. But their work to avoid a devastating loss of life began more 18 months earlier with the formation of the Mountain Area Safety Task Force, known throughout the San Bernardino Mountains as the MAST.

San Bernardino National Forest Supervisor Gene Zimmerman initiated the formation of the MAST to deal with an on-going crisis: the death of more than 5 million trees because of drought and attacks by pine bark beetles. The forest, which is largely in my 41st Congressional District, is one of the most urbanized and heavily used in the nation, with nearly 100,000 residents and visitors living amongst the trees. The chance for a devastating fire is overwhelming, and it will take many years and hundreds of millions of dollars to eliminate the danger.

It became clear that the task of restoring the forest—and avoiding the loss of thousands of lives in a fire—would require the coordinated efforts of the Forest Service, the state Department of Forestry and Fire, San Bernardino County Fire Department, and dozens of local fire departments, community groups and businesses. Such a coordination effort had never been undertaken on such a comprehensive scale, and the organizational hurdles alone were daunting.

But the mountain communities, while divided into dozens of small pockets by geography, are populated by people who look out for each other, and who are united in their devotion to the forest. Hundreds of residents turned out for every informational meeting, and officials from agencies at all levels made the coordination of effort their top priority.

With the substantial help of the geographic information systems company ESRI, the MAST established elaborate plans on how to evacuate residents along the few main highways that snake through the forest. Dozens of community meetings were held, and residents had access to an Internet Web site created free-of-charge by ESRI that provided even more detailed information.

When the Old Fire struck in October 2003, our worst fears seemed about to be realized. The fire appeared to be unstoppable before it reached the stands of dead trees. Within a day, the order went out to evacuate, even as the firefighters made valiant stands to stop the fire along the evacuation routes. The success of the planning process was soon clear: No one was injured in the evacuation. Although six deaths were attributed to the fire, none of our residents were caught in their homes like those who suffered tragic deaths in San Diego County.

Mr. Speaker, the MAST continues to meet and plan for the restoration of the forest and the upcoming fire season. While some progress has been made in reducing the number of dead trees, the fire danger remains high. Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of this group, I am confident that we will be prepared to meet that danger.

The members of the MAST—represented by Supervisor Zimmerman and San Bernardino National Forest Staff Director Doug Pumphrey—will be honored this Friday with a U.S. Department of Agriculture Honor Award. This award is without question highly deserved, and I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating and thanking those who took part in this life-saving effort.

INTRODUCTION OF THE GERIATRIC AND CHRONIC CARE MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2004

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 24, 2004

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Geriatric and Chronic Care Management Act, an important piece of legislation that would authorize Medicare coverage of geriatric assessment and care management for eligible Medicare beneficiaries.

Americans are living longer than ever, with the average life expectancy rising to 80 years-old for women and 74 years-old for men. While this is a positive development, there are costs associated with the aging of America. As seniors live longer, they face greater risks of disease and disabilities, such as Alzheimer's, diabetes, cancer, stroke and heart disease.

Geriatricians are physicians who are uniquely trained to help care for the aging and elderly. By promoting a comprehensive approach to health care, including wellness and preventive care, geriatricians can help seniors live longer and healthier lives.

It is critical that our nation have a sufficient number of geriatricians to help manage the aging of the baby-boom generation. Unfortunately, there are currently only 9,000 certified geriatricians, and that number is expected to decline dramatically in the coming years. Of the approximately 98,000 medical residency and fellowship positions supported by Medicare in 1998, only 324 were in geriatric medicine and geriatric psychiatry. The Alliance for