

WELCOMING NEW REPUBLICAN MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. CHOCOLA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. CHOCOLA. Mr. Speaker, I have to say I am thrilled to be here tonight. Ever since Election Day, I have been very anxious to get back here to Washington and join my colleagues, in fact, the growing Republican majority. For the first time ever, the Republicans have grown their majority in two consecutive cycles, and now we have the most Republican Members we have ever elected since 1946.

Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of talk about a divided America, but I do not see a divided America. When we look at the results of the election, and this is a very historic election, we see that the President won the popular vote margin by 3½ million votes. He is the first President to win the majority vote of over 50 percent since 1988. He received the most votes of any candidate for President in our Nation's history with almost 60 million votes, and he was reelected and gained seats in both Houses of Congress, both Chambers of Congress, for the first time since 1936.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the map of America as a result of the elections, especially when we look at the county-by-county map, it is overwhelmingly red.

So, Mr. Speaker, America spoke in a loud and united voice on Election Day and sent people here to Washington to serve in this body to express their voice, and they sent very good people. So tonight I am very pleased and honored to be joined by many of my colleagues to introduce to America those that will be serving as new freshman Members in the Republican Party in the 109th Congress.

Mr. Speaker, we have got a lot of people to introduce and an hour to do it. So we are going to get right to it. So it is my honor to yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY).

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor indeed to be a part of this time tonight to introduce our new Members of the Republican majority, and it is my distinct pleasure to talk about three of them, two who are from my State of Georgia who will be representing the sixth and the eighth congressional districts.

First of all, let me talk briefly about Dr. TOM PRICE. Dr. PRICE is an orthopedic surgeon. I have known him for many years. He served in the Georgia senate for 8 years, the past 8 years, and actually was a mentor to me when I was first elected to the senate and served for 4 years. Dr. PRICE at that time was the minority whip and went on to become the first senate majority leader, Republican majority leader, in the history of the Georgia general assembly.

As I say, Dr. PRICE has practiced medicine in northwest Atlanta for over 20 years as an orthopedic surgeon. He comes to the Congress to represent the sixth district and will do an absolutely fantastic job as he did in the Georgia general assembly. And it is certainly my honor, as a physician Member, to have a fellow physician serving with me. I think that will make eight or nine physician Members, Mr. Speaker, in the United States Congress, and to have two of them from the State of Georgia and actually two who represent the same county, Cobb County, that has got to be unprecedented.

TOM PRICE is married to his wife, Elizabeth, Betty, who is also a physician; and they have a 12-year-old son, Robert. It is a great honor to be able to introduce Dr. PRICE for the very first time this evening to my colleagues in the House.

Representative LYNN WESTMORELAND will be representing the Eighth Congressional District of Georgia, the district that has been represented so effectively by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) for the past 12 years. LYNN WESTMORELAND is from Sharpsburg, Georgia. He and his wife, Joan, have three children and three grandchildren. LYNN has served in the Georgia House for 12 years and 2 years ago became minority leader. LYNN led the Georgia house as minority leader and was very instrumental in this last election cycle when Georgia finally took over control of both the senate and the house.

And I think a great deal of credit goes to these two gentlemen, Dr. TOM PRICE, who will be representing the sixth congressional district, and Representative LYNN WESTMORELAND in the eighth. I share counties with both of these Members. I commend them to my colleagues. They will work tirelessly in a bipartisan fashion as we continue the leadership that we have in this great body.

Last but not least, it is my distinct honor to introduce to the Members Representative BOBBY JINDAL. BOBBY will be representing Louisiana's First Congressional District. He was born and raised in the State of Louisiana. He has served as a public servant in both health and education. Before entering politics, he served as Secretary for the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals. And most recently he was appointed by President Bush as a health policy adviser to the administration. BOBBY JINDAL has also served as president of the University of Louisiana system, and during his tenure, the universities there raised their graduation and retention rates, increased private donations and the number of endowed chair positions.

A graduate of Brown University and a graduate degree from Oxford, BOBBY JINDAL has received the National Jefferson Award by the American Institute for Public Service and the Christus Health Advocacy Award for Leadership. He has been married to his

wife, Supriya, for 6 years and is the father of two children, Selia Elizabeth and Shaan Robert.

Mr. Speaker, as I said at the outset, it is indeed an honor to be part of this Special Order as we introduce the new Republican Members of the 109th Congress. We look forward to working with them.

Mr. CHOCOLA. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for welcoming his new colleagues from Georgia and Louisiana, doing such a fine job.

