

Sandia, and has two children and three grandchildren.

Through his initiative, energy, and audacity, Mr. Blackstone Dilworth has contributed enormously to Texas' economic health and vitality. He is a pillar of the business community, and a model for entrepreneurs everywhere, and I am pleased to have the chance to honor him here today.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 26, 2005*

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I missed nine votes on April 20th, 2005 because I was attending an important family event with my 12-year-old daughter. The votes were on amendments to the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (H.R. 6). Had I been present I would have voted yea on rollcall Nos. 115, 116, 117, 118, 120, 121, 122, 123. I would have voted "nay" on rollcall No. 119.

LOOSEN THE GAS PRICE NOOSE!

**HON. BOB FILNER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 26, 2005*

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, a gallon of regular gas in San Diego or Imperial Valley has been hovering around the outrageous price of \$2.50, often reaching even higher. Even as the price per barrel of oil declines, the price at our local gas stations stays sky-high.

Every time one of my constituents drives to work, drops a child off at school or drives away on vacation, hard-earned dollars go up in smoke. When our grocery stores have to pay more to get their groceries shipped in, they pass the extra cost on to their shoppers. What's the result? The whopping price of gas is choking our middle and working class—essentially levying a new tax when we can least afford it and boosting the profits of the oil companies!

This is simply unacceptable. We must continue to fight to lower the price of gas and protect consumers. One year ago I called on the Bush Administration to take several steps to loosen the gas price noose, including suspending deliveries to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve; requesting an investigation of market failures and lack of competition; blocking mergers that allow oil companies to manipulate supplies; and implementing strong fuel economy standards to put more efficient and environmentally friendly cars on the road and lower consumption.

An investigation by the Federal Trade Commission in August was inconclusive, and the White House has failed to take any steps to rein in oil companies or reduce gas prices. The energy bill we are considering this week also fails to responsibly tackle this problem, instead offering the same favors to oil companies. In the absence of effective leadership, consumers remain at the mercy of the price-gougers.

That's why I have now appealed directly to the Federal Trade Commission and the Attor-

ney General to launch a broader investigation to determine whether the oil companies have engaged in illegal or anti-competitive practices that contribute to the high gas prices.

Additionally, I am fighting for passage of legislation known as the Gas Price Spike Act, that would implement a windfall tax when oil companies collect excessive profits, provide a tax credit for fuel efficient vehicles, and offer federal grants to reduce mass transit fares.

I call on Congress and the Administration to support me in these efforts to inject fairness and competition into the market and end price gouging at the gas pump!

FLEXIBILITY FOR CHAMPION SCHOOLS ACT

**HON. BOB GOODLATTE**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 26, 2005*

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer the Flexibility for Champion Schools Act (H.R. 1821).

Mr. Speaker, on January 8, 2002, the President signed the No Child Left Behind Act, commonly referred to as N-C-L-B. I was fortunate enough to have served on the House Education and the Workforce Committee, which considered the details of this domestic policy proposal put forth by the President.

The goals of N-C-L-B were and are laudable. According to the Department of Education, the No Child Left Behind Act gives our schools historic education reform based on stronger accountability for results, more freedom for states and communities, encourages proven educational methods, and creates more choices for parents.

However, one of the major tenants of N-C-L-B, its FLEXIBILITY to treat different states fairly while maintaining the goals of the underlying legislation; has not been a priority for the Department. A law that was originally intended to react like a rubber-band, to bend but not break, has unfortunately been implemented rigidly and is intolerant of states like Virginia, who had previously administered high testing and accountability standards.

Mr. Speaker, with any new law, especially one as sweeping as N-C-L-B, some hurdles will have to be overcome. To jump through these hurdles, my colleagues and I have attempted to work with the Department to resolve some of these problems. After meeting with some superintendents in my district, we began a dialogue to work through issues that were specific to states like Virginia, which already had high standards in place.

We recently learned of the Secretary's intent to "take into account each state's unique situation" to implement the law. Earlier this year, the Virginia Department of Education proposed a series of waivers that would allow N-C-L-B's goals to mesh with the state's already high standards. Unfortunately, not less than a week after the Secretary's promises of flexibility, the Department rejected the first request for flexibility—one to waive certain assessments of limited English proficiency students in grades K-1 in reading and writing. Mr. Speaker, these are non-English speakers who are 5 years old. I do not believe this demonstrates the flexibility intended by members who supported N-C-L-B.

