

Information and intelligence sharing must also be improved. This bill will fix the current problems by requiring the Department of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Department of Transportation, to issue a Rail and Public Transportation Strategic Information Sharing Plan to strengthen the intelligence updates provided to rail and public transportation systems.

Another critical component to this bill is its provisions improving training and exercises. If an attack does occur in the United States, proper training and exercises could make the difference between life and death for front-line workers, first responders, and passengers. This bill requires rail and public transportation systems to train their employees on how to prevent, prepare for, and respond to a terrorist attack. It also establishes a Rail and Public Transportation Security Exercise Program to test the preparedness of rail and public transportation systems for a terrorist attack.

It will cost substantial sums to implement the security measures needed to prevent a possible attack on U.S. rail and public transportation systems. This bill authorizes \$400 million per year over the next 6 years for a grant program dedicated to rail and public transportation security. In addition, this bill authorizes \$150 million over the next 3 years for advanced research and development that will find solutions to the security threats faced by rail and public transportation systems. Finally, the bill authorizes \$26.4 million per year over the next 6 years to hire 200 new rail security inspectors per year. There are only 100 rail security inspectors at the present time.

The security gap remaining in rail and public transportation is still a major threat to our Nation. The Rail and Public Transportation Security Act of 2006 will take substantial steps to close that security gap. I hope this Congress moves quickly to pass this bill.

TRIBUTE TO DOUG TANNER

HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a man and a moment in history. The U.S. Congress has been blessed by the vision and the faith of the Reverend Douglas Tanner, and we have been deeply moved by his invocation today.

Mr. Speaker, it takes wisdom to lead the leaders of men. It takes faith to hear the voice of the spirit through the rush and tumble of the U.S. Congress. But the Bible says that "many are called, but few are chosen."

God knew that the humility and the faith of Rev. Doug Tanner would serve as a powerful witness among us. As the founder and leader of the Faith and Politics Institute, he has led us on a moral mission. He has led us on a journey of the soul through meditation and prayer. He has led us through the pilgrimages through Alabama, Tennessee, and Virginia. He has helped to remind us that our faith is the key to all that we can accomplish here.

Mr. Speaker, when historians pick up their pens and write the story of this Congress in the latter part of the 20th century and the first part of the 21st century, they will have to say that one man, who was not chosen by men,

but was chosen by God, led Democrats and Republicans, Members of the House and the Senate to understand that the way of peace, the way of love, the way of non-violence is the more excellent way.

Doug, we are deeply indebted to you for all that you have done to help build Beloved Community. We are deeply grateful for your vision, for your courage and your faith.

TRIBUTE TO SPECIALIST KEVIN DOWNS

HON. JIM COOPER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mr. COOPER. Mr. Speaker, what does it mean to be a hero today? We each have our own ideas about what act of bravery earns a man or woman that very special privilege—the honor to be called a hero, to be saluted by friends and neighbors and strangers alike for doing something extraordinary that, at that moment in time, just seemed like the right thing to do.

Today, I am honored to stand before you here, on the floor of the House of the Representatives, to tell you and all of America about someone I consider a true hero. This young man has inspired me and so many others around the world who have heard his story of courage and patriotism.

On August 13th, 2005, Specialist Kevin Downs of Kingston Springs, Tennessee was traveling in a Humvee near the city of Tuz in northeastern Iraq with three other members of the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment. The Humvee was struck by four explosive devices. Kevin was blown 60 feet. He lost both legs, his arm was broken, he was severely burned over 60 percent of his body, including burns to his eyes, throat and lungs. He was 20 years old and had been in Iraq eight months.

Specialist Downs was the only survivor of the IED attack that day. His three friends, crewmates and fellow Tennesseans were killed that day: 22-year-old Gary Lee Reese of Ashland City, 35-year-old Staff Sgt. Asbury "Fred" Hawn, Jr of Lebanon and 30-year-old Shannon D. Taylor of Smithville.

Specialist Downs was first evacuated to a hospital in Germany where his injuries were stabilized. As his father Joe told friends and reporters at the time: "The young man is fighting and battling, and he's going to make it." Joe and Catherine Downs remained at his bedside during his time in the ICU in Germany.

As soon as possible, Kevin was transferred to a burn unit at the Brooke Army Medical Center in Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas. But the challenges were far from over. Since his injuries almost one year ago, Kevin has endured more surgeries than his family can even count—two in the last ten days. He is able to get around using a wheelchair today, his father reports. And he is learning to maneuver using his prosthesis. His father adds that any time he and Catherine fall into the habit of saying they'll do something for him, Kevin politely but firmly refuses saying, no, he wants to do it for himself.