Next it is my honor to yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURPHY), newly elected president of the soon-to-be sophomore class, to introduce two of his new colleagues from Pennsylvania.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Indiana for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and welcome Congressman-elect MICHAEL FITZPATRICK, who was just elected to serve in the 109th Congress from the eighth district of Pennsylvania. The eighth district, mainly to the north of Philadelphia, consists of Bucks County, parts of Montgomery County, and a small portion of Philadelphia. Mr. FITZPATRICK resides in Levittown with his wife, Kathy, and six children. He received an honors degree from St. Thomas University in Miami, Florida, and a law degree from Dickinson Law School of Pennsylvania State University.

Prior to his election in Congress, Mr. FITZPATRICK has served as a member of the Bucks County Board of Commissioners since 1995, on which he served as chairman for 5 years, and as the Commissioner, he oversaw a county budget of \$385 million and a workforce of 2,600 employees. He also sought improvements in the local 9/11 system and the construction of a state-of-the-art emergency operations center.

Mr. FITZPATRICK has also received numerous honors relating to personal achievements, including the American Red Cross Citizen of the Year in the year 2000 and the Habitat for Humanity Leadership Award for 2003. I am certain all my colleagues will join in welcoming our newly elected Congressman MIKE FITZPATRICK.

I would also like to recognize a friend who I met while I served in the Pennsylvania senate, and that is Congressman-elect CHARLIE DENT, who was also elected to the 109th Congress from the fifteenth district in Pennsylvania. The fifteenth district is located in the heart of Lehigh Valley and includes the cities of Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton. Mr. DENT's wonderful family has lived in the region for six generations, and he currently resides in Allentown with his wife, Pamela, and three children: Kathryn, William, and Jack.

CHARLIE received a BA from Penn State University in foreign service and international politics and a master's in public administration from Lehigh University. He began his political career early on as an interim for former

Representative Don Ritter, who also served the fifteenth district.

He was first elected to the Pennsylvania house in 1991, representing Allentown and South Whitehall. And in 1999 Mr. DENT was elected to the Pennsylvania senate, where we served together until my election to Congress in 2002. As a State senator, CHARLIE served as chairman of the Urban Affairs and Housing Committee and vice chairman of the Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee. I had the pleasure, while serving with CHARLIE, of oftentimes in the evenings going jogging together along the Susquehanna River, and throughout that time CHARLIE constantly talked of policy. So I am assuming he will do the same along the banks of the Potomac as he gets here. And as my colleagues will recognize, he loves to talk about policy.

So I ask all Members of the Congress to join me in welcoming CHARLIE DENT and MICHAEL FITZPATRICK to the 109th Congress.

Mr. CHOCOLA. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman for his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, this election put new meaning to the phrase "Don't mess with Texas." And to help explain that, it is my honor to yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS).

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Indiana for putting together this hour.

Mr. Speaker, it is my high honor tonight to welcome two new Members of the Texas delegation. First from out in west Texas, Texas 11, we welcome Representative MIKE CONAWAY. MIKE is an Army veteran from Fort Hood and has had a distinguished career with Price Waterhouse & Coopers. He is a native Texan, and he grew up in Odessa. He graduated from Texas A&M University-Commerce in 1970 with a BBA degree in accounting.

In 1995 Governor George W. Bush appointed MIKE to the Texas State Board of Public Accountancy, a State regulatory agency that regulates the practice of accountancy in Texas. MIKE CONAWAY has volunteered his time to serve the citizens of Texas on the board for 7 years, including more than 5 years as chairman. He has served as chairman and board member of the Family Services of Midland, Texas. He and his wife, Suzanne, have four children and four grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, my next-door neighbor, my new next-door neighbor in Texas 24, is Representative KENNY MARCHANT. KENNY is a former Carrollton City councilman and mayor of that city. He is currently the chairman of the House State Affairs Committee and the former chairman of the House Financial Institution Committee in the Texas house of representatives. Outside of politics, KENNY is a local small businessman and a home builder in Dallas County, Denton County, and Northeast Tarrant County.

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He also serves on the Advisory Board of Children's Medical Center and heads

a local nonprofit foundation which funds church-related humanitarian aid projects around the world.

KEN MARCHANT has both a bachelor's degree and an honorary doctorate degree from Southern Nazarene University. He and his wife Donna have raised their three sons and one daughter in the Twenty-Fourth Congressional District. They are also now the proud grandparents of a new granddaughter.

Madam Speaker, it is my honor to welcome these two members of the Texas delegation. We are indeed fortunate. And, as the gentleman from Indiana pointed out, "Don't mess with Texas."

Mr. CHOCOLA. Madam Speaker, continuing with the Texas tradition, it is my honor to yield time to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, I want to introduce three distinguished Texans to this House.

First is Representative LOUIE GOHMERT. Judge GOHMERT is an attorney who returned to private practice this last year before being elected to Congress. Prior to that time, he was appointed Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals in Texas.