Without this flexibility, I believe the law is inefficient and duplicative for parents, teachers, students, and state education officers. So we have reached this point where N-C-L-B needs to have a mechanism to recognize the role of certain states in providing accountability. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, we have stood by too long waiting for this flexibility. Our bill does not "water down" N-L-C-B provisions, or its intent. If certain states do not have strong accountability standards, then N-L-C-B is directed at them. But when we have schools in Virginia passing one standard but failing another, sometimes based solely on the results of one student from one particular subgroup, we need to act.

To address these problems, I offer with my colleagues, Representatives JOANN DAVIS, VIRGIL GOODE, JIM MORAN, THELMA DRAKE and RICK BOUCHER, the Flexibility for Champion Schools Act.

The legislation provides that a State which meets certain requirements shall be granted a waiver from the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) provisions of No Child Left Behind.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF DIANA DAY OF BILL BROWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**HON. HENRY CUELLAR**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 26, 2005*

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the exemplary work of Diana Day, Bill Brown Elementary School Teacher of the Year.

Diana Day earned her bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies from Texas A&I in Corpus Christi. Currently serving as a special education teacher in Comal Independent School District, she has over 9 years of experience.

She teaches Behavior Life Skills to students in grades kindergarten through four, and believes in teaching her students how to solve problems. Each child is an individual, and Ms. Day believes that the best way to teach each of them is through a unique approach. She wants to help teach each of her students the joys of reading and learning on their own. Diana Day works hard empowering young minds and teaching them the skills that they need to be successful in school.

I am honored to have the chance to recognize the accomplishments of Diana Day, the Bill Brown Elementary School Teacher of the Year. Her passion for education has helped to ensure that our children are on the right track.

TRIBUTE TO ROELAND PARK, KANSAS, MAYOR LORI HIRONS

**HON. DENNIS MOORE**

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 26, 2005*

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Roeland Park, Kansas, Mayor Lori Hirons, who recently left elective office after 4 years of service as mayor, 8 as a city councilmember and 1 year of service on the Roeland Park zoning appeals board.

Lori Hirons has been a visionary and diligent leader of the city of Roeland Park during her tenure as a public servant. Individuals like her across America regularly make significant commitments of their time, resources and personal patience in order to fill these important roles in local government: we cannot thank them enough for doing so.

During her tenure as mayor, I was privileged to work with Mayor Hirons and Senator SAM BROWNBACK to bring to Roeland Park \$1.25 million in vitally needed Federal funds to improve that city's stormwater management facilities. Additionally, Lori and her husband, Frank, have been longtime advisors to me in my capacity as Representative of Kansas' Third Congressional District and I am proud to consider them close, personal friends as well.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD with these remarks an article recently carried by the Kansas City Star that summarizes Mayor Hirons' lengthy record of service and achievements for Roeland Park. I join with her neighbors in wishing her and Frank all the best as they consider new challenges and I hope she will hear the calling of public service again at a future time.

[From the Kansas City Star, Apr. 20, 2005]

**HIRONS HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE IN HER CITY**  
(By Kara Cowie)

Much has changed in Roeland Park Mayor Lori Hirons' 13 years with the city.

City Council meetings no longer run until 1 a.m. and are more amiable than they used to be. Neighborhoods are now looking forward to much-needed street and storm water improvements. And instead of a vacant Venture plaza, a soon-to-be vibrant shopping center with a Lowe's home improvement store and brand-new Price Chopper is in the works.

It's taken many, many meetings to make it all happen, but Hirons is pleased with the results of her four years as mayor, eight years as a Ward 1 council member and one year on the city's board of zoning appeals.

Now she's ready for a break.

"I don't think I've done anything in government that's superstar status, but I do think I took the road less traveled," Hirons said. "And I always said I never wanted to be carried out of here in a box."

So, after more than a decade of Wednesday night meetings, tonight will be her last. Just after 7:30 p.m., Hirons is to pass on the gavel to Councilman Steve Petrehn, who ran unopposed for the position earlier this month.

City Administrator John Carter is sad to see her go.

"I've been doing this for 30 years, and the last four were the most enjoyable years working with a very good mayor," he said.

What makes Hirons so special, Carter added, is "her caring for her community, her ethics and her desire to do what's right," as well as her "doggedness." Hirons never gave up her dream of seeing the old Venture plaza redeveloped, and she pushed to expand RoeFest and to turn the Roeland Park Community Center into a true community hub, he said.

Hirons, too, is proud of those accomplishments and several others.

"I can look back 12 years and see a real difference," she said. "That gives you a feeling of pride and accomplishment."

But she is quick to point out the credit isn't hers alone. She's worked with several progressive council members who shared her vision for the city.

Councilman Scott Gregory has known Hirons for about 15 years and, although they don't always see eye to eye, Gregory said, they do share a mutual respect.

