

## INTRODUCTION OF THE HERO ACT

**HON. JANE HARMAN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 14, 2005*

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, today, together with my good friend CURT WELDON and a bipartisan group of our colleagues, we are introducing Homeland Emergency Response Operations or HERO Act. The HERO Act would take much-needed broadcast spectrum available for use by America's first responders by no later than January 1, 2007.

Many public safety and state and local governmental associations, as well as first responders and other emergency personnel from across the country, support this legislation.

Interoperability is more than a public safety issue. It's a national security issue, and to our first responders it can be an issue of life or death. In 1997, Congress made a promise to the American people to allocate dedicated radio spectrum to first responders. Yet 8 years later, we still have not made good on our commitment. Why have we broken our promise? Because a handful of broadcasters refuse to compromise on this issue.

Thousands of lives are potentially at stake. We have all heard the tragic stories of firefighters who died in the World Trade Center on 9/11 because NYPD helicopters circling overhead could not radio them that the towers were glowing and beginning to collapse.

At the Pentagon on that same dark day, first responders from surrounding counties who converged on the scene were forced to use runners to convey messages, as their communications equipment was not compatible.

The tragedies of September 11 taught some painful lessons about the need for improved communications among and between first responder groups. In particular, the events of that and subsequent days have underscored the need for more public safety radio spectrum with which first responders can perform their live-saving functions.

The lack of frequency among emergency response agencies and jurisdictions is an everyday problem. Police officers, fire fighters, emergency medical personnel and others are forced to depend on radio systems that operate on incompatible radio frequency bands and lack sufficient capacity. We must as a nation remedy this situation as effective and interoperable public safety communications are more important than ever in the war against terrorism.

Key elements for first responders to begin using this spectrum are in place. The spectrum is allocated, states have already received licenses to use the 700 MHz band and local jurisdictions are engaged in regional planning needed to get a license. However, the investment to use the spectrum by public safety agencies cannot commence unless there is a tangible date when that spectrum can be used. Essentially, the first responders are waiting on Congress to keep our promise, and I think they have waited long enough.

I urge my colleagues to join us in this important effort to safeguard the lives of our public safety workers—and of the communities they serve—by co-sponsoring the HERO Act.

## CONGRATULATE OAKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE ON 40 YEARS OF EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

**HON. SANDER M. LEVIN**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 14, 2005*

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Oakland Community College on their 40 years of educational excellence.

When the voters of Oakland County voted to establish the Oakland Community College District on June 8, 1964, they not only approved the establishment of a valuable opportunity for thousands of students, but also an institution which would eventually become one of the State of Michigan's largest educational facilities. And, with 888 full-time employees, OCC is one of the County's largest employers.

When the college opened, a record 3,860 students enrolled to take classes. Today, annual enrollment reaches 74,000 and some 700,000 students have received a world-class education at OCC since it opened.

As the largest community college in the state of Michigan, and 14th largest in the nation, OCC has attracted students from over 80 countries.

Oakland Community College is certainly a home-town institution with more than 11 percent of Oakland County's high school graduates attending OCC. The college also boasts the largest freshman class in the entire state. And with campuses throughout Oakland County, many of which I have had the pleasure to represent at one time or another, this institution increasingly became accessible to students. I worked very hard years ago with an active group of citizens and Board members to open campuses in South Oakland County. Today, the Southfield and Royal Oak Campuses are among the two largest in the County.

OCC is also home to the CREST Program. The CREST or Combined Regional Emergency Service Training Facility is a 22-acre site which is the only emergency-response training center in the Midwest designed for the combined training of police, fire and emergency medical technicians in "real-life" scenarios.

Mr. Speaker, on May 5th Oakland Community College will celebrate its 40th anniversary at a dinner to raise money for its scholarship endowments. I ask you and my colleagues to join me in saluting a major community asset, Oakland Community College, as it celebrates its past and focuses on the future.

IN HONOR OF THE EARTH DAY—  
2005**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 14, 2005*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of the Earth Day Coalition of Cleveland, as they celebrate EarthFest 2005—a date that commemorates the 36th Anniversary of Earth Day. The Earth Day Coalition was formed in 1990 to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of Earth Day in Ohio. Over the past twenty-five years, a staff of one

has evolved into a staff of six fulltime employees, college interns, and hundreds of volunteers. As the staff has grown, so has the focus, outreach and expansion of the programs and projects created by the Earth Day Coalition.