He served his country as a captain in the United States Army. He is a Fighting Texas Aggie, graduating from Texas A&M University where he was class president and Brigade Commander of the Corps of Cadets. He earned his law degree from Baylor University School of Law, where he was the class president.

Judge GOHMERT has served as the President of the South Tyler Rotary Club, on the Boy Scout District Board of Directors and as deacon in the Green Acres Baptist Church. He also has been a director of leadership in Tyler, Texas, and a director of Centrepont Ministries, among other numerous efforts.

He and his wife Kathy have three children, Katy, Caroline and Sarah. He is going to be an asset to the State of Texas and to the United States, and I ask that we welcome him to our Congress.

Judge TED POE, another judge, we are going to form an organization of Texas judges before this is over, Judge TED POE is a native of Harris County. Before being elected to Congress, he served as a felony court judge, having been appointed in 1981 and elected six times as a felony district judge.

Before becoming a judge, Judge POE was a felony prosecutor for the District Attorney's Office in Harris County for 8 years and served in the United States Air Force Reserve. He taught criminal justice courses at the University of Houston, conducted training at the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia, and at West Point.

Judge POE has received awards from the National Victim's Center, Foundation for Improvement of Justice, the Texas District Attorney's Association, Kansas Peace Officer's Association, Houston Bar Association, Houston Police Officers Association and the Harris County Deputy Sheriff's Office.

TED POE received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Abilene Christian

University in political science and his J.D. degree from the University of Houston Law Center where he was a member of the Law School Honor Society.

TED POE has lived in Humble, Texas, with his wife Carol for over 24 years and has four grown children, Kim, Kara, Kurt and Kellee. He is an active member of the Church of Christ.

I ask that you welcome now Congressman TED POE to the 109th Congress.

Finally, a man who took a vast majority of my old district in Texas, the Tenth District, Representative MIKE MCCAUL.

MIKE MCCAUL was the Chief of the Terrorism and National Security Section with the Criminal Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Texas before he was elected to Congress. He is a member of the Bush-Cheney transition team as well as Attorney General Greg Abbott's transition team.

MIKE MCCAUL served as Deputy Attorney General under JOHN CORNYN and was a Federal prosecutor with the Public Integrity Section of the Justice Department's Criminal Division.

MCCAUL received his BS from Trinity University in San Antonio and got a law degree from St. Mary's University School of Law. He is also a graduate of the Senior Executive Fellows Program at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

MIKE MCCAUL will be a great asset to this Congress, and we should all look forward to serving with him, and I ask that you welcome him to the 109th Congress.

Mr. CHOCOLA. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure and honor to introduce the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART).

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Indiana.

I am so pleased today to be able to introduce three brilliant Members to the United States Congress, three brilliant additions to our conference.

The first one is a person I have had the privilege to know for a number of years. He comes from a very strong background. His name is CONNIE MACK. That is a name that is very familiar in the State of Florida. We all know that his father served with such great distinction here in the United States Congress.

This CONNIE MACK, his son, was born and raised in Southwest Florida. He is, again, the son of the former Senator Connie Mack. He will represent the Fourteenth District of Florida, which borders the district that I am honored to represent, and also the district that has been so ably represented until now by our now CIA Director Porter Goss, who was for many years the chairman of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

CONNIE, though, I got to know during his tenure, our joint tenure, in the

Florida State Legislature. He was a great leader in the Florida legislature, an active member of that legislature. He helped create and chaired the Freedom Caucus in the State House of Representatives, the Florida State House of Representatives, which fought hard and successfully, I may add, through the leadership of CONNIE MACK, to keep taxes low, to cut taxes, to cut regulation, to shrink the size of government.

CONNIE comes with a wealth of experience. He will help promote President Bush's fiscally conservative agenda and tax relief and make sure that America's families are not overburdened by excessive taxation.

Again, CONNIE MACK, now Congressman-elect CONNIE MACK, has a wealth of experience coming from the Florida legislature, particularly on issues of fiscal responsibility. He has shown great leadership, and I am anxious to have him as my partner because, again, we have adjoining districts. We are going to be working very closely together, as we have in the past, and I am excited to have him as part of the team.

Another person who joins us now from the State California with just a huge wealth of experience is Congressman-elect DAN LUNGREN. He had served, by the way, here in the House between 1979 to 1989. He now returns to the House after serving as the Attorney General of California, which, by the way, he did so for 8 years until 1998.

He, along with Newt Gingrich, formed the Conservative Opportunity Society here and really laid the foundation for the Contract with America. He is a man who, again, has been tested, really tested, and has always shown great leadership qualities, the ability to lead, the ability to fight for the issues that he believes are important. It is wonderful to have his wealth of experience back now on the majority team.

The third person that I am just excited, Madam Speaker, to be able to introduce is Congressman-elect LUIS FORTUNO, La Isla Del Encanto, representing Puerto Rico.

