

beauty of the Greek countryside as marathon runners raced along the original route from the city of Marathon to the Olympic Stadium, Mrs. A brought the world to Athens—reminding us of all that this ancient civilization has meant to world history and of all that this great country has yet to offer.

In the days before the opening ceremony, Mrs. A wrote, "Some will call what we have achieved a miracle. It is a miracle, but one that's man-made—a product of hard work, discipline and the pride of the Greek people." She could not have been more accurate. Today's Athens is a unique blend of an ancient civilization and modern marvel—with its rich history celebrated and showcased for the world to enjoy. In ensuring the success of the 2004 Olympic Games, Mrs. A has also brought renewed vigor and beauty to one of the world's most fascinating cities.

For her outstanding contributions to both the 2004 Olympic Games and to the city of Athens, I am proud to stand and congratulate Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki. She has left an indelible mark on our consciousness and shared history.

#### RECOGNIZING EAGLE SCOUT STEPHEN TYLER STOKES

#### HON. BRAD MILLER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2004

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the perseverance and achievement of Stephen Tyler Stokes in earning the rank of Eagle Scout, Boy Scouts of America, Oconeechee Council—Troop 104, on December 12, 2003, and entered into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD as such. His Court of Honor commenced on July 24, 2004.

While a member of Troop 104 in Wake County, North Carolina, Stephen served in various positions including Librarian, Instructor, Troop Guide, Assistant Patrol Leader, and even Patrol Leader. He learned what it takes to assist his fellow scouts and how to lead them. Stephen attended the National Boy Scout Jamboree in 2001, at Ft. A.P. Hill in Virginia, which influenced him to become an Eagle Scout and a role model for younger boys.

In addition to devoting his time to being an Eagle Scout, Stephen attended Broughton High School in Raleigh, NC, where he helped establish the F.I.R.S.T. Robotics Program, participated in the Chess Club, and served as webmaster for the Literary Magazine and the Japanese Animation Club. Stephen received an Enterprise in Action Certificate of Achievement from Junior Achievement and was listed in the publication Who's Who Among American High School Students.

Stephen's commitment to serving his community and helping others is truly commendable. He has helped construct homes in Charleston and Philadelphia as part of Habitat for Humanity's ongoing inner-city improvement projects. During Stephen's 8 years with the Boy Scouts, he was an active participant in the Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, and Citizenship in the World volunteer programs.

Mr. Speaker, I know his father Steven and his mother Jamie are proud of all that their

son has accomplished and join me in recognizing that the achievement of earning the rank of Eagle Scout is just the beginning of a bright future for their talented and deeply committed son.

The journey a young man makes to earn the rank of Eagle Scout requires not only a scout's dedication to his community, but also the community's dedication to the scout. I would like to extend my congratulations and best wishes to Stephen Tyler Stokes, his family and Troop 104.

#### CONGRATULATIONS, TAMI DOETCH

#### HON. PAUL RYAN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2004

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, what an honor it is to be able to congratulate Tami Doetch, a teacher at Wilson Elementary School in my hometown of Janesville, Wisconsin, for being recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a No Child Left Behind American Star of Teaching.

Every day, Tami Doetch goes to school committed to helping students learn to read and master the building blocks that will form the foundation of their education. She teaches third- and fourth-graders and has put a lot of time and energy into helping English language learners.

By using effective teaching techniques to open up the world of reading to her students, she is giving them the tools to achieve their dreams, not to mention countless hours of reading enjoyment throughout their lives.

Tami Doetch has also taken a leadership role, going above and beyond her work in the classroom. She oversaw the incorporation of the Harcourt Brace Reading Program into instruction at Wilson Elementary. And she has led tutoring and after-school reading programs.

For many of us, our most challenging teachers are the ones we remember most fondly because they pushed us to think and taught us lessons that we still rely on today. I have no doubt that Tami Doetch's students will remember her fondly and gratefully for her dedication to their reading instruction and overall education.

#### ESSAY BY BROOK ROBISON "MY COMMITMENT TO AMERICA'S FUTURE"

#### HON. ROB BISHOP

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2004

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that Brooke Robison, a high-school student at Layton High School in The First Congressional District of Utah was selected earlier this year as a recipient of the Veterans of Foreign Wars' 2004 "Voice of Democracy" scriptwriting contest. I commend to my colleagues her essay which speaks so movingly of the sacrifices of her grandfather and, indeed, all members of the U.S. Armed Forces in protecting our freedom.