Beyond the initial focus on environmental education, recycling and energy waste, efficiency, alternatives and conservation, the focus of Earth Day Coalition has expanded into other significant environmental areas of concern that speak directly to the preservation and conservation of the delicate, interdependent threads of our natural world. Many of the programs initiated by the Earth Day Coalition have grown into nationally-recognized programs and models that speak to the critical need of community pollution prevention. EarthFest 2005, to be held on Sunday, April 17th at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, promises once again to be a significant aspect of the world celebration of Earth Day.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor and recognition of the staff, volunteers and members of the Earth Day Coalition—as we celebrate EarthFest 2004 on April 17, 2005. This significant day reflects the hope for a healthy community—for us today, and for future generations. The organizing force behind EarthFest—the Earth Day Coalition of Cleveland, offers residents of our community access to a wide range of environmental resources and information, presented by local and national organizations and agencies. Again, Earth Day promises to educate, inspire and motivate all of us to live with the awareness of our fragile connection to all living things.

INTRODUCTION OF MILITARY  
FAMILIES LEAVE ACT**HON. TOM UDALL**

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 14, 2005*

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Military Families Leave Act, a bill that will take a small step to help ease the burden of military families in this country. I originally introduced this bill at the end of the 108th Congress, and I look forward to working for its passage during the 109th Congress.

Nearly every day we hear stories about the hardships of the families of our nation's soldiers. Family members of deployed soldiers face unique challenges, especially in the first days and weeks after the member has been summoned to duty. The National Military Family Association has testified that it hears from many families about the difficulties of balancing new family and personal requirements with their regular duties when a family member is deployed. As members of Congress, we too hear from constituents who struggle with this balance. I believe there are measures we can take to ease this burden and increase flexibility in the lives of our military family members.

The legislation I am introducing today is one of the steps we can take. The Military Families Leave Act allows spouses, parents, or children of military personnel who are serving on, or are called to active duty, in support of a contingency operation to use their Family and



Medical Leave Act benefits for issues directly related to deployment. The bill does not extend the FMLA to anyone; it simply allows those who already qualify for the FMLA to use that benefit in new specific instances. For example, if a woman's husband is deployed for a contingency operation, she can use her FMLA benefit to secure power of attorney or to arrange for necessary childcare. Or, in a single parent situation, the mother or father of the deployed servicemember could use his or her FMLA benefit to care for a grandchild. This bill has been carefully drafted to stipulate that this leave could only be taken for issues directly relating to or resulting from the deployment of a family member.

Senator RUSS FEINGOLD of Wisconsin has introduced the Senate companion to this bill, which has garnered widespread support from military reserve, active duty, and military family organizations. I would like to submit for the RECORD support letters from the Reserve Enlisted Association and Reserve Officers Association, the National Military Family Association, the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States, and the National Partnership of Women and Families. Others who support this bill include the Military Officers Association of America and the National Guard Association of the United States.

It is time to show our military families that we are listening to their concerns. The Military Families Leave Act represents a small measure of relief for the families of the men and women who serve in our armed forces. I ask that my colleagues join me in assisting our military families by supporting this bill.

RESERVE ENLISTED ASSOCIATION,  
April 9, 2005.

Hon. TOM UDALL,  
House of Representatives,  
Longworth House Office Building Washington,  
DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE UDALL: The Reserve Officers Association, representing 75,000 Reserve Component members, and the Reserve Enlisted Association supporting all Reserve enlisted members supports your bill, to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act to provide authority for Reserve Component family members to take leave in conjunction with a call-up.

The Guard and Reserve are contributing approximately 40 percent of the troops in Iraq and Afghanistan and are gone from home for the longest period of time ever anticipated. Many families are faced with having to accommodate this absence with often less than 30 days notice and it requires a considerable amount of time to make the necessary adjustments. Family members supporting a spouse, son, daughter or parent that is serving on active duty, should not have to also be afraid of losing their job.

The bill recognizes many of the problems encountered in the current mobilization and provide solutions. We encourage you to offer your provision as an amendment to House Report 109-016, Making Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for the Fiscal Year ending September 30, 2005. ROA and REA applaud your effort and concern.

Sincerely,

LANI BURNETT,  
CMSgt, USAFR (Ret.), REA Executive  
Director.

ROBERT A. MCINTOSH,  
Major General (Ret), USAFR, ROA Executive  
Director.

NATIONAL MILITARY  
FAMILY ASSOCIATION,  
Alexandria, VA, April 10, 2005.

