

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that Speaker Bledsoe has ceaselessly dedicated his time and efforts to serving his country and the people of Colorado as the Speaker of the House in the Colorado House of Representatives. I am honored to bring his hard work and commitment to the attention of this body of Congress and this nation today. Thank you for all your service, Carl, and I wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

FORMER U.S. CONGRESSMEN'S
MONITORING DELEGATION TO
UKRAINE JULY REPORT—EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2004

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I am submitting the following article for the RECORD.

Significant irregularities and improprieties have been found in the on-going presidential campaign in Ukraine by an election monitoring delegation of former Members of Congress in the Kharkiv, Poltava, and Sumy oblasts.

Five former U.S. Congressmen—John Conlan (R-AZ), Arlen Erdahl (R-MN), Jack Hightower (D-TX), Gregory Laughlin (R-TX), Andrew Maguire (D-NJ), and Tom Sawyer (D-OH)—traveled to Ukraine on July 25–31, 2004 to monitor presidential election campaign activities in the region. The communities visited were: Kupiansk, Merefa, and Vovchansk in the Kharkiv oblast; Chutove, Dykanka and Karlivka in the Poltava oblast; and Lebedyn, Okhtyrka and Trostianets in the Sumy oblast. These former congressmen were registered by the Central Election Commission (CEC) of Ukraine and accorded all the rights and privileges provided to foreign observers by Ukraine's law on presidential elections.

Ukraine is a signatory of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and therefore welcomes international observers to help secure a free and fair election. The congressmen's election monitoring activities included meetings with representatives of the main political parties, Ukrainian government officials, Central Election Committee, and U.S. officials in Kyiv. In the regions, the congressmen met with local government officials, representatives of NGOs, political parties, the media, and citizens, who shared their views and experiences of the political process in their respective communities.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE FIRST DELEGATION TO
THE KHARKIV, POLTAVA, AND SUMY OBLASTS

Generally, in the communities visited, local officials were very cooperative and generously shared their time and opinions with the delegation. Local officials provided space for meetings and assisted in extending invitations to representatives of political parties, media, and NGOs to meet with the delegation. The delegation does note, however, that there were occasions when opposition parties were not informed of the meetings and, thus, were denied an opportunity to express their views and have their respective cases heard.

In conversations with participants in the meetings attended and in conversations with ordinary Ukrainian citizens, the delegation was appalled to find that an overwhelming number do not expect the outcome of the election to be fairly decided. Those that hold this view often reply that the outcome has

already been determined and that the vote count will support that determination. Independent polls verify that around 70 percent of the population believes this. That reinforces the view that every effort must be made by observers to ensure that the vote count is accurate and fair.

While the delegation cannot investigate the allegations made, it does note with deep concern the repeated allegations of the systematic use of the government's administrative resources to bring pressure upon voters to support the candidate endorsed by government authorities. These reports are too numerous, consistent, and from too many different locations to be set aside; in fact they appear to the delegation to constitute a pattern of officially sanctioned political activity by government employees that is in violation of Ukraine's law on presidential elections.

The delegation is very concerned about these reports and appeals to the Ukrainian government to ensure that all local government officials strictly adhere to the law. Allegations include: threats regarding loss of jobs predominate; police preventing buses and automobiles from traveling to opposition rallies; forcing government workers, teachers, and hospital workers to sign petitions for pro-government candidate, Viktor Yanukovych; forcing regional councils to pass resolutions in support of Yanukovych; teachers and agricultural workers given quotas to collect signatures for Yanukovych, under threat to lose vacation time or jobs; students pressured to distribute Yanukovych literature; even patients have been threatened with discharge from hospitals and denial of medical services if they fail to sign and pledge to vote for Yanukovych.

In every community the delegation visited, they were greeted with hope and anticipation of a brighter tomorrow. They welcomed contact with the wider world and were anxious to host foreign visitors to show off their country and its potential. They deserve an opportunity to go to the polls and freely express their views and to be secure in the knowledge that all their votes are counted accurately in accordance with the law of Ukraine.

The delegation is a fact-finding mission and will report its findings to Ukraine's Central Election Commission, the U.S. Government, European governments, international organizations and the public through release to the mass media. The delegation does not support any candidate or political party and is only interested in helping ensure that the presidential election is free and fair.

