

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. HENRY J. HYDE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2006

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, on January 31, 2006, I was absent for the following vote for personal reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted "present" on rollcall No. 1.

IN MEMORY OF THE "COLUMBIA"
AND "CHALLENGER" HEROES

HON. TOM DELAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2006

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember 14 heroes of our Nation's space program.

Three years ago today, on a clear blue morning, the space shuttle *Columbia* exploded in the skies above Texas, killing all seven members of her crew.

The tragedy reminded us of a similar cloudless morning almost 17 years to the day earlier, when the space shuttle *Challenger* was lost moments after liftoff.

The 14 men and women who died on these missions were extraordinary individuals, but they were typical of the men and women NASA employs.

Courageous.

Dauntless.

Driven by a spirit of exploration and a desire to understand the unknown.

The *Columbia* and *Challenger* crew members knew the risks of spaceflight, but they chose to serve anyway—not in spite of the risks, but in part because of them.

They gave their lives in the hard and noble work of discovery, in service to their country and for all mankind.

Though these 14 heroes have slipped the "surlly bonds of earth," their legacy remains, grounded in the hearts and memories of those who strive every day to finish their life's work.

COMMENTS ON SECTION 1403 OF
ENERGY POLICY ACT OF 2005

HON. JOE BARTON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2006

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the Energy Policy Act of 2005 that was signed by the President in August. This Act is the most comprehensive energy legislation in 30 years, and I believe it will lower energy prices for consumers, spur our economy, create hundreds of thousands of jobs, and take unprecedented steps to promote greater energy conservation and efficiency. I want to highlight one provision that I included in the House passed version of this legislation and which was retained in the final conference report. This provision promotes energy efficiency of electric transformers and improved public safety, but also promotes strong environmental stewardship. This provision, [section 1403,] governs the use of non petro-

leum oil in electric transformers as electrical insulation.

The intent of section 1403 was to provide clarity for the new Oil Spill Prevention, Containment, and Countermeasures (SPCC) regulations. As some of my colleagues know, electric transformers, whether the small buckets on telephone poles or those pad mounted on the ground, include some quantities of oil used as an electrical insulation and thermal dissipation medium.

Under SPCC, small and rural utilities and institutions that have their own electric transformers—including hospitals, schools, and military bases—will be required to build secondary containment diking around their electric transformers in case there is a spill of the oil used in transformers as thermal insulation. It should be noted that by the government's own estimates, facilities with less than 10,000 gallons of storage capacity account for less than 2 percent of the total volume of oil spilled in the United States. Furthermore, the amount of volume contained in electric transformers is well below this figure.

All those facts aside, section 1403 was included in the Energy Policy Act of 2005 as a means to provide an alternative to the increased costs of Federal regulations on rural communities and institutions that have electric transformers, providing regulatory relief for bio-based oils that have proven environmental benefits. Specifically, local communities and institutions that have electric transformers can avoid the costs of constructing secondary diking containment around their transformers if they use bio-based, non petroleum oils as insulation. In addition, many older electric transformers still contain Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) in their electrical insulation. By promoting these alternatives to petroleum-based oil used as thermal insulation in electric transformers, we provide a smart and environmentally friendly option to encourage the replacement of PCBs. It should be noted that this provision was retained in the final legislation without opposition or controversy.

Additionally, in 1995, Congress passed the Edible Oil Regulatory Reform Act. This statute set forth specific guidelines for implementing regulations on oil spills. The Edible Oil Regulatory Reform Act states ". . . in issuing or enforcing any regulation or establishing any interpretation or guideline relating to the transportation, storage, discharge, release, emission, or disposal of a fat, oil, or grease under any Federal law, the head of that Federal agency shall differentiate between and establish separate classes . . . and consider differences in the physical, chemical, biological, and other properties, and in the environment." Nearly a decade later, EPA continues to maintain the position that "oil is oil." EPA has either been unwilling or unable to differentiate between the different classes of oils. I raise this issue because I want to make clear how the author of section 1403 intends it to be interpreted.

Section 1403, Regulation of Certain Oil Used in Transformers, reads as follows: "Notwithstanding any other provision of law, or rule promulgated by the Environmental Protection Agency, vegetable oil made from soybeans and used in electric transformers as thermal insulation shall not be regulated as an oil identified under section 2(a)(1)(B) of the Edible Oil Regulatory Reform Act (33 U.S.C. 2720(a)(1)(B))."

EPA's broad generalization that "oil is oil" disregards renewable oils that, I believe, have an improved effect on the environment in case of a spill. EPA's broad policy impedes the replacement of fluids known to be harmful to the environment with fluids that have proven, tested benefits for the environment.