LUIS is a brilliant lawyer who has had significant experience in the business community, including being, by the way, for example, appointed as Puerto Rico's first Secretary of the Department of Economic Development and Commerce, an area he cares so deeply about.

I am just so excited to have him in the majority party, to work on issues that are dear to his heart, including economic development and many, many other issues.

LUIS is going to be the first Republican Resident Commissioner in the history of Puerto Rico. Think what that means, Madam Speaker. LUIS FORTUNO now will be in the majority party, will be speaking from the side of the majority when he speaks for the people that he represents. What a difference that is going to make for the people of Puerto Rico.

LUIS is also going to be a member of the Congressional Hispanic Conference, a growing group here of members of the majority who are concerned about, obviously, everybody in the country, but particularly concerned about the issues that particularly affect those of Hispanic descent and Portuguese descent.

So we are excited to have LUIS FORTUNO. It is a huge deal for the Island of Puerto Rico and for the people there, and it is a huge deal for us to have now as a member of the majority party a person who will now represent the Island of Puerto Rico. It is a distinct honor.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Indiana for this opportunity to introduce three extremely capable, extremely talented members now of the growing majority conference.

Mr. CHOCOLA. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida.

It is now my honor and privilege to introduce the gentlewoman from Florida, CATHERINE HARRIS.

(Ms. HARRIS asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. HARRIS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, 2 weeks ago today the most important election in a generation came to a close. As always, the American people cut through the heated rhetoric to render their well-considered, common-sense decision and have provided their mandate for our approach to fighting terrorists abroad and creating jobs and economic security at home.

These victories this year stem from an effective message, coupled with exceptional candidates who will quickly become extraordinary Members of Congress. I am deeply honored tonight to introduce two of these individuals.

CATHY ANNE MCMORRIS, who will replace the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NETHERCUTT) as the representative from Washington's Fifth District, understands the challenges associated with operating a small family business. For 14 years, she helped her family run the Peachcrest Fruitbasket Orchard and Produce Stand in Kettle Falls, Washington. Meanwhile, she compiled an outstanding record in the State government.

Beginning as a legislative assistant to State Representative Bob Morton, CATHY MCMORRIS was appointed to succeed Representative Morton in December 1993. She was elected to that seat in 1994 and was reelected by overwhelming margins in 1996, 1998, 2000 and 2002. Her colleagues in the Washington House of Representatives elected her as the Republican Leader in 2002.

She has been named by the National Federation of Independent Business as Outstanding Legislator and by the Washington State Farm bureau as Legislator of the Year, among numerous additional honors.

Newly elected GEOFF DAVIS has spent a lifetime serving his Nation, his com-

munity and his family. He worked as a janitor during high school to help pay for his family's bills. Then he enlisted in the United States Army and won an appointment to West Point.

He spent 6 years as an Army Ranger and assault helicopter pilot, serving in the Middle East after being chosen to run the U.S. Army Flight Operations for the Peace Enforcement mission between Israel and Egypt. He rose to the rank of captain before leaving the Army in 1987.

In 1992, GEOFF DAVIS started his own business, Capstone Inc., which specializes in consulting lean manufacturing and high technology systems integration. In 1995, this firm was named as an Outstanding Consulting Resource by The Executive Committee, a 3,500-member organization of CEOs.

GEOFF DAVIS has also served as a mentor and tutor in inner-city Cincinnati schools, as well as a volunteer chaplain for the Kentucky Corrections Cabinet. He and his wife Pat have six children.

On behalf of my colleagues, I wish to welcome these outstanding new Members to what I hope will be a long and fulfilling tenure in this House. They will join us as we continue to keep faith with the American people by making tax relief we passed during the last 2 years permanent so our economy will keep growing for them and by continuing to support our troops as they battle for freedom in Iraq, Afghanistan and around the globe.

For the sake of our children and our grandchildren, let us get to work. We will not and we cannot let them down.

Mr. CHOCOLA. Madam Speaker, it is now my pleasure to introduce the newly-elected vice president of the soon-to-be sophomore class, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. BARRETT).

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, it was not long ago I was wandering the halls of the Capitol, we call it Capitol Hill, trying to figure out what the heck was going on. But when I arrived, I found that D.C. was very warm and welcoming.

This week it is my turn to extend a warm welcome to the freshman class of the 109th Congress. And what an exciting time for all of them. I think they will find, as I did, that their classmates will fast become close and trusted friends.

Madam Speaker, it is my honor to talk tonight specifically about two new Members from my so-called neck of the woods, VIRGINIA FOXX and my dear friend BOB INGLIS.