Programming is organized by the U.S.–Ukraine Foundation (USUF), in partnership with the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress (USAFMC) and is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The Foundation's second delegation traveled in August to the Cherkasy, Kyiv, and Kirovohrad oblasts and also included parliamentarians from Spain and the Netherlands. The third delegation, comprised of congressmen and a former member of the German Bundestag, traveled to the Kherson region during the week of September 19–25, 2004 to observe election campaign activities in the Kherson, Mykolayiv, and Zaporizhzhya oblasts.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO MICHELLE
LAWRENCE

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2004

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Michelle Lawrence and thank her for her exceptional contributions to her community and the State of Colorado as a Jefferson County Commissioner. A two term commissioner, Michelle is a dedicated public servant and leader in her community, and I am honored to recognize her accomplishments before this body of Congress and this Nation today.

Michelle is a Colorado native who has lived most of her life in Jefferson County. She is the co-owner of a Jefferson county business that had been in her family for over 48 years. Michelle served in the Colorado legislature from 1990 to 1994, and is a former member of the board of directors of the Arvada Chamber of Commerce. She has been active in several local community organizations such as the Arvada Historical Society and the Arvada center for the Arts & Humanities and as a member of the Jeffco Transportation Task Force.

After leaving the General Assembly, Michelle continued her exemplary public service record by serving as a Jefferson County commissioner. Currently she is the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners and the Law Enforcement Authority Board. She also represents the county on the Rocky Flats Coalition of Local Governments and the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District Board. Michelle has been appointed as an alternate to the Denver Regional Council of Governments, the Jefferson Economic Council, and most recently the Intergovernmental Affairs Steering Committee.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that Michelle Lawrence has ceaselessly dedicated her time and efforts to serving her country and the people of Colorado as a Commissioner for Jefferson County. I am honored to bring her hard work and commitment to the attention of this body of Congress and this nation today. Thank you for all your service, Michelle, and I wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

HONORING THE BROOKSVILLE
EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM
(BERT)

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2004

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the members of the Brooksville Emergency Response Team, also known as BERT.

In the wake of Hurricane Charley's devastating visit to Florida, these remarkable individuals answered the call of duty. On the morning of August 14, 2004 at 6:45 a.m. these BERT operatives sprung into action and began to rebuild areas of the Fifth Congressional District left in shambles. Because of their efforts, the communities of Poinciana, Calooso, Lake Village, Lake Wales, Bascon,

Highland Park, Frostproof, and Lake Hamilton received relief at a critical time of need. The BERT team worked to reconstruct Poinciana's fire department and assisted with firefighting duties for the community. In addition, the team worked on debris clean-up, directed traffic, and assisted in damage assessment activities throughout the area. In the end, the BERT team accomplishments included 336 work hours removing trees from residences and roadways; 14 hours traffic control; and deliveries of 1,250 bags of ice, 450 cases of water and 150 prepared meals to hungry citizens.

I would like to express my gratitude for the BERT team's service. Their actions demonstrated the dedication, selflessness, and sacrifice of the human spirit that emerges from rubble of Mother Nature's fury. I am proud to represent the Fifth Congressional District of Florida, where members of the heroic Brooksville Emergency Response Team call home.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO FRANCES
OWENS

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2004

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the First Lady of Colorado, Frances Owens. Frances is a compassionate and intelligent woman whose dedication and commitment to her family and fellow citizens is renowned and unprecedented. Long before she became Colorado's First Lady, Frances was an education advocate for children and a dedicated servant to her fellow Coloradans. I am honored to stand before this body of Congress and this nation to recognize her many accomplishments.

Frances is a Colorado native, spending her childhood in Texas before returning to Colorado to receive a degree in Art History from the University of Colorado at Denver. She began campaigning for former Senator Bill Armstrong in the late 1970's and served as the Associate Director of the Colorado Council on Economic Education. Frances, who is married to current Governor Bill Owens for twenty-nine years, has three children: Monica, Mark, and Brett. She is actively involved in her children's academic careers.

On January 12, 1999, Frances became the First Lady of Colorado, where she has made important strides for Colorado in public service by actively volunteering her time to various charitable projects and organizations throughout the state and by serving on boards such as the Children's Hospital Cardiac Care Center, and the Colorado Opera. Frances is a dedicated advocate for children; her involvement crosses into many arenas, including support of Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic, Samaritan's Purse-Operation Christmas Child, Make-A-Wish Foundation, and the Colorado Historical Society. Frances currently serves as the Honorary Chair for Early Childhood Intervention Awareness Day, where she continues to champion important issues for Colorado's children. Frances widely promotes literacy and children's programs like the annual Easter Egg Roll. Her latest honor, given by the Republican Women Leadership Forum, was their Humanitarian Award for civic involvement.

