

the Ibero-American Summit held in Havana in November 1999. Despite being confined in the horrors of the gulag, Mr. González bravely continued his peaceful activities to bring liberty and freedom to Cuba.

Unfortunately, Mr. González Marrero was arrested again in March 2003, as part of the repulsive island wide crackdown against peaceful pro-democracy activists. In a sham trial, he was sentenced to 20 years in the totalitarian gulag.

The family of Mr. González Marrero has reported that he was being held in solitary confinement in a punishment cell where he is deprived of any sunlight, adequate ventilation or drinking water, and subjected to temperatures of 30 to 32 degrees centigrade. According to Amnesty International, Mr. González Marrero is suffering from high blood pressure and inadequate medical attention to his failing health.

Let me be very clear, Mr. González Marrero is languishing in the depraved dungeons of the tyrant's gulag because he desires freedom for the people of Cuba. His demand for the rights of man to be given back to the citizens of Cuba is the only reason that he is locked in the abhorrent filth of Castro's prisons.

Mr. Speaker, as we gather to celebrate the results of our democracy and to commence the first session of the 109th Congress, it remains repulsive that, only 90 miles from our shore, brave souls like Mr. González Marrero are locked in dungeons because they too believe in the freedoms we hold sacred to our way of life. My Colleagues, let us remember those who suffer under the nightmare that is the Castro regime. Let us demand the immediate release of Diosdado González Marrero and every prisoner of conscience languishing in the dungeons of totalitarian despots.

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#### INTRODUCTION OF THE MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY COMPETITIVENESS ACT

### HON. VERNON J. EHLERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 6, 2005*

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce H.R. 250, "The Manufacturing Technology Competitiveness Act." I introduced this legislation in the 108th Congress, and it was passed by the House. I am re-introducing it in this Congress in the precise form passed last year. I am doing this because the global competitiveness of U.S. manufacturing remains a pressing issue.

This bill will help address long-term problems facing our nation's manufacturers by coordinating existing federal manufacturing programs, creating a new program to revive manufacturing innovation through collaborative research and development, and broadening and strengthening manufacturing extension.

Although manufacturing has experienced tremendous technological gains over the last few years, international competition has exacted a terrible toll on our nation's manufacturers. In particular, our small- and medium-sized firms are under tremendous pressure to become more efficient, to modernize, and to cut their prices. There is no evidence that these pressures are likely to go away.

In my conversations with manufacturers, I learned of their deep concern that the decline of manufacturing in the U.S. is undermining our ability to innovate. Innovation is the key to the development of new industries, without which our economy could stagnate. Governments of our global competitors are eagerly supporting investments in manufacturing R&D because they know that it is the foundation for sustained economic development.

If we are to continue to be the world technological leader, we need to rise to this new global challenge by supporting our manufacturers. The Manufacturing Technology Competitiveness Act, which received broad support in the House in the 108th Congress, will accomplish that by:

Creating an Interagency Committee that will coordinate the existing federal manufacturing research and development activities to ensure that they work as effectively and harmoniously as possible;

Creating a new collaborative research and development program for manufacturing technology;

Reauthorizing the critical programs at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), a federal research laboratory dedicated to ensuring U.S. leadership in technology-based standards and industries;

Creating a fellowship program at NIST to develop U.S. manufacturing research expertise; and

Reauthorizing and creating a new grant program within the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program so that the MEP Centers can extend their expertise to a range of problems beyond their current scope of activities.

Mr. Speaker, globalization is in full swing. It is incumbent upon this Congress to provide a coherent federal response to the changes that are underway in manufacturing, and to support the technological innovation that is fundamental to retaining our manufacturing strength. This bill provides a mechanism for that crucial response and I look forward to working with my colleagues on this issue in the 109th Congress.

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#### IN HONOR OF REVEREND THOMAS C. BLESSIN, S.J.

### HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 6, 2005*

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Reverend Thomas C. Blessin, S.J., for his 55 years of service to the Society of Jesus and the people of his community. Father Blessin will be receiving the 2004 Reverend James F. Fox, S.J. Award at the Loyola School of New York's Annual Alumni Dinner on January 7, 2005.