#### MY COMMITMENT TO AMERICA'S FUTURE

(By Brooke Robison, Utah)

On a stormy afternoon in February I was working towards an easy "A" for my history class. The assignment was to write an essay on a veteran's most memorable war experience. "Piece of cake," I thought. "I'll just interview my Grandpa, he fought in World War II. He might even have a story written up for me by the time I got there and I could be on my way." But, when I arrived at my grandparent's home, I saw that he had brought out piles of war memorabilia to show me. "Great," I thought, "this is going to take longer than I thought. I'm actually going to have to act interested." I picked up a photograph and was drawn in by the dashingly handsome young pilot that smiled up at me. The other aged photographs began to intrigue me and I gently fingered the old uniforms and medals and read the letters he had saved. I had never really thought of him as a young guy. I mean he was always, you know, GRANDPA! I was surprisingly fascinated about the life he had when he was barely older than I am now. I became anxious to hear the story he had selected to share with me for my project. Little did I know that his story would rock my shallow little world.

Near the end of the war a group of cocky young pilots emerged from their mess tent in Germany. They nearly ran into a truck full of sandy material parked near them on the street. My grandfather, a bright and promising mining engineer before the war, prided himself on being able to quickly identify almost any rock or mineral. He boasted that he could probably tell the make up of the sand just by touching it. He thrust his hand in and let it run through his fingers. Puzzled, he did it again and again, sniffing it and rubbing it between his palms. "What is this?" he thought, "I must be losing my touch!" He approached the driver of the truck and explained his professional background. "What is this stuff?", he asked, "I just can't figure it out!" The driver answered with a tone of one who had learned to distance himself from the daily horror of his job. "Ashes," he replied flatly, "human ashes."

The driver's answer struck me as hard as it did my grandfather decades ago. I felt as if my eyes had been opened for the first time. Wars weren't just a flash of information on the news or something that starred Tom Hanks. My young, handsome grandfather had watched the remains of thousands of innocent lives run through his fingers like common playground dirt. His efforts, and those of thousands of others, made sure that this carnage would stop. Brushing aside tears he whispered to me, "Tell this story, tell it, so this can never happen again." I came away from that visit with my grandfather knowing I had lived a shallow and ungrateful life. As corny as it may sound, my grandfather's story changed who I am and what I will do with my future. I learned that day that I have a responsibility to my country. The sale at the mall or having a date on Saturday night is nowhere near as important to me as my latest service project. I feel that if America's soldiers can endure so much to make our world a better place, I can certainly do all I can to improve my little corner of it. I have developed a passion to learn about wars and conflicts in our history. I have joined political youth groups so I can be well informed when I'm old enough to vote. I collect food for the local food pantry, fill and deliver bags of supplies for children in shelters, and make blankets for homeless. I wrote a song that encourages young people to get involved in community service. I was honored to perform it this past summer at a national award ceremony honoring outstanding youth in service. Performing with

the Marines the last two years I became aware that gifts for teenagers run out early. There are never enough. I knew I could come up with a plan to help. I developed a program called Toys for Teens that involves running teen gift drives in our high schools and middle schools. I presented my idea to the Marines in my area and it was enthusiastically approved. The program is well received and is being implemented all across the state giving other young people the opportunity to know joy of giving back to their community. We hope to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of donations. With this project I am proud to serve the youth of my community while also supporting my country's servicemen.

But I feel that the most important thing that I can do to show my commitment to America's future, is to tell my grandfather's story. As young people we need to make an effort to hear and pass on the stories from our country's past. Armed with the strength of the stories of our Nation's past heroes, we can truly have an inspired commitment to America's future.

IN MEMORY OF GEORGEA BLACK  
McKINLEY

HON. MARION BERRY

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 23, 2004*

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of Georgea Black McKinley, an Arkansan whose dedication to her family, her church and her community was as strong as the constitution of her pioneering ancestors.

Mrs. McKinley could trace her family roots all the way back to the true founders of this great nation: America's first pioneers. In order to stay in touch with her historic and noble history, Mrs. McKinley was a member of the Arkansas Pioneers, United Daughters of the Confederacy and Daughters of the American Revolution.

Born in DeWitt, Arkansas, she was the daughter of the late Lester A. and Mary Black. Mrs. McKinley attended DeWitt schools, Ward Belmont School in Nashville, Tennessee and then Randolph Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg, Virginia.

Mrs. McKinley's family holds a special place in my own career, as well. It was Georgea's father, L.A., who had vision of how crucial water is to a farmer. I have no doubt Mr. Black also passed down his knowledge of irrigation strategies and water management issues to his daughter. I never met him, but the legacy of the value of water has impacted my home community forever.

Georgea McKinley was an active Methodist, but her commitments to her community did not stop at the church steps. She was a member of the Aesthetic Club, The Colonial Dames of America, Little Rock Garden Club, Junior League of Little Rock and the Edelweiss Club.