Kevin's determination and positive outlook have touched the hearts of so many. Thanks to local news coverage of his challenges,

Kevin has received thousands of letters of support from folks around the world. His resolve and bravery as he faces the latest surgeries and treatment have made him a true hero to all of us in Tennessee.

We had all hoped Kevin would be able to join us this July 4th for the annual Independence Day Parade in Pegram. He's doing great, his family reports, but it looks like his treatment is going to keep him in Texas just a little longer. But Kevin is going to be the Grand Marshall of the parade anyway. His parents will be there in his place on the 4th—and we all look forward to the day when we get to welcome Kevin back home to Tennessee and have the chance to thank him personally for his service to our country and congratulate him on his recent promotion to sergeant.

IN RECOGNITION OF JERRY AND VIRGINIA GREENWOOD

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to a very special occasion today—the 50th wedding anniversary of Jerry and Virginia Greenwood.

In April of 1954, Jerry Greenwood of Blue Mountain, and Virginia Hicks of Oxford met while working together at the Anniston Playland Skating Rink. Mr. and Mrs. Greenwood married 2 years later, on June 30, 1956. They lived and worked in Oxford, and moved to Blue Mountain where Jerry worked for the City of Anniston Parks and Recreation Department.

The couple relocated to Saks and raised their two sons, Rodney and Ryan. Mr. Greenwood was involved in the Saks Youth baseball program and coached and sponsored several of his sons' teams. Mr. Greenwood retired from the City of Anniston and opened Greenwood Auto Sales, while Mrs. Greenwood retired from Blue Mountain Industries.

Today, the couple attends Saks Baptist Church, where Mr. Greenwood once served as the bi-vocational music director. They are proud grandparents of Chase, Cameron, Caylor, Carmyn and Cassidy Greenwood.

I salute this lovely couple on the 50th year of their life together and join their family in honoring them on this special occasion.

TRIBUTE TO MIKE VADALA

HON. THOMAS M. REYNOLDS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to recognize the retirement of Mike Vadala as the Chairman of the National Association of Federal Credit Unions (NAFCU). Elected to the NAFCU Board in 1997, Mike has been a leader in the credit union community both nationally and within my great state of New York.

For the past 9 years, Mr. Vadala has been balancing his time as a NAFCU Board Member including this past year as the Chairman of the NAFCU Board, along with his responsibilities as President/CEO of The Summit

Federal Credit Union. With over 67,000 members in northern New York, The Summit FCU has fostered many savings programs targeted to today's youth by teaching the importance of saving through targeted programs ranging from kindergarten through college. Mr. Vadala has worked hard to promote financial education programs and has armed his members with protecting themselves against identity theft.

Throughout his tenure as Chairman of the NAFCU Board of Directors, Mr. Vadala worked tirelessly to enhance the federal credit union charter by working with Congress for regulatory relief legislation for credit unions. As Chairman, he has also helped maintain NAFCU's status as a leading credit union trade association.

Mr. Vadala has proven himself to be a true gentleman. I have seen him walking the Halls of Congress many times carrying the torch for the credit union industry, and he has testified before this Congress on multiple occasions on issues important to credit unions.

Many would think that the work he does for credit unions would be enough to fill a day, but Mr. Vadala does much more. He is a dedicated family man as well. Mr. Vadala and his family have played a huge role in fundraising for the United Way in upstate New York. He was also the former Chairperson of the March of Dimes Walk America. His work with these organizations has made a huge impact on thousands of lives in New York and beyond. Also Mr. Speaker, I could not fail to mention that Mr. Vadala is one of the biggest Syracuse Orange fans I have ever had the privilege to meet; I would like to share one more "Go Orange" with Mr. Vadala as he concludes his time on the NAFCU Board.

I rise today to congratulate Mr. Mike Vadala on his fine work throughout his illustrious tenure as Chair of NAFCU. I have worked with him on issues that are important to the credit union community in the past and I am committed to continuing this relationship.

With more than 20 years experience in the credit union community, there is no doubt in my mind that our good friends at NAFCU will feel a great void once he steps down. Congratulations on your retirement from the NAFCU Board Mr. Vadala.

CONGRATULATING CURTIS SILER ON HIS LIFE SAVING ACTION

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Curtis Siler of Flower Mound, Texas, who rescued a drowning girl during a day trip to a local water park.

Twelve-year-old Curtis Siler and his mother, Tanya Siler, were spending the day at Hurricane Harbor, an Arlington, Texas water-based park. While swimming in the deeper end of the wave pool, Siler noticed a young girl resting on the bottom of the pool. He realized that her eyes had rolled back in her head and she was not moving. Without hesitation, Siler dove to the bottom, grabbed the girl, and brought her to the surface. He then called for the help of a lifeguard.

Thanks to the actions of Curtis Siler, lifeguards were able to get the girl to safety and begin first aid, ultimately saving her life.