Throughout the years, Father Blessin provided a strong spiritual foundation for the members of his community. Born, raised, and ordained in Staten Island, he later moved to New Jersey where he spent decades ministering to the community and attending to the spiritual needs of congregants at various churches, missions, and spiritual retreats.

In addition to his work with churches around the area, Father Blessin served for 9 years as the assistant headmaster at Loyola High School and an additional 2 years as the school chaplain. For 25 years, he was a chaplain and active member of the New Jersey National Guard. He later worked at St. Peter's College where he offered mass and assisted with student services. Currently, he is retired and living in the Jesuit residence at St. Peter's College in Jersey City.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the Reverend Thomas C. Blessin, S.J., for his outstanding spiritual leadership and years of faithful service to the people of New Jersey. His dedicated work throughout the decades has helped to enrich the lives of so many throughout our community.

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#### REMEMBERING MONSIGNOR MCDERMOTT

### HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 6, 2005*

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mourn the loss of a beloved leader of the Chicago Archdiocese, Monsignor Ignatius D. McDermott, who passed away on December 31.

Monsignor McDermott, known affectionately as Father Mac, was born on Chicago's South Side on July 31, 1909. He was ordained in 1936 after studying at Quigley Preparatory Seminary and Mundelein's St. Mary of the Lake Seminary.

Demonstrating a lifelong commitment to helping those most in need, Monsignor McDermott often walked the streets of Chicago's poorest neighborhoods in order to comfort the homeless and help recovering drug addicts and alcoholics return to sobriety, happiness and meaningful lives.

In 1946, Monsignor McDermott was appointed assistant director to the Chicago Archdiocese's Catholic Charities. Advancing his commitment to helping individuals with substance abuse problems, he founded Catholic Charities' Addiction Consultation and Education Services and the Central States Institute of Addiction.

After nearly four decades of service, Monsignor McDermott cofounded the Haymarket Center in 1975. Named for its location near Haymarket Square in Chicago, the detoxification center offers residential and outpatient services. As a direct result of Monsignor McDermott's compassion and dedication, the center has continued to expand over the years and now serves over 14,006 people each year.

Mr. Speaker, I join with the people of Chicago in recognizing the life of Monsignor McDermott. Together we honor his service and lifelong dedication to community service as well as the lasting impact he has had on the countless individuals he touched and whose spirits he lifted throughout his distinguished career. His many contributions leave an indelible mark on our community that will always be remembered.

EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES AND SUPPORT FOR ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMIS THAT OCCURRED ON DECEMBER 26, 2004, IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

SPEECH OF

**HON. BETTY McCOLLUM**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 4, 2005*

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 12, expressing support to the victims of the tragic earthquake and tsunami that occurred on December 26, 2004. I offer my deepest condolences to the people of Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and India, along with all of the children and families across South Asia and Eastern Africa, in the wake of this devastating event.

The toll taken by this tragic earthquake and tsunami is staggering: More than 150,000 dead, thousands still missing, and 5 million lacking basic survival necessities like clean water, food and shelter, and healthcare. The world endured the largest earthquake since 1900 and the tsunami that followed took the lives of children, their parents, tourists and entire families. This is a region ill-prepared for such a colossal and devastating natural occurrence. It is a human tragedy of epic proportions.

In response, the world community has embarked on a massive humanitarian relief effort unparalleled in the history of disaster relief. To date, the United States and other donors have pledged an estimated \$2 billion in emergency and reconstruction assistance.

As the wealthiest nation in the world, the United States must lead the effort to provide humanitarian assistance. A once belated and undervalued response by the United States must now be erased with aggressive and generous action. I call on Congress to swiftly authorize and appropriate the \$350 million pledged by the President so it can be delivered promptly to those who need it immediately.

I also call on the President to ensure that the money he pledged to provide humanitarian relief in the wake of this disaster does not come at the expense of existing international aid programs assisting millions of people across the globe. These programs, for example, help AIDS orphans, victims of drought, war refugees and the families in Iraq and Afghanistan that are rebuilding their homes and communities. Our assistance in these areas must remain a priority.

The tragic loss of human life and destruction from the earthquake and tsunami unite the United States and the entire international community in solidarity and support. My thoughts and prayers go out to the victims of this terrible tragedy and I pledge my continued support and help for their families and the hundreds of relief workers who have come to their aid.

