

America, bringing products and jobs back to New Jersey, and creating further economic development and business opportunities throughout our region.

Mr. Rivera currently is Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Community United for the Rehabilitation of the Addict, Inc. (CURA), Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Puerto Rican Action Board, and Trustee for New Brunswick Tomorrow. Mr. Rivera's vast community activities are an example of his wide variety of concerns for his community, while showing his dedication and desire to improve his community through action.

Mr. Rivera received his bachelor's degree from the University of Puerto Rico. Mr. Rivera is a loving husband to his wife, Nina Rivera.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Miguel Rivera for his 35 years of distinguished service, outstanding leadership, and devotion to Verizon Communications and the Hispanic community.

TERRORISM PROTECTION OF MASS TRANSPORTATION AND RAILROAD CARRIERS ACT OF 2004

HON. CHRISTOPHER SHAYS

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 2004

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, the recent horrific terrorist attacks on commuter trains in Madrid, Spain tragically underscored the vulnerability of railroad and mass transit systems to terrorist attacks. It is time we identify these vulnerabilities and make the necessary changes to improve our safety.

Congressman RUPPERSBERGER and I have introduced the Anti-Terrorism Mass Transportation and Railroad Carrier Act of 2004, which is the companion legislation to a bill introduced by Senator SESSIONS in the Senate. This bill takes tangible steps to protect the millions of Americans who use our transit systems and increase punishment if a terrorist is able to conduct an attack.

Under current law, an attack on a train is treated differently than an attack on any other mass transit system. We believe clear federal jurisdiction is needed to send the message to would-be terrorists: they will face the full force of law. Under our bill, perpetrators would face up to 20 years in prison if an attack causes material damage to a railroad or mass transit system, and the death penalty if the attack results in any deaths.

Our bill would also broaden the definition of "domestic and international terrorism" to provide law enforcement with tools to combat and prevent attacks on mass transportation and railroads. Specifically, our bill would make it easier for law enforcement officials to detect and disrupt terrorist plots against mass transit systems in the planning phases by allowing the interception of wire, oral, or electronic communications if sufficient evidence existed.

Mr. Speaker, we need to deal with the terrorist threat in a forceful, decisive manner. While much remains to be done to improve railroad security in our country, this bill takes an important first step.

INTRODUCING CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO ADDRESS CONTINUITY OF CONGRESS ISSUE

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 2004

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to offer what I believe is a necessary solution to a problem not addressed in our Founding Fathers' plan for our country's government.

I recently introduced a Constitutional Amendment to address the issue of how Congress would continue should a catastrophic event occur. Under this proposal, if a majority of House members are killed or incapacitated as a result of such an event their seats could be immediately filled by temporary appointments made by state legislatures. We need look no further than the Continental Congresses and Constitutional Convention, to understand that such a temporary solution would be successful. I believe that a functional House, even in a temporarily modified form, is far better than no House at all.

The temporary appointments would be afforded full Member powers, until vacancies are filled by a special election. However, a temporary Member could not be a candidate in the election for the seat he or she holds, and the temporary Member must be of the same political party as the Member who previously held the seat.

There is no way the Founders could have foreseen the need to address such an issue. The terrorist acts that take place nearly every day across the globe were not a part of their world. That's why I believe a Constitutional Amendment is necessary to enable the House to reconstitute itself as quickly as possible.

We have amended the Constitution to address presidential succession and the appointment of Senators in the case of vacancies, but the House has no such constitutional safeguard in the event of a catastrophe. That doesn't make sense. If the Senate can accept an appointment to fill an entire term, then a temporary appointment should not be that offensive to the concept of democracy, and therefore, should be acceptable for the House.

I offered this Constitutional amendment (H.J. Res. 89), because I believe that proposals to expedite special elections and make temporary appointments are not mutually exclusive. I support the idea of a new statute that seeks to expedite special elections and fill House seats quickly in the event of a catastrophe, but this needs to be done in concert with a Constitutional Amendment for temporary replacements and with respect for views of the states.

As for other proposals that address this issue only through expedited special elections, I am certainly willing to review any compromise opportunities. However, I do not believe, nor does the secretary of state from my home state of Connecticut believe, that it is reasonable to expect that we can hold special elections within 45 days after a disastrous event has wiped out hundreds of Members. Also, expedited special elections won't reconstitute the House fast enough to deal with pressing legislative matters.

