

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2006

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I was unavoidably absent for a portion of the House's proceedings on May 18th and all proceedings on May 19th due to very urgent personal family business.

Had I been present on May 19, for the four votes which occurred during consideration of H.R. 5385, Making appropriations for the military quality of life functions of the Department of Defense, military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes:

I would have voted "aye;" on rollcall vote 176—Final Passage;

I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote 175—the Blumenauer Amendment;

I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote 174—the Rule on H.R. 5385;

I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote 173—ordering the "Previous Question"—(Rule on H.R. 5385).

And, Mr. Speaker, had I been present on May 18, for the final five votes which occurred during consideration of H.R. 5386, Making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes:

I would have voted "aye;" on rollcall vote 172—Final Passage—H.R. 5386;

I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote 171—the Hefley Colorado Amendment;

I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote 170—the Putnam of Florida Amendment;

I would have voted "aye" on rollcall vote 169—the Oberstar of Minnesota Amendment;

I would have voted "aye" on rollcall vote 168—the Chabot of Ohio Amendment.

CONGRATULATING INTERNATIONAL FIRE MARSHALS ASSOCIATION

HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2006

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the members of the International Fire Marshals Association (IFMA), who will be celebrating their 100th anniversary on June 6. I particularly would like to commend Ron Farr, Past President of IFMA and current Fire Chief and Fire Marshall for the Kalamazoo Township Fire Department. I applaud Ron and his courageous colleagues for their tireless efforts to keep our community safe.

Since it was formed in 1906, the men and women of the International Fire Marshals Association have dedicated themselves to saving the lives, homes, and properties of folks throughout our great Nation. Today, the Association has over 1,800 members representing over 20 nations and we are truly grateful for their service here in southwest Michigan.

There is nothing more important to us than the safety of our loved ones, and this organi-

zation has stood watch, protecting the public for the last 100 years. I would like to thank the International Fire Marshals Association and its membership for the continued quality service they provide our community and congratulate them once again on this milestone. We are truly fortunate to have folks like Ron Farr and his colleagues in southwest Michigan, dedicating their lives in the name of public safety.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF MR. FRED L. MCGHEE

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2006

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, south Alabama recently lost a friend, dear not only to the Poarch Creek Band of Creek Indians but to the entire State of Alabama. Today, I rise to pay tribute to the memory of Mr. Fred L. McGhee.

Elected first as chairman of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians at the age of 50 in 2000, Fred served honorably and respectfully, bringing cohesion to the Poarch Creek community and the surrounding city of Atmore.

Fred grew up in the close-knit Poarch Creek community in south Alabama and attended the Poarch Consolidated Indian School where his initial love for Native American culture began to germinate. He devoted his time to the intense study of Indian culture as well as historic preservation. Coupled with his previous experience in leading the nine-member Tribal Council, he was the natural fit to be chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me today in recognizing this beloved member of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. Fred will be greatly missed by his eight sisters; three sons, Greg McGhee of Atmore, Joe McGhee and Fred Lee McGhee, both of Pensacola, Florida; two daughters, Tracy McGhee and Cierra McGhee, both of Atmore; four grandchildren; and friends that he leaves behind. Our thoughts and prayers are with them all during this difficult time.

ON THE VETERANS IDENTITY PROTECTION (VIP) ACT

HON. HEATHER WILSON

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2006

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I introduce the Veterans Identity Protection (VIP) Act.

On May 3, 2006, a personally-owned computer was stolen from the home of a VA employee. The stolen files contained information that included the names, birth dates, and social security numbers of 26.5 million veterans. This represents data from every military veteran discharged since 1975.

This legislation will ensure that our veterans are made whole as a result of any damages suffered by a veteran as a result of this theft. The VA's mission is to serve and honor our Nation's veterans. We must do more than just provide a call center and put the burden on our veterans to deal with the consequences of this blunder.

This legislation will set up an independent Office for Veterans Identity Theft Claims to receive, process, and pay claims in accordance with this Act.

I am here today to introduce a bill that will ensure that Veterans will be made whole if they are harmed by this release of information without spending years in court and thousands of dollars for lawyers.

MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2006

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind my colleagues that May is Mental Health Month. I would also like to thank those who have dedicated their lives to mental health care.

Now more than ever, we must commit ourselves to full mental health parity. Nearly 30 million Americans suffer from mental health disorders and more than 1 in 5 Americans will experience a mental health disorder in their lifetimes. Many millions suffer from serious, debilitating, and life altering mental disorders such as Alzheimer's and schizophrenia. Nearly every American has friends and relatives that cope with such disorders.

Mental health professionals not only help people with organic mental health disorders, but also help people recovering from traumatic and life changing experiences. Over the last few years, Americans have experienced the trauma of a major terrorist attack and two wars overseas. Tens of thousands of families have experienced firsthand the loss or serious injury of a loved one. Tens of thousands of soldiers who have sustained serious injuries will need assistance adjusting to a life far different than they left. Thousands of American soldiers will return home in need of mental health services related to their combat experiences.

I hope that the Committee on Education and the Workforce will continue to work to ensure that the mental health needs of the elderly are met as we reauthorize the Older Americans Act. The elderly are the most vulnerable to mental health disorders and elderly men are the demographic most to likely commit suicide. Specifically, I want to ensure that senior citizens have access to mental health services in their community or in the same place that they receive primary health care services. I am pleased that we are beginning to make some headway on this important issue.

HONORING THE IMMORTAL FOUR CHAPLAINS OF THE USS (USAT) "DORCHESTER"

HON. ERIC CANTOR

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2006

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, sacrifice is a common virtue of the U.S. Armed Forces and this Memorial Day we will pause to honor our fallen men and women in uniform. Throughout history, members of the Armed Forces have lost their lives to preserve our freedoms. Sixty-

three years ago, Father John Washington, Reverend Clark Poling, Rabbi Alexander Goode and Reverend George Fox died aboard the USS (USAT) *Dorchester* on February 3, 1943, as a result of a torpedo attack by a German U-Boat.

In the mayhem after the attack, the Four Chaplains provided comfort to fallen soldiers and handed out life vests to the survivors. After the life vests ran out, they removed their own life vests, gave them to needy soldiers, and stood arm-in-arm together praying for the comfort of the soldiers. Eighteen minutes after the attack, the USS (USAT) *Dorchester* sunk with the Four Chaplains aboard. John Koenig, a resident of the 7th District of Virginia wrote of their sacrifice in a letter saying "By putting others in front of themselves without regard to race, creed, or color, thus in making the ultimate sacrifice costing each his life so that others might live, they exemplified the finest in saintly virtues."

On behalf of the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer in Midlothian, Virginia, and the following members of the vestry: Alison Althouse—Senior Warden; Margaret Stevens—Registrar; Reverend Stephen Cowardin—Rector; Reverend Kathryn Jenkins; Rose O'Toole; Stewart Dendler; Leonard Vance; John Flikeid; Jo Anne Simpkins; Matthew Whitworth; Betsy Collins; Lois Thompson; Stefani Ross; Jennifer Wester; and William White, I am honored to recognize the sacrifices of the Immortal Four Chaplains of the USS (USAT) *Dorchester*.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES J. VINCENT,
JR.

HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2006

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a man of honor, faith, family, and selfless service. On April 13, James (Jim) J. Vincent, Jr. lost his life when the County Rescue helicopter he was piloting had a catastrophic failure.

Jim Vincent was a native of my home town of Menominee, Michigan. Jim excelled at high school sports and developed discipline, leadership, and respect at an early age. He enlisted in the United States Navy, where he spent 6 years serving his country. Wanting to become a pilot, he joined the United States Coast Guard, received world-class training, and began flying search and rescue missions.

I had the pleasure of working with Jim when he moved to Traverse City, Michigan, and was based out of the Coast Guard Air Station Traverse City. On a couple of occasions I flew with Jim. His skills as a pilot were impeccable. He took his job seriously, and Jim was the consummate professional. He had an ability to relate and work well with officers, enlisted men, and civilians. He treated everyone with respect and was always willing to lend a hand.