Colorado's First Lady is involved in many long-term projects that promote the great diversity and vibrant culture of Colorado. She chairs the Colorado Commemorative Quarter Advisory Commission for the design of Colorado's new quarter, which is planned for release in 2006. Frances has also been instrumental in the privately funded renovation and restoration efforts of the Executive Residence, which was originally constructed in 1908.

Mr. Speaker, Frances Owens is a tremendous asset to the State of Colorado. Her impeccable record of dedication and service throughout her life is a high standard for any public servant to match. Frances' devotion to the State of Colorado has advanced Colorado and certainly made it a better place to live and raise a family. I want to thank Frances for all of her hard work, and I wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO ROY BRAUNSTEIN,
LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR OF THE
AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS
UNION, AFL-CIO

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2004

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my friend, Roy Braunstein, Legislative Director of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU).

Roy was hired in June 1973 with the United States Postal Service, and worked as both a Distribution Clerk and CMU Clerk during his postal career. He will retire on November 6, 2004.

The APWU has more than 300,000 members in every city, town and hamlet in the United States and is the world's largest postal union. Roy was first elected in 1980 as the APWU Legislative Aide, and was elected Legislative Director in 1992. He was elected nine times by the APWU membership.

Before he came to Washington, D.C. in 1960, Roy was active in the New Jersey Shore Area Local where he served as Legislative Director and Shop Steward. He was also the New Jersey State APWU Legislative Director and Editor. He served in community affairs as a member of the Barnegat, New Jersey Board of Education for three years and as a member of the Ocean County New Jersey Mental Health Board.

In Washington, Roy served as a lobbyist for the APWU and has worked on a number of issues important to the membership. During his tenure at the APWU, Roy worked to secure passage of the Hatch Act, legislation granting greater political freedom for postal and federal employees. Roy also played a key role in the eight year battle for the Family and Medical Leave Act which President Clinton signed into law in 1993.

Over the years, Roy worked diligently to help win passage of the Federal Employees Retirement System Act, the Spouse Equity Act, the Postal Employees Safety Enhancement Act, the Veterans Employment Opportunity Act, and many other legislative initiatives to help working families.

Roy fought to protect the viability of the Postal Service. He was a leader in the fight against Postal Privatization, and the move-

ment to take the Postal Service off-budget during the 1960s in an effort to stop congressional attacks on the Postal Service. APWU is an affiliate of the AFL-CIO, and Roy worked closely with other labor leaders for the goals of this nation's working men and women.

Roy's wife of 36 years, Marilyn, is also an APWU member, and they are the proud parents of two young men, Rick and Daniel. He has an A.A. Degree from Kinsborough Community College in Brooklyn, New York, and a B.A. Degree from Richmond College in Staten Island, New York.

Roy will be retiring to the Phoenix, Arizona area where his sons are living. He plans to retain full APWU membership, and to become actively involved with the Phoenix Metro Area Local (Arizona) and the Arizona Postal Workers Union relating to legislative issues. He also will be spending time traveling and relaxing with family and friends.

HONORING LATE REPRESENTATIVE
WILLIAM NATCHER

HON. RON LEWIS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2004

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay public tribute to a remarkable man of this House, the late William Huston Natcher, on the occasion of The Kentucky Museum and Library's opening of the William H. Natcher Political Collection, a compilation of artifacts from his storied life and career.

Congressman Natcher served in this body, preceding me as representative of the Second District of Kentucky, from August 1, 1953 until his death on March 29, 1994, having cast an astonishing 18,401 consecutive votes, a record most historians believe will never be matched. Through the years, he earned a reputation as an exceptionally hardworking and honest public servant, becoming one of the most highly-respected and influential members of congress in recent memory.

As years passed and his congressional seniority increased, Natcher received several important committee appointments, namely within the powerful House Appropriations Committee. From 1961 to 1979, he chaired the Appropriations District of Columbia subcommittee, exercising control over spending in the Nation's capital. He later moved on to chair the subcommittee on labor, health and human services, influencing major legislation to advance education and promote public welfare throughout the 1980's. He was elected Chairman of the full House Appropriations Committee in 1992, a position he held until his death in 1994.

Congressman Natcher became a legend not only for his effectiveness as a legislator but for his uncompromising dedication to the responsibilities of public service. Not only did he cast an unbroken chain of roll call votes over a 41-year career, he also exercised a sincere reverence for the opinions of his constituents, personally reading and responding to his own mail. Though he attained a position of national influence, he maintained a modest, responsible lifestyle, never accepting political contributions, driving himself to and from work in his aged Chevrolet. He was a model citizen-legislator worthy of an honored place in our Nation's history.