Before I welcome this first person to Congress, though, let me make just a brief comment and give my heartfelt congratulations to her predecessor, Senator-elect RICHARD BURR. RICHARD's office has been around the corner from mine for the past 2 years, and I want to thank him personally and all his staff for all they have done for me over the

last 2 years. He has become a good friend, and I look forward to continuing working with him in the future.

VIRGINIA FOXX was elected by the people of the Fifth Congressional District in North Carolina to succeed the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BURR).

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She served as a State senator for five terms. Prior to election to the State Senate she served as president and consultant at Mayland Community College. She was confirmed by the U.S. Senate to the Education Advisory Committee and has served as a consultant for the U.S. Department of Education.

As a former small business owner and running a family business myself, I am pleased to say that Representative-elect FOXX and her husband, Tom, own and operate Grandfather Mountain Nursery. I believe that the perspective that a small business owner brings to the Congress is quite unique, Madam Speaker. I look forward to working with Dr. FOXX to bring a more commonsense business approach to our everyday work here on Capitol Hill.

The next gentleman, Madam Speaker, is from my home State of South Carolina. He is a good man, and he has been a dear friend of mine for years. Mr. BOB INGLIS. BOB actually served from the Fourth Congressional District in Congress from 1993 to 1998. After leaving Congress, BOB returned to the firm where he had worked from 1986 to 1992, Leatherwood, Walker, Todd and Mann. It is a pleasure for me to welcome BOB back and his lovely wife, Mary Anne, and their children to the United States Congress.

I look forward to working closely with BOB on issues important to South Carolinians and all Americans, such as homeland security, strong national defense, individual freedom and strong families, which I know BOB is a very strong proponent of.

I would also be remiss, Madam Speaker, if I did not extend congratulations to BOB's predecessor and a dear trusted friend of mine, Senator-elect JIM DEMINT. JIM served the people of the Fourth Congressional District well, and he has always put their needs and the needs of our State and Nation ahead of politics. And I know he will continue to do the same as South Carolina's next junior Senator.

Madam Speaker, it is always humbling to walk the Halls of Congress and stand on the floor of the people's House. Again, I want to congratulate these incoming Members and I look forward to serving with them. I know they will do a fantastic job.

Mr. CHOCOLA. Madam Speaker, it is my honor and privilege to introduce the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT).

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me. I think that

message right up there says it all: "America Speaks." And America spoke very loudly and correctly on November 2, 2004. November 2, 2004, was really a great day not only for the Republican Party but for the American people in this country as well. President Bush won reelection by over 3.5 million votes on that day, becoming the first Presidential candidate to win more than 50 percent of the vote since 1988.

The Republican majority also maintained the majority in both the House and the Senate, while also gaining seats in both Chambers. For House Republicans, that means this cycle Republicans made history by increasing their majority two cycles in a row. This historic game proves the critics' claims that the House was up for grabs and there was a general discontent among American voters with the Republican leadership false. Those arguments were all wrong. Republicans won 22 of the 39 so-called hotly contested seats.

Yes, on November 2 the voters confirmed that the agenda of this Republican-led Congress is in fact best for America and what the Americans want; that the Americans are for tax relief for American families and hard-working Americans everywhere; that they realize that their economic and growth policies of these last several years are right for America; that our job creation and pro-growth policies have worked. Perhaps more importantly, they realize that America's security is best in the hands of the Republican President and this Congress.

So I want to congratulate not only the President but also these newly elected Members of Congress today that made this historic feat possible. And I look forward to working with them as they come in January to be sworn in to further the successes in the 109th Congress. Because we must deliver on the confident hope of millions of American voters across this country.

We are going to be faced with enormous challenges ahead; and in a bipartisan effort, we must really support behind this agenda. So I welcome two new Members to this Congress. JOHN R. "RANDY" KUHLE, JR., of the southern tier of the western New York region was elected to the 29th Congressional District in New York, and he is one of those great new Members. Now, KUHLE's past experiences will bring a wealth of information and experience to this Congress. It includes three consecutive terms in the New York State Assembly and election to the State senate in 1986. There he was appointed to the senate as assistant majority leader for house operations back in 1995. He also served as senate chairman of the senate Standing Committee on Agriculture in 1987 through 1999 when he was then appointed chairman of the senate Standing Committee on Education. He served as chairman of that committee up until 2003 when he was appointed chairman of the senate Standing Committee on Transportation.

KUHLE is also a former State chairman of ALEC, a group that I am familiar with, that is the American Legislative Exchange Council, a group for States rights, and vice chairman of the National Conference of State Legislatures, that is the NCSL. In addition to this, he is a member of the senate Select Committee on Interstate Cooperation, the New York State Early Intervention Coordinating Council, the NCSL assembly on State issues, their committee on education, and their assembly on Federal issues and their committee on education, labor and workforce development. Also another national organization, the CSG, the Council of State Governments' Intergovernmental Affairs Committee, and the CSG Eastern Regional Conference Committee on Economic Affairs.