Mrs. McKinley leaves behind a large and loving family filled with children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. On behalf of the Congress, I extend sympathies to her family and the utmost respect to a woman whose love for her friends and family was unlimited and whose time was generously shared with the community. Georgea Black McKinley was a true role model, and I am honored to be able to recognize her in this Congress.

INTRODUCTION OF THE RAIL AND  
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ACT

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 23, 2004*

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to be joined by my Democratic colleague from New Jersey to introduce the Rail and Public Transportation Security Act, which would force the Federal Government to finally get serious about protecting our Nation's transit and intercity rail passengers.

This bill addresses the tremendous disparity between what we spend on security for each airline passenger and what we spend for each bus and train passenger, who are no less vulnerable than those who fly. In fact, data from the National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism shows that public transportation passengers are in far more danger worldwide than airline passengers. Since 9/11, there have been roughly 50 terrorist incidents targeting airports and airlines, resulting in about 120 deaths. In the same 3 years, there have been over 280 terrorist attacks on other transportation systems, with over 600 fatalities.

The recent attacks in Spain, and intelligence that terrorists may strike the rail and systems here in America, dictate that we now broaden our attention to also include rail and transit security. Each year, approximately 24 million intercity rail passengers ride Amtrak, and 9.6 billion people travel by transit. Every day, 32 million commuters, students, and tourists depend on our public transportation system. One of the ripple effects of 9/11 was that the aviation industry was shut down for several days. Imagine the social and economic dislocation that would occur if a major attack destroyed people's confidence in our transit system, or made it grind to a halt. The economic impact would be far greater than 9/11.

Our Nation's rail and transit systems are highly vulnerable, and require at least \$5.2 billion in capital equipment and \$800 million in annual operating expenses to adequately meet security needs, according to the American Public Transportation Association. This legislation provides that funding, and just as importantly, it allows operating expense grant money to be used for the best security device of all: more police officers.

Giving our transit agencies money for fences, cameras and explosive detection equipment is necessary, but only a half-measure unless we also give them money for the cops and security officers that make all that equipment work. This bill allows money to be used for hiring new cops and security officers, pay them overtime when necessary, deploy additional K-9 units, conduct helicopter patrols, and more. In short, it unties the hands of our transit agencies and lets them spend the money where they need it.

This legislation also provides badly needed security and safety funding for Amtrak, including \$670 million for safety upgrades to the tunnels that run underneath New York, Baltimore, and Washington, DC. These tunnels are simply not properly equipped for rescue operations or evacuation should either be necessary. An additional \$62 million for Amtrak to put towards security expenses, including the

hiring of additional police officers, is also provided.

Mr. Speaker, this bill would authorize new research and development grants to help develop new technologies for both passenger and freight rail that can help reduce the threat of terrorist attacks. And since rail security involves more than just deterring terrorist attacks, the legislation would establish new inspection procedures for rail track, and set new standards for tank cars, to make sure their hazardous cargo isn't released in the event of an accident.

I believe this bill is already long overdue. I urge my colleagues to imagine what we would have done, what action we would have taken, if the Madrid train bombings had occurred in our homeland, on our soil. What immediate investments would we have been ready to make? What urgent action would we have been willing to take?

Well, we can do it now. Let's make that investment and take those actions now. Let's take what steps we can to reduce the risk to our Nation's transit. We don't need commissions and studies after a tragedy in order to act, so let's not get mired in that now. Nearly 3 years of needs assessment and analysis have occurred, and we have the data to put a program in place. All it takes is Congress having the gumption to act before a tragedy on the rails takes place in this country.

QUESTIONING BUSH'S RECORD ON  
VETERANS

HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 23, 2004*

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, on August 16, President Bush stood before the national convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and proclaimed: "... my administration has a solid record of accomplishment for our veterans ... To provide health care to veterans, we've increased VA medical care funding by 41 percent over the past 4 years."

The reality is far more complex.

In 1997, Congress gave the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) the authority to collect and retain veterans' copayments for health care. As a result, about 6.4 percent of the VA's medical care system is now (fiscal year 2004) comprised of veterans' copayments. The Bush Administration has made no secret that it would like to increase the share of this budget borne by veterans, including combat decorated veterans, while at the same time taking steps to discourage veterans' use of their health care system or explicitly bar their entrance into the system. The Administration's budget request for fiscal year 2005 would increase the share of the budget financed by veterans to 8.7 percent.

The Congress—for the third consecutive year—has rejected the legislative proposals in the President's budget that would charge a new enrollment fee for certain veterans and increase copayments for pharmaceutical drugs. Democrats in the House and Senate have also asked VA Secretary Anthony J. Principi to reconsider his current position to prohibit some veterans from enrolling in the VA health care system.

The President's claim that "we've" added 41 percent for VA medical care gives the false