I extend my sincere congratulations to young Curtis Siler for his heroic actions and true concern for the welfare of others. I admire his bravery during such a grave situation. He is truly an inspiration to us all. I am honored to represent Curtis and his family in Washington.

ARTICLE ON IMMIGRATION

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like bring to the attention of our colleagues in this House an opinion editorial (Baltimore Sun, May 11, 2006), written by my constituent Stephen Nordlinger, which I submit for the RECORD. Mr. Nordlinger is a former Washington correspondent for the Baltimore Sun.

Mr. Nordlinger's article highlights an issue that has received scant attention in the debate over immigration reform, namely the need to improve and streamline the process for legal immigrants to obtain a green card and eventually qualify for citizenship. Congress has never provided the funds to satisfactorily implement legislation passed in 2000 to ease the immigration process for those who entered the country legally. As a result, those who played by the rules find themselves waiting for years in a bureaucratic maze for their applications to be processed. This creates the perception that those who play by the rules get penalized. As we work to fix our broken system, we must provide the resources that are necessary to ensure that individuals like Mr. Veng Preap, who is the subject of this article, are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

[From the Baltimore Sun, May 11, 2006]

AN IMMIGRANT'S STORY

(By Stephen Nordlinger)

My wife and I first met Veng Preap on a sultry fall day when we walked into the offices of the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on a busy street in the center of Siem Reap, near the Angkor Wat complex in Cambodia. We carried a letter from a friend of his in Washington and a pile of World Bank books on international development that Mr. Preap's friend suggested for him.

Veng Preap, not his real name to protect his privacy, took us everywhere to see the Angkor monuments and spent evenings speaking with us about his life and such subjects as civil engineering and Buddhism and his views toward organized religion. He showed us the large computer maps he had made as part of the effort by UNESCO to preserve the Angkor complex.

On our final day in Siem Reap, I spoke with Mr. Preap about coming to the United States. My wife and I were bowled over by his abilities, especially his rich English vocabulary, for someone who had never left Cambodia. We discussed sponsoring Mr. Preap for a year of study in his specialty, geographic information systems, a highly valued skill for producing computer-based maps. Less than a year later, he arrived at Towson University, its first Cambodian student.

He is still in this country nearly 10 years later, and his contribution to the United States has been substantial. He has seized opportunity after opportunity for public service.

His life here shows what a talented immigrant can contribute. But at the same time, his American experience is sending another clear message: how easily our government can overlook such a gifted person. It is a message that Congress should heed as it considers new immigration legislation.

Mr. Preap has been waiting on line five years and counting on government approval of the first step toward getting a green card to realize his dream of becoming a permanent resident and citizen. It is not the fault of government immigration workers. Congress never provided the funds to carry out legislation passed in 2000 that was intended to ease the immigration process for those like Mr. Preap who had entered the country legally, and there was a flood of applications.

Mr. Preap did not have to stay in this country beyond the original year we planned together. But how could such a hugely able person return to impoverished Cambodia, especially when a long-standing dispute between UNESCO and the corrupt authoritarian government had idled him for a year? The Khmer Rouge killed his mother and sister when he was 7. The current government allowed his wife's property to be stolen.

Mr. Preap considers himself an American even without the necessary documents. He relishes speaking English. While growing up in Cambodia, he pursued his desire to learn English often by studying alone and by candlelight for fear of being arrested or worse because such studies were banned. At Towson, he insisted on living in a dormitory with American students rather than in an international enclave.

Over the past few years, he has earned a second bachelor's degree in geography at Towson and a master's in computer science at Strayer University. He has volunteered for more than 6 years to teach computers to poor Americans and foreigners. He worked for the Voice of America broadcasting to Cambodia. He helped film a documentary on the tsunami disaster. And he helped prepare a giant map for the rotunda at the National Museum of American History showing the various kinds of voting machinery in the nation's election districts.

All the while, he has paid taxes on his limited income.

Mr. Preap is a skilled computer teacher. The community center where he volunteers has asked him to come two nights a week because it cannot find teachers with his ability. The Internet runs job offers for his skill in geographic information systems.

People speak in the abstract about immigration, and much of the discussion is about the need for more farm and restaurant workers. But here is an example of a hugely talented, hard-working immigrant being needlessly thwarted by our government. Mr. Preap cannot take a job and settle down because our immigration system won't let him.

Not only are we not taking full advantage of skilled talent among the immigrants, but we may be on the verge of causing more disappointments, by the millions. The huge number of immigrants who have come out of the shadows to demonstrate for the right to become citizens may find a long, long waiting line. The system is just too cumbersome and underfunded.

Unless the Bush administration and Congress provide new resources, it is all too likely that broken borders will be replaced by broken promises.