With all of this we know that he is going to be a valued addition to this Congress, and we welcome Congressman KUHLE.

I would also like to welcome newly elected Representative THELMA DRAKE. Ms. DRAKE served as a delegate in the Virginia house for 9 years to represent the people of the 87th district. She is also a Realtor with RE/MAX Allegiance Realty's Hampton Roads home team, and she has worked as a Realtor in real estate for over 20 years.

DRAKE also served on the house finance, the general laws, rules and commerce and labor committees; and as a long-standing member of that committee on general laws she served as chairman of its subcommittee on housing and also as chairman of the finance tax preference committee.

In addition, she has held a leadership position in that Republican house majority. In addition to all this as well, she has served as chairman of the Virginia housing commission, is a member of the mayor's task force on ocean view, and is a board member of the Virginia Zoological Society, and also a recipient of the John Marshall Alliance for Leadership and Property Rights.

We welcome Ms. DRAKE. Her background and skills will be an asset to the House. As we have heard of all of the accomplishments of all the Members and the Members that we are about to hear as well, these accomplished individuals to the Republican freshman class of 2005 is a strong loop and will remain committed to working in the House of Representatives promoting the values of the American people, and I welcome you all.

Mr. CHOCOLA. Madam Speaker, it is my honor and pleasure to introduce the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING).

Mr. KING of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. CHOCOLA) for yielding to me. I appreciate the time and opportunity to say a few words to this House and to Americans.

One thing I would point out, for the first time in 20 years since the Reagan landslide in 1984, the great State of Iowa finally voted state-wide for a Republican President. It has been a long

time coming. It took a lot of work to do that, and it took a lot of energy. What turned out that energy was the strongest ag economy since at least 1979. In fact, a lot of folks say the strongest ever. 2003 was a very good year; 2004 is an even better year yet. Our economy is strong. Our people care about families. They care about marriage. They care about the quality of life we have. Who in the world would vote against that is the question they were asking, especially in western Iowa where we had a tremendous turn out, and a much larger collection of votes than we had seen ever before.

I am thrilled to be here in this growing majority of conservative Republicans who will manage this budget with strict responsibility and move this Nation towards its national destiny. And people will be taking part in that in this upcoming 109th Congress. I have the privilege of introducing two of them to this Chamber. The first is Congressman-elect JOE SCHWARZ from Michigan's 7th district. JOE has served the people of Michigan in many capacities. He is a former State senator. He was considered to be a key senator on higher education and health care issues. He was elected president pro tem by his colleagues in the Michigan senate. He was chairman of the subcommittees on higher education and general government.

When I get through with his resume, you will wonder how he had time to do all these things. Congressman-elect SCHWARZ has also served as mayor and city commissioner of Battle Creek, Michigan, a sister city to Battle Creek, Iowa, I am sure. He built a medical practice around his reputation as a skilled surgeon. Prior to his political career, SCHWARZ served as a Naval officer in Vietnam and as a CIA operative. He serves on the boards of the Kellogg Community College Foundation; the Wayne State University Foundation; the University Musical Society in Ann Arbor, Artrain which is in Ann Arbor; Olivet College; and Detroit Receiving Hospital.

He was born and raised in Michigan. SCHWARZ received his bachelor's degree in history from the University of Michigan and his medical degree from Wayne State University. Quite a resume. He brings a lot to this Chamber.

I look forward to this freshman class going to work. They bring new ideas and new energy and help energize all of us.

I will tell you that I built a personal bond and a great respect and appreciation for another Member-elect, JEFF FORTENBERRY from Nebraska. I represent the 5th district of Iowa, which is the western third of Iowa, and I at one time declared it to be the eastern Nebraska district because it is isolated alone out there along western Iowa, and I found out that South Dakota wanted to be included in that. But JEFF FORTENBERRY represents the real eastern Nebraska district. He will be stepping into the very big shoes of

DOUG BEREUTER who served here for 26 years and did so honorably.

After Congressman BEREUTER's retirement, JEFF FORTENBERRY stepped into a 3-way primary and demonstrated his ability. As I watched him make decisions and take stands on positions, I watched him around his colleagues and the campaign staff and in the communities, and I watched him with his wife, Celeste, and his family, it built more and more respect for the man who is JEFF FORTENBERRY. He served on the Lincoln City Council, and he has been involved in a number of things. Economic development issues, urban revitalization projects, transition of a major public hospital, and a new baseball stadium. Maybe his skills here in Washington, D.C. could be utilized as we figure out how we are going to place a professional team here in this city.