Hon. TOM UDALL,  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE UDALL: The National Military Family Association (NMFA) is a national nonprofit membership organization whose sole focus is the military family. NMFA's mission is to serve the families of the seven uniformed services through education, information and advocacy.

On behalf of NMFA and the families it serves, I would like to thank you for introducing legislation to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 to provide entitlement to leave to eligible employees whose spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty in support or a contingency operation or notified of an impending call or order to active duty in support of a contingency operation.

NMFA has heard from many families about the difficulty of balancing family obligations with job requirements when a close family member is deployed. Suddenly, they are single parents or, in the case of grandparents, assuming the new responsibility of caring for grandchildren. The days leading up to a deployment can be filled with pre-deployment briefings and putting legal affairs in order. Families also need the opportunity to spend precious time together prior to a long separation. The need is no less when the servicemember returns. Reintegration and transition requires training not only for the servicemember but for the family as well in order to be most effective.

Military families, especially those of deployed servicemembers, are called upon to make extraordinary sacrifices. This amendment offers families some breathing room as they adjust to this time of separation.

Thank you for your support and interest in military families. If NMFA can be of any assistance to you in other areas concerning military families, please feel free to contact Kathy Moakler in the Government Relations Department at 703.931.6632.

Sincerely,

CANDACE A. WHEELER,  
Chairman/Chief Executive Officer.

EANGUS  
Alexandria, VA, April 11, 2005.

Hon. TOM UDALL,  
U.S. Congress,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN UDALL: The Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS) would like to thank you, on behalf of the Enlisted men and women of the Army and Air National Guard, for drafting the Military Families Leave Act.

Families of mobilized National Guard and Reserve members, as well as the families of deployed active duty service members, experience many hardships. Your bill will help alleviate some of the stress involved when a principal family member is deployed. Allowing the use of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 for those family members can greatly assist during a difficult time.

Thank you so much for recognizing one of the many needs of the military community. EANGUS will support the Military Families Leave Act in any way possible. If there is anything we can do to assist, please let us know.

If I can be of any assistance, please feel free to ask.

Working for America's Best!  
MSG (RET) MICHAEL P. CLINE, AUS,  
Executive Director.

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP  
FOR WOMEN & FAMILIES,  
Washington, DC, April 8, 2005.

Hon. THOMAS UDALL,  
Longworth House Office Building,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE UDALL: Thank you for introducing legislation that would expand the scope of the Family and Medical Leave Act to allow the spouses, parents and children of active duty military personnel to take job-protected leave to take care of issues caused by the deployment of their family member.

The National Partnership was proud to lead an active coalition that fought for and helped secure passage of the FMLA. Twelve years later, the FMLA has helped more than 50 million Americans take job-protected leave from work after the birth of a child, to recover from a serious illness or to care for a family member with a serious illness. While the FMLA is a landmark piece of legislation and has made tremendous inroads in the struggle to make our workplaces more family friendly, there is still much more that can be done to help our working families in times of crisis. The National Partnership has long been a champion of expanding the FMLA to cover more workers and to allow workers to take job protected leave to address important family needs such as medical appointments and parent/teacher conferences. We also are actively advocating for policies and programs that make it easier for workers to receive pay while on leave.

Your bill comes at a critical time in the lives of our military families. Its passage will give them time to prepare, logistically and mentally, before or during a loved one's departure for active duty—without fear of losing a much needed job. For these reasons, the National Partnership applauds your leadership on this issue and supports the enactment of this legislation.

Sincerely,

DEBRA L. NESS,  
President.

HONORING BERKELEY CITY  
COUNCILMEMBER MARGARET  
BRELAND

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 14, 2005

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and work of former Berkeley City Councilmember Margaret Breland of Berkeley, California. Serving the people of West Berkeley first as a private citizen and then as a public servant, Margaret devoted most of her adult life to improving conditions in a community she saw to be underrepresented and often overlooked. Margaret retired from the Berkeley City Council in November of 2004, and after a long battle with breast cancer, passed away on April 7, 2005.

Though Margaret was originally from Beaumont, Texas, she spent the majority of her life in Berkeley after moving there as a child with her family. The oldest of four children, she was counted on by her mother to help run the household. After graduating from Berkeley High School, Margaret became a licensed vocational nurse, an occupation in which she served for 27 years.

Margaret retired early from her work as a nurse to care for her mother in the late 1980s, but became increasingly involved in community and public service activities at Liberty Hill