"Over the years, Lori and I have been just screaming at each other and yet we come through it being able to talk, being able to deal with each other," Gregory said. "I truly believe that she has remained focused and hasn't indulged in intrigue and manipulation."

Hirons is the first to admit that public service isn't a popularity contest, and some council members may think she's too brusque.

"I am very direct; I am very honest," she said. "You've got to be yourself."

Hirons' direct and honest nature is one of the things Mission Mayor Laura McConwell appreciates the most.

"She's approachable and she is straight; you can believe what she says, and she doesn't play games," McConwell said. "Whether I agree or not, it's a lot easier to know where someone's coming from."

Plus, McConwell added: "She's a lot of fun. She's just a dynamo."

Hirons joined the council in 1993 after a one-year stint on the board of zoning appeals and several years' involvement with her church and neighborhood. She was elected mayor in 2001 with 64 percent of the vote.

In that time she's helped secure professional management for the city and a new building for City Hall and the police department. She's also helped set up benefit districts for storm water projects, secure a \$1.2 million federal grant for drainage improvements and implement a city ethics ordinance, which she described as a moral compass for council members.

Still, Hirons said, her biggest accomplishment is the \$31 million Venture plaza redevelopment project, which is expected to boost the city's sales tax base.

"The work I did on that is hopefully my gift to the city," she said.

Now Hirons plans to devote more time to her career as the vice president for public affairs for Citi Cards, a division of Citigroup in Kansas City, and her husband, Frank.

As for politics?

"I don't believe this is the last time you're going to see my name on a ballot, but it won't be in 2006," she said.

**INTRODUCING A BILL TO ENHANCE  
THE SECURITY OF THE U.S. PAS-  
SENGER AIR TRANSPORTATION  
SYSTEM**

**HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 26, 2005*

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, today Congressman COSTELLO, Congressman DEFAZIO and I have introduced a bill to enhance the security of the U.S. passenger air transportation system—The Airport 5 Screener Technology Improvement Act of 2005. This bill will create a Checkpoint Screening Security Fund for the TSA that will fund \$250 million that has been authorized for the deployment of new checkpoint screening technologies. The bill also provides funds for \$650 million a year, which has been authorized for the installation of in-line baggage screening systems.

Mr. Speaker, last week the Department of Homeland Security Inspector General (DHS IG) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) both released reports that indicate improvements are still needed in the screening process to ensure that dangerous prohibited items are not being carried on aircraft, or enter the checked baggage system. While the trav-

eling public is more secure today than before September 11th, 2001, airport screeners are not detecting prohibited items at the level we need. Regarding the causes of poor screener performance, the DHS IG stated—

Despite the fact that the majority of screeners with whom our testers came into contact were diligent in the performance of their duties and conscious of the responsibility those duties carry, lack of improvement since our last audit indicates that significant improvement in performance may not be possible without greater use of technology. . . . We encourage TSA to expedite its testing programs and give priority to technologies, such as backscatter x-ray, that will enable the screening workforce to better detect both weapons and explosives.

In response to the DHS IG's findings, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) responded—

We agree with the IG's conclusion that significant improvements in performance will only be possible with the introduction of new technology.

Mr. Speaker, our screening system is failing us because this Congress and this Administration are failing both the screeners and the American traveling public. This Congress has arbitrarily capped the number of airport screeners at 45,000, and has provided neither the resources nor the technology for the screeners to get the job done. It is a failure of leadership and there are no more excuses.

Last year, the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States ("the 9/11 Commission") specifically recommended that the TSA and the Congress "give priority attention to improving the ability of screenings checkpoints to detect explosives on passengers." The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (P.L. 108-458) authorized \$250 million for the research and deployment of advanced passenger screening technologies, such as trace portals and backscatter x-ray systems. To date, only about \$30 million has been appropriated specifically for the general deployment of these types of technologies.

The 9/11 Commission also recommended that the TSA "expedite the installation of advanced (in-line) baggage screening equipment." The Chairman of the 9/11 Commission testified before Congress that:

The Commission supports an effort to move explosives units out of airport lobbies and into a secured area where they can be integrated into the process of moving the bags from the check-in counter to the loading area in a seamless, in-line process. This will promote greater security, because: (1) screening machines will not be exposed to the public; (2) screeners will be able to focus on screening bags rather than moving them; and (3) fewer people will be congregated around machines in the public area. Moreover, processing bags from checking to loading through an in-line system is functionally more efficient making travel more convenient as well as more secure.

In addition to these benefits, in-line baggage screening systems have a much higher throughput than stand-alone systems. If we install in-line systems, more bags will be screened by explosive detection systems instead of less reliable, alternative methods.

The TSA and airport operators rely on commitments in letters of intent (LOIs) as their principal method for funding the modification