Prior to his congressional campaign, JEFF FORTENBERRY had worked in the publishing industry for Sandhills Publishing; he has worked for the United States Senate with the Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations. He is currently a member of the Nebraska National Guard Civilian Leadership Council, and a member of Lincoln Independent Business Association. He has a bachelor's degree in economics, which will come in useful, from Louisiana State, a masters in public policy from Georgetown, and also a masters of theology from Franciscan University of Steubenville.

So both of these gentlemen's credentials are tremendous. They have proven in their life before they arrive here in Congress their ability. It is a tremendous venue for them to continue to develop their skills and develop those skills here and contribute to all of the people in this country. I look forward to working with them and the other Members of this class. I welcome both of these men to the 109th Congress.

Mr. CHOCOLA. Madam Speaker, it is my honor and pleasure to introduce the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. CHOCOLA) and want to say that this was a resounding majority for the President of the United States. Unlike previous elections for the White House where a plurality of voters supported the candidate, this candidate won a solid majority of the American people.

When we look to who else won the majority, we look at some of the new stars that have come into the Congress to take their places as Members-elect: like DAVE REICHERT from Washington's 8th district, an expert on both domestic and international security. He brings with him a wealth of experience in law enforcement where he delivered a remarkable record of service to the citizens of King County, Washington. Prior to his election to Congress, REICHERT served as King County Sheriff since 1997, and he work within the sheriff's office since 1972 after serving in the United States Air Force.

I will say that DAVE REICHERT joins a very small number of veterans still

serving in the Congress. There was a time when three-quarters of us had military backgrounds. Now we are down to just one in five, but DAVE REICHERT will be one of those advocates for Americans in uniform. During his leadership as sheriff, REICHERT brought national recognition to the sheriff's office as head of a task force that solved one of the largest serial murder cases in U.S. history, apprehending the infamous Green River Killer. The people of Washington are safer because DAVE REICHERT chose public service.

He is the recipient of the prestigious 2004 National Sheriff's Association Sheriff of the Year Award and is a two-time Medal of Valor Award recipient from the King County sheriff's office.

□ 2000

DAVE is a graduate of Concordia Lutheran College in Portland, where he played football and met his wife of now 34 years, Julie Reichert.

The Reicherts currently have three grown children, Angela, Tabitha and Daniel, and no less than five grandchildren. He is a family man and expert on international security and especially domestic law enforcement.

Now joining him is another star of our class, PATRICK MCHENRY from North Carolina, an expert on the Internet, someone who knows about labor issues and is a key to building the ownership society as a real estate broker.

Prior to his election, he was a State legislator in North Carolina, worked as an executive with DCI/New Media, Incorporated, and served as a director of the Bush for 2000 Presidential Campaign.

He served his country and the United States Department of Labor and, yes, is a licensed real estate broker and owner of his own real estate company, someone who brings that service to the Congress who can help Americans take part in the ownership society that the President has talked about.

PATRICK MCHENRY also knows to those that are given great abilities much is expected, and PATRICK MCHENRY sits on the board of directors of the United Way's Success By 6 youth program.

He brings these skills in real estate for ownership, in Internet-based economy, in making sure that we know how to support charities and how to make sure that we give back to the community.

For all of these reasons, we are thrilled that PATRICK MCHENRY joins us as well as DAVE REICHERT, with other stars, to join in the Republican ranks here in the House, and I thank the gentleman from Indiana for yielding.

Mr. CHOCOLA. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman and I thank all of my colleagues who have joined me this evening in welcoming this very impressive freshman Republican class that will be sworn in on January 4, 2005, and we all look forward to that day.

There is still one Member of the freshman class to introduce, Madam Speaker. I am a little biased. It happens to be my favorite Member of the freshman class. He is a Hoosier. That is not the only reason that he is my favorite Member. He is also a businessperson, someone that has actually created jobs, has actually learned how to seize the opportunities of economic growth and has contributed greatly to his local community before being elected to Congress.

He also ran for Congress in 2002 and was unsuccessful and ran again in 2004 and proved that persistence pays off, and that is a very admirable quality.

I am talking about MIKE SODREL. MIKE SODREL comes from his small business, his family business, called Sodrel Trucking. I see his trucks on the roads of Indiana every single day. He expanded that business in 2000 when he founded Sodrel Logistics.

He has served as a past chairman for the Southern Indiana Chamber of Commerce. He has also been recognized as the Southern Indiana Small Businessperson of the Year.

Service to his Nation is nothing new for MIKE SODREL. He served in the Army National Guard and continues service as a member of the American Legion. He is a community leader in many respects, and he leads many organizations, including the Boy Scouts of America, his Rotary Club, Junior Achievement, the Chamber of Commerce, the National Federation of Independent Businesses and the Boys and Girls Club.

