aid with interest. Never before has Congress or the President required the repayment of this aid. That is why we are introducing the ''Whatever It Takes to Rebuild Act, Part II.''

The ''Whatever It Takes to Rebuild Act, Part II'' would repeal the provision in Public Law 109–88 that requires Gulf Coast Communities to repay the assistance they receive under the Community Disaster Loan Program. This legislation would permanently repeal the $5 million cap on these loans, would make states eligible for this assistance, repeal the cap that limits loans to 25 percent of a municipalities operating expenses, and would provide this assistance as grants when a disaster has been declared an ''Incident of National Significance'' under the National Response plan (Hurricanes Katrina and Rita were both declared ''Incidents of National Significance'').

This legislation is similar to H.R. 1795, the ''Whatever it Takes to Rebuild Act'', which would provide federal assistance for lost tax revenues to New York following the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Following 9/11, President Bush also promised New York and the country that we will do whatever it takes to rebuild.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this important legislation to provide real relief to the Gulf Coast and let's do what it takes to rebuild.

TRIBUTE TO MARY BOURDETTE

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 20, 2005

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, Mary Bourdette, a great champion for America's children and families took a leave from her job advocating for parents, and it is important that we take the time to mark her extraordinary career. In her 30 year career, Mary has been an ever-present voice and an unyielding force, reminding everyone around her that we must do much more for children—especially for the most disadvantaged children in our country.

I first met Mary back in California when she was working on improving education in the state. My wife Cynthia and I have long valued Mary for her friendship as well as for her passion for her work. Mary and I worked closely together when I chaired the Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families in the 1980's. She is a skilled lobbyist and negotiator and her vision and persistence were critical to my efforts on child welfare policy in addition to numerous other issues.

One of the reasons Mary is so effective in fighting for children is that she is an idealistic pragmatist. She would always fight to the end for what she knew was right. But she was just as committed to getting the different sides together and fostering communication—particularly when the situation was at its most polarized.

Mary advocated for children and families in many capacities here in Washington, DC over the past 30 years. She first fought for the Legal Services Corp. to help ensure that our poorest citizens have access to the legal system that our Constitution promises. She later worked tirelessly at the Children Defense Fund on the first major expansion of the Earned Income Credit and the original enactment of Child Care and Development Block Grant—programs that have made an enormous difference for America's poorest families. Her work with the Child Welfare League of America as Director of Public Policy also proved vital for the well-being of America's children and families. And her 8 years with the Clinton Administration allowed Mary to play a central and critical role in the many federal policies that affect children.

So I commend Mary for her impressive career and thank her both for the assistance she has provided to me over the years and on behalf of the millions of children who have benefited from her intelligence and passion.

TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT LARRY W. PANKEY

HON. THOMAS G. TANCREDO

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 20, 2005

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Sergeant Larry W. Pankey of Morrison, Colorado. Sergeant Pankey died October 3 at Walter Reed Army Medical center here in the Washington, D.C. area, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Sergeant Pankey was assigned to the 467th U.S. Anny Reserve Engineer Battalion, Greenwood, Mississippi. He is survived by his wife and daughter in Morrison, Colorado, and his mother in Louisiana.

Mr. Speaker, we owe Sergeant Pankey a great debt of gratitude for his service to America. My heartfelt sympathy goes out to friends and family of Sergeant Pankey.

He will be missed by all who knew and loved him.

FORMER TAIWANESE PRESIDENT LEE'S VISIT TO D.C.

HON. SHERROD BROWN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 20, 2005

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I would join all Americans in welcoming President Lee, during his historic visit to our Nation's capital from Taiwan.

I am pleased to know he will have the opportunity to meet with Members of Congress.

Taiwan is a beacon of democracy and freedom in the Pacific.

It is my hope Taiwan will continue to shine despite the continued threats across the Strait from China.

I hope in the near future all restrictions on high-level visits from Taiwan would be lifted, so that Members of Congress will be able to welcome the current president of Taiwan to DC as well.

It is important these visits take place so that a balanced understanding of both sides of the Taiwan Strait will be directly available to Congress, the Administration, and the American public.

Congress and the American people remain unequivocally committed in their support for the people of Taiwan.

The Taiwanese should be praised for their continued commitment to freedom, human rights and democracy.

Through the tireless efforts of President Lee, Taiwan will continue to shine as a beacon of democracy and freedom.

Again, we welcome President Lee to Washington, DC during this historic visit.

INTRODUCING THE IMPROVE INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS FOR FIRST RESPONDERS ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 20, 2005

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Improve Interoperable Communications for First Responders Act of 2005. This act provides Federal assistance to local first responders for developing an interoperable means of communications. Ensuring first responders at the local, state, and Federal level have the ability to effectively communicate with each other should be one of the Federal Government's top priorities. The ability of first responders to effectively communicate with each other, and with their counterparts at different levels of governments, is key to their ability to save lives in the crucial time immediately after a natural disaster or a terrorist attack.

My bill helps first responders by establishing a Director of Interoperability and Compatibility to help develop a national strategy and architecture for an interoperable system, as well as to bring together Federal, State, local, and tribal officials to work on a coordinated effort to develop and coordinate efforts to implement an interoperable communications system. The bill also provides a grant program so state and local governments can receive Federal assistance for planning and designing an interoperable system, as well as in training first responders how to use the system.

Rather than simply further burdening taxpayers, or increasing the already skyrocketing national debt, my legislation is financed through cuts in corporate welfare and foreign aid programs, which subsidize large corporations and even American businesses' overseas competitors such as the Export-Import Bank use of taxpayer money to underwrite trade with countries such as Communist China. It is time for the Federal Government to begin prioritizing spending by cutting unnecessary programs that benefit powerful special interests in order to met our constitutional responsibilities to ensure America's first responders can effectively respond to terrorists' attacks.

Mr. Speaker, reducing spending on corporate welfare and foreign aid to strengthen first responders' interoperable capability is a win-win for the American people. I hope my colleagues will help strengthen America's first responders' ability to help the American people in times of terrorists attacks and natural disasters by cosponsoring the Improve Interoperable Communications for First Responders Act.