CLARIFICATION OF CONGRESSIONAL INTENT REGARDING 22 U.S.C. 7207(b)(1)

**HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 6, 2005*

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address a question about the Congressional intent of the phrase "payment of cash in advance" as it appears in 22 U.S.C. 7207(b)(1) as passed by the U.S. House of Representatives on October 11, 2000, as passed by the U.S. Senate on October 18, 2000, and as signed into law by President Clinton on October 28, 2000.

As the principal negotiator and author of the language in question, I can state, without any ambiguity, that the Congressional intent behind the phrase "payment of cash in advance" is the following: that all legal sales of agricultural commodities or products to the Cuban Government or any person in Cuba, must be paid in full in advance of the shipment of the goods.

I sincerely hope that regulations will be issued to reflect the congressional intent of this phrase.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 242, THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2005

**HON. VERNON J. EHLERS**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 6, 2005*

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to introduce "The Surface Transportation Research and Development Act of 2005." This legislation is actually a reintroduction of the bill that passed the Science Committee last Congress. After the bill passed the Science Committee, I worked with my colleagues on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to have many of the provisions included in the House version of the reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century—better known as TEA-21. Unfortunately, the House and Senate were not able to reach consensus on a final transportation bill.

As we prepare to complete the reauthorization early in this Congress, my legislation still provides the needed emphasis on transportation research and development that will ensure our whole transportation system can meet the tremendous challenges of today and especially for the future. Considering that we won't have the ability to simply build more roads to address these challenges, especially in urban areas, we must look at new ways to improve the overall system, to make it safer and more efficient, and to ensure that the system meets future needs. Good research, properly done, will more than pay for itself in longer-lasting roads, better bridges, faster traffic flow, and fewer accidents.

In the last Congress, as chairman of the House Science Subcommittee on Environment, Technology and Standards, which shares jurisdiction over surface transportation research with the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I held hearings to hear

from experts on the state of the Federal Government's current surface transportation research program. In addition, we heard from a wide array of interests on how to improve and reform the research program, and the levels at which research should be funded. Based on this input, I introduced the Surface Transportation Research and Development Act last Congress.

This legislation I am introducing today is identical to the bill that passed the Science Committee last Congress. It has three overarching goals: to increase stakeholder input to ensure that the people who must implement and use the research agree that it is applicable to everyday challenges; to create the highest quality research through increased competition and peer-review of all projects; and to ensure greater accountability so that our research supports the goals of our surface transportation system.

More specifically, the bill:

Creates and funds an important research program run by the National Academy of Sciences to address short to medium-term research needs. Research will focus on reducing congestion, renewing existing roads and bridges while minimizing impact to the public, improving safety by reducing crashes, and developing tools for getting more out of our existing highway capacity and assessing future needs. All projects funded by this program will be competitively awarded and peer-reviewed;

Provides needed funds to implement a public-private cooperative environmental research program, with the goal of developing the knowledge, tools, and performance measures that will help us better understand and manage the linkage between the environment and the transportation system;

Calls on the U.S. Department of Transportation to take the lead in carrying out fundamental, long-term research to achieve breakthroughs in transportation research;

Increases funding for University Transportation Centers and ensures greater competition among universities which seek to become transportation research centers;

Reforms and increases the responsiveness of the Bureau of Transportation Statistics to the needs of the transportation community; and

Provides States with additional resources to better train and educate the transportation workforce.

This legislation will significantly, yet prudently, increase funding for transportation research starting at \$500 million a year in fiscal year 2006 for Federal research programs and gradually rising to \$850 million a year by 2010. When Congress increased funding for overall transportation programs by upwards of 40 percent in TEA-21, funding for transportation research remained relatively flat. I believe that lack of investment in research has hurt our ability to meet new challenges. My approach ensures that our transportation research is well planned, peer reviewed, properly funded and evaluated and will go a long way to help solve the many challenges facing our Nation's transportation system.

I look forward to again working with my colleagues on the Science and Transportation and Infrastructure Committees, the U.S. Department of Transportation, state transportation departments, and all other interested stakeholders as we try to finish the job begun last Congress.