There are countless stories of Jim helping others with everything from re-wiring their homes, to work at the local American Legion, to helping friends pack up and move during relocation for work. One of the more touching stories about Jim was told by a fellow Coast Guardsman who went through officer training school with him. This cadet was at a point

where he wasn't sure if he could complete the training. During one particularly difficult training task, Jim put his arm around his classmate and told him "You know what, it's gonna be all right." That classmate found strength in Jim's words and managed to complete officer training school. He went on to become Cmdr. Sam Creech, who is now the operations officer at Jim's old base, Coast Guard Air Station Traverse City.

After 20 years of combined service in the Navy and Coast Guard, Jim and his family moved back home to Menominee where they could be near their extended family and build their dream home. Jim, his wife Gina, their sons, Jim III and Luke, and their daughter, Vanessa, worked together on construction of their home overlooking the waters of Green Bay. They put a lot of sweat and love into the home.

Jim worked for a while as a contract employee for the Navy at the Marinette Marine shipyard, just across the Michigan/Wisconsin border from Menominee. However, Jim wanted to continue to fly helicopters. In the summer of 2004 he landed a job with County Rescue flying Eagle III, an emergency air and ground transportation program, which provides Critical Care level treatments during rapid transport of critically ill or injured patients. The job was just outside Green Bay, Wisconsin, which required days away from home. Jim found the job very rewarding and by all accounts, he quickly earned the respect and admiration of his peers. While he was serious about his job, he also had a great sense of humor—often playing pranks on co-workers.

Mr. Speaker, for anyone who works in the military there are significant sacrifices that their families make in terms of time away from the family. While Jim did need to spend time away from his family throughout his career, he always had a deep love for his family. Jim had a strong faith in God and was an active member of Holy Redeemer Catholic Church. He and Gina believe in the power of God. In February they attended a conference put on by Father John Corapi and Jim was fond of Father Corapi's teachings. Now, as Gina, Jim III, Luke, and Vanessa struggle to move forward with their lives, they have turned to God for strength and comfort. With this strong faith, support from family and friends, and with time, I am confident that they will find the strength to persevere.

As we commemorate this Memorial Day, I am reminded of a beautiful sunny summer day in Traverse City when Jim Vincent walked across the Coast Guard hanger to greet a veteran who was seated awaiting the start of a program. As Jim approached the veteran, he reached out to shake the man's hand and simply said, "Sir, thank you for your service to our country." The veteran's eyes welled with tears as he replied, "You're welcome." So as I conclude Mr. Speaker let me simply say "Jim, thank you for your service to our country."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2006

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, during consideration of the Agri-

culture Appropriations Act of 2007, on May 23, 2006, I inadvertently voted in favor of an amendment, H. Amdt. 895, offered by Representative BLUMENAUER.

It was my intention to vote in opposition to the amendment. My true intention was to vote "no."

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT
APPROPRIATIONS ACT,
2007

SPEECH OF

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2006

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union has under consideration the bill (H.R. 5427), making appropriations for energy and water development for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes:

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to thank the chairman and staff of the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee for their continued support of the Florida Everglades FY07 Energy and Water Appropriations bill.

This legislation includes funding for the Army Corp of Engineers to proceed with Everglades Restoration, which will ensure natural water flows continue through Everglades National Park.

The Florida Everglades is a unique and precious ecosystem that must be preserved for future generations. Everglades Restoration is an invaluable investment that will ensure the Everglades is restored and protected.

I am pleased that the chairman included \$164 million for Everglades Restoration, which is so critical to ensuring continuation of this vital project. Just last week, the Interior Appropriations bill included an additional \$69 million for Restoration. The funding provided in the Interior bill, combined with that in the Energy and Water bill, will together provide a total of \$233 million to allow restoration to move forward.

I thank my colleagues from Florida for their continued support of the Florida Everglades and Restoration funding. Additionally, I would like to thank the Governor of Florida for his steadfast support of Everglades Restoration. Floridians understand the great benefit the Everglades provide not just to our ecological diversity, but also to our economy, which is so dependent upon tourism and ecotourism.

On behalf of myself, and the residents of southern Florida I am so proud to represent, I thank the chairman for his support of this funding.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO VERNON AND
DARLENE BURK

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2006

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Vernon and Darlene Burk for their 55 years of marriage and for their service to the Boulder City community.