MIKE is a native of New Albany, Indiana. He lives there today, and he has been married to his wife Marquita for 36 years. Together, they have two children, Noah and Keesha, and they are the proud grandparents of six grandchildren.

I know that MIKE will serve this body well, and I certainly look forward to working with him and all of his colleagues of the freshman class to serve Hoosiers and every citizen of this country.

Madam Speaker, we have just introduced a great class, and this great class will take the oath in the next coming months, and they will become part of the 109th Congress. I fully expect that the 109th Congress will be an historic Congress because it was the result of an historic election and, indeed, is an historic time for our Nation.

We did more than just keep our majority. We received a mandate from the American people. In the last 2 years, we delivered on health care, we delivered on security, cutting taxes and much, much more.

Our constituents recognized that. As the NRCC chairman, the gentleman from New York (Mr. REYNOLDS), stated, "The only people that think the GOP needs to be repudiated are two Democrat leaders from California, while the whole United States obviously disagrees."

What the United States wants and what the people of this country want is

a Congress that keeps working on their behalf, and as we have seen from the headlines, America has spoken. What America has said is they want Members of Congress that will get over the bickering and work on their behalf and do things like have budget process reform to make sure that we have more clarity and responsibility in how we spend the taxpayers' money and reduce the deficit.

America has spoken that says we want to have lawsuit abuse reform, to make sure we lift the burden of frivolous lawsuits off of our economy, which really hurts the creation of jobs and economic growth.

We have also heard from the American people that we need to have things like tax reform, to make sure we have a fair and flatter tax system that helps grow our economy as well.

We have also heard that we need to make sure that every generation of American gets the Social Security benefits they have earned and they deserve; and, most of all, we have heard from the American people that we have to make sure that we keep this Nation and our families and our communities safe and secure.

So, Madam Speaker, this has been an extraordinary hour where we have met an extraordinary class of incoming freshmen to the Republican-controlled Congress. So it has been my honor to have my colleagues join me. I thank them and I look forward to working with them in the 109th Congress, as well as all of the Members of this body.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment bills of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 4794. An act to amend the Tijuana River Valley Estuary and Beach Sewage Cleanup Act of 2000 to extend the authorization of appropriations, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5163. An act to amend title 49, United States Code, to provide the Department of Transportation a more focused research organization with an emphasis on innovative technology, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5213. An act to expand research information regarding multi-disciplinary research projects and epidemiological studies.

H.R. 5245. An act to extend the liability indemnification regime for the commercial space transportation industry.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed bills and a concurrent resolution of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 2280. An act to establish a coordinated national ocean exploration program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

S. 2283. An act to extend Federal funding for operation of State high risk health insurance pools.

S. 2489. An act to establish a program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to integrate Federal coastal and ocean mapping activities.

S. 2526. An act to reauthorize the Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education Program.

S. 2618. An act to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to extend medicare cost-sharing for the medicare part B premium for qualifying individuals through September 2005.

S. Con. Res. 145. Concurrent resolution to correct the enrollment of H.R. 1417.

INCREASING THE DEBT LIMIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MUSGRAVE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SPRATT. Madam Speaker, 4 years ago, the Bush administration was just getting started. They sent us their first budget, then told us, based upon a projected \$5.6 trillion in surpluses over the next 10 years, that there could be huge tax cuts, between a trillion five and \$2 trillion, huge tax cuts and still a budget surplus, and that they would not have to even come back to Congress to ask again for an increase in what we call the debt ceiling until the year 2008, 7 years later.

The debt ceiling is a statutory limit, a limit that we impose by law on the total amount of debt that the United States of America can incur. It currently stands at a level of \$7.384 trillion.

We did not buy into this argument. We did not vote for the tax cuts, and we on this side of the aisle were not surprised, disappointed, bitterly disappointed, because we had strived mightily to put the budget in surplus for the first time in 30 years during the 1990s. We did not vote for it, but we were not surprised when in the year 2002, not 2008 as predicted, but in the year 2002, the Bush administration came back to Congress and said that the statutory debt ceiling is about to be hit. In other words, we have run up so much debt that we are right at the ceiling of the total amount of debt that the government of the United States can incur, and, therefore, we need a \$450 billion increase in the debt this year, 2002.

The next year they were back asking for more, and now they are back asking for still more, this time \$800 billion. It is phenomenal when you consider that the last increase occurred 18 months ago and amounted to \$984 billion. That was the largest increase at any one given time in the fiscal history of this country. As a matter of fact, \$984 billion, the amount by which the debt ceiling was increased in May of 2003, \$984 billion is more than the total indebtedness of the United States when Ronald Reagan came to office in 1981, and how long has it lasted, this \$984 billion increase in the debt service? Eighteen months.

In fact, right now, this administration, under its fiscal policy of the budgets passed by the Republican majorities in this House and the Senate, has