The tragic events of September 11, 2001 taught us that Congress needs to act quickly

on critical pieces of legislation to deal with the aftermath of a crisis. Should such an event occur again and many Members of Congress die, the country will not have the luxury of waiting for special elections to occur in order for the people's business to continue. To avoid taking action now to prevent this scenario would be a dereliction of our duty.

My proposed Constitutional Amendment also addresses vacancies created by the incapacity of a Member of the House, which cannot be addressed by a mere statute. The article would become part of the Constitution if ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the states within seven years of the date of its submission to them.

As a former history teacher and long-serving member of the Connecticut State Senate, I feel very strongly about the need to preserve the institution of Congress. In December, I held a Continuity of Congress Forum at the University of Connecticut School of Law in Hartford, Connecticut. I invited local academic leaders, who are experts in Congressional operations, to discuss current House proposals about how Congress would continue should a catastrophic event occur.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this Constitutional Amendment. This is certainly an issue that is difficult for all of us to address—our untimely demise or incapacitation. Yet, given the level of terrorist activity in our world, it would behoove us to recognize that we need a mechanism for temporary appointments should a catastrophic event occur in the House of Representatives.

TRIBUTE TO PELKIE AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL AND THE ORIGINAL SEVEN ONE-ROOM COUNTRY SCHOOL HOUSES ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR REUNION

HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 2004

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to call your attention and that of our House colleagues to a ceremony that will take place in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan on August 9, 2004. While the Baraga County Fair goes on, the Pelkie Agricultural School along with the original seven one-room country school houses of the Pelkie area, will be celebrating with all their alumni.

In the NW corner of the Upper Peninsula there is the small town of Pelkie where a hidden treasure lay. The treasure built in 1932 is known as Pelkie Agricultural School, and is perhaps one of the oldest schools of its kind in Michigan or even in the United States still operating as an educational institution. The community looks forward to hosting the event and reuniting with old friends, teachers and classmates.

The Pelkie area was originally settled by Finnish immigrants in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century. As late as the mid-1970's one could walk into the local Co-op Store and hear the Finnish language spoken, or attend an area church service on Sunday conducted in the Finnish language. In the early years, seven one-room country school houses served the educational needs of the Pelkie area children, and then in 1932 the Pelkie Agricultural

School was built to consolidate these schools. For the first ten years or so, Pelkie Agricultural School operated as a K-10 school with an agricultural focus. The concepts of agriculture (for boys) and home economics (for the girls) were articulated and integrated into all aspects of the curriculum.

In the mid-1940's, the school began the first of many changes caused by declining enrollment and dwindling finances. The school first changed to a K-8 school and then eventually a K-6 school. As innovations and curriculum changes occurred in Michigan education, Baraga Township decided to implement a new and innovative concept. Eventually this led to the designation of the school as a lower elementary building for the entire district. The elementary school is currently filled to capacity and wisely used by the district.

When asked what role the school plays in the community, a local resident responded that the school was and continues to be the center of the community. It is the place for all community activities except church services. MSU Extension Study Clubs, 4-H Clubs, physical fitness programs, preschool programs, Agricultural Extension meetings, as well as the Baraga County fair are held there. Everyone has fond memories from their times at Pelkie Agricultural School and the community takes pride in doing everything they can to keep the school in good condition.

Over the years, the school has provided many important needs for the community including educational programs for soldiers after WWII. The school received federal funding under the GI bill to offer educational services and training in agriculture to area men returning home after the war. Five teachers dedicated themselves to teaching night classes to returning GIs in efforts to help them become productive independent farmers on the land that their Finnish forefathers had cleared a generation earlier.

The caliber of education offered at Pelkie Agricultural School is revealed through their many distinguished alumni. For forty-four years, Mrs. Ida Fitzpatrick, one of the school's teachers and its principal, directed the education of community youth. The school has produced many farmers, professors, traders, musicians, teachers, writers, and doctors. Among those we can cite as having attended Pelkie Agricultural School are Dr. LuAnne Ruona, psychiatrist and faculty member at George Washington University, Dr. Paul Niemisto, a professor and composer of music at St. Olaf's University, and Mr. Dan Maki, professor of History at Finlandia University. I am proud of their commitment to education and their contribution to their individual professions.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and our House colleagues to join me in wishing the best to the people of Pelkie in celebrating 70 years of education at Pelkie Agricultural School and the seven original one-room country school houses. We also extend a hearty, "Well Done!" to the Reunion Planning Committee. I am sure that many former Pelkie residents will be drawn back home for this celebration, so that families may be reunited, old friendships renewed, and a remarkable quality of life rediscovered.

RELATING TO THE LIBERATION OF THE IRAQI PEOPLE AND THE VALIANT SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES AND COALITION FORCES

SPEECH OF

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 2004

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to strongly condemn and denounce this cynical resolution which seeks members of Congress to once more endorse the needless war against Iraq. The world is certainly not safer now than it was before the attack on Iraq. Indeed, just the opposite is true. We are bogged down in a war at the wrong place which drains dollars, manpower and creative decision-making energy from our government. This administration has placed our nation in a deadly vise that blocks us from a more effective pursuit of terrorism. Let me just cite one critical example: Pakistan! We are losing our long-term ally, Pakistan, as a result of blatant neglect. The one Islamic nation which clearly has "weapons of mass destruction" has received low priority and second class treatment from our government. Even after the President of Pakistan chose to take great risks to assist in the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan, the U.S. offered this nation an economic assistance package of less than one billion dollars. At the same time this administration was offering Turkey several billion dollars merely to allow our troops to pass through on their way to Iraq. Pakistan also has a population of more than 150 million people while Iraq only has 25 million people. Nevertheless we are proposing 27 billion dollars to rebuild Iraq while offering the loyal ally, Pakistan, less than one billion dollars.

Mr. Speaker, we are losing our most valuable ally in the war against terrorism because we are obsessed with Iraq. Because I have a large Pakistani-American community in my District I was invited to visit Pakistan 2 years ago. Everywhere there was obviously admiration for America; however, everywhere there was also disappointment and bitterness with respect to the treatment of Pakistan by successive U.S. governments. In the end there is a feeling that their nuclear weapons program is the only way they can command the appropriate attention from the U.S.

Be assured that no high school sophomore is expected to believe that the sale of Pakistan's nuclear secrets to other nations was a crime committed by one super scientist acting without the assistance of the government. These deadly sales to North Korea and other rogue nations represent defiance and revenge expressed by a nation that deems itself to have been grossly mistreated.

Emergency diplomatic and economic assistance are needed to save Pakistan from becoming a Taliban victim or an overt enemy. Loyalties in the nation are now almost evenly divided and the present government is walking on a very thin line. Diverting just a quarter of the economic assistance approved for Iraq to Pakistan would send a meaningful message to our long-term ally. Who is losing Pakistan? The Iraq obsessed White House is losing Pakistan.

Problems in Iraq are impacting on all types and levels of decision-making in Washington.

We have been forced into a hardship budget for domestic programs. While there is no Federal aid for public school construction here at home, we are spending billions to build schools in Iraq. While fifty percent of the Black males in New York City are unemployed, billions of dollars are being spent to provide jobs to Iraqi men. There is a possibility that the bitterness and desperation which is the fertilizer for terrorism will create a unique incubator in America.

Is the world better off since we ventured into oil rich Iraq? Are Americans safer? Is the war against terrorism being conducted effectively? The answer to all of these questions is no. Should we pass this resolution which pretends to honor the troops but has been concocted to ambush legislators into stating that they endorse the war in Iraq? The answer is no.

TRIBUTE TO THE REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA

HON. ROBERT E. (BUD) CRAMER, JR.

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 2004

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the government and citizens of the Republic of Tunisia on the forty-eighth anniversary of Tunisian independence.

On March 20, 1956, Tunisia declared its independence from France and the United States was one of the first countries to recognize an independent Tunisian state. For forty-eight years, Tunisia has been a strong ally of the U.S. and has helped to encourage the values of liberty, democracy, and free enterprise throughout Africa and the world.

In addition, Tunisia has worked closely with the United States to promote international peace, stability, and progress. In fact, Mr. Speaker, Tunisia was one of the first nations to condemn the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and offer its support in the global fight against terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, all of Tunisia's people will be in joyous celebration. I rise today to join them in the commemoration of their independence.

RECOGNIZING ALFRED P. GERHARDT, JR.

HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 2004

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the American Legion's Eighth District Commander and Wawassan Post 422 Post Commander Alfred P. Gerhardt, Jr.

Alfred P. Gerhardt, Jr. received his draft notice on Pearl Harbor Day, December 7, 1966 and spent three months and ten days at Fort Lewis, Washington when he was honorably discharged on April 27, 1967.

In 1968, he went to Baptist Bible College in Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania as a part-time student during the spring semester and eventually went on to work as a nursing assistant at the Coatesville Veterans Administration Hospital in Coatesville. He subsequently retired from there after 15 years of service on March 28, 1998.