CHARLES WARREN CILISKE

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2006

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, today I want to congratulate Charles Warren Ciliske on his recent offer of appointment to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Charles sought a nomination to West Point through my office, competing with a group of highly qualified applicants. He was selected for a nomination and West Point has offered him an appointment to their celebrated institution. I am proud to give him a Congressional nomination.

Charles is currently a senior at Kingwood High School in Kingwood, Texas and he possesses many qualities that will make him an excellent cadet at West Point, and an excellent officer in the United States Army. He has shown the ability to dedicate himself to a goal over the long-term, and to succeed with this dedication. Charles is a 4-year varsity swimmer on the Kingwood High School Swim Team and was Captain of the team this season. He is a 5-time High School All-American, 2003 Rookie of the Year and 2005 District Swimmer of the Year. Also in 2005, he was on the Team 5A Texas State Champs and was a National Runner-Up.

Charles has proven himself academically as well, earning the AP Scholar Award. He is a member of the USA Swimming Academic All-American Team and a member of the National Honor Society.

The clincher for Charles was the interview by my Service Academy Nomination Board. Nothing can replace a personal encounter to establish credibility and repute. His interviewers said that he was an exceptional candidate, with excellent character and strong moral values. They were impressed by Charles's professed dream to attend the U.S. Military Academy, and knew he understood the gravity of the commitment to the Academy and of becoming an officer in the U.S. Army. They recommended him to me without reservation.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that Charles is a fine Texan who will serve his country with distinction and I wish him good fortune in this new chapter of his life.

COMMENDING THE SAN ANTONIO
STOCK SHOW AND RODEO

HON. HENRY BONILLA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2006

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Speaker, today I wish to recognize and offer my congratulations to the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo for receiving honors as the "Large Indoor Rodeo of the Year for 2005" and "Top Rough Stock Rmuda of the Year Award." Everyone who

worked together to support our world-class rodeo in San Antonio deserves our commendation.

Each year, the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association honors the best of the best in contract personnel, stock contractors and rodeo committees during the annual "Contract Personnel Awards Banquet" on the eve of the National Finals Rodeo. The San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo took home the prestigious honor of "Large Indoor Rodeo of the Year for 2005." The award is especially meaningful because winners are voted on by over 10,000 of their peers in the rodeo industry. It is the equivalent of the national championship for rodeo.

San Antonio made history in 2005 by bringing some new athletes into the rodeo: the roughest, toughest and best livestock from sixteen different stock contractors all over North America. This prompted the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association to create a category especially for the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo: the "Top Rough Stock Remuda of the Year Award."

The Executive Director Keith Martin and the over 4,000 dedicated San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo volunteers deserve special recognition. It is their hard work and dedication that makes the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo one of the best in the Nation.

**FREEDOM FOR JORGE LUIS
GARCIA PEREZ**

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2006

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind my colleagues about Jorge Luis Garcia Perez, better known as Antunez, a long suffering and heroic political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Antunez, Mr. Speaker, is the face of the real Cuba.

Antunez has been locked in the totalitarian gulag since 1990. In a sham trial, he was sentenced to 6 years in prison for "oral enemy propaganda." In May 1993, he was tried in a second sham trial, and sentenced to an additional 15 years to be served from that moment. In total, Antunez has been sentenced to 18 years in Castro's grotesque, inhuman gulag.

Despite being locked up in the tyrant's gulag, Antunez has bravely carried out heroic activism in Cuban jails, writing reports on prison conditions and carrying out numerous protests and hunger strikes to demand more humane treatment for prisoners. He has never wavered in his commitment to human rights and democracy for the Cuban people. Antunez has never given in to the beatings, the punishment cells and the instruments of torture inflicted on him by the Castro regime. Antunez always rises up and calls out, demanding human rights and freedom for Cuba.

After over 15 years in the gulag, Antunez is still feared and relentlessly attacked by the dictatorship. According to the Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2004, "on July 6, family members of political prisoner Jorge Luis Garcia Perez, reported being beaten along with Garcia during a prison visit. Authorities handcuffed

and beat Garcia and later punched his sister and kicked his girlfriend's 9 year old son after the visitors protested the harsh treatment."

No matter how intense the repression, no matter how horrifically brutal the consequences to him and his family, Antunez will not waiver in his conviction that Cuba should be and will be free. He is a symbol of dignity and heroic resistance to tyranny.

Mr. Speaker, this courageous man has been in Castro's gulag since 1990, for failing to keep silent about the nightmare that is the Castro regime. My Colleagues, it is a profound embarrassment for mankind that the world stands by in silence and acquiescence while political prisoners are systematically tortured because of their belief in freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We should never forget those who are locked in gulags because of their desire to be free. We must demand the immediate and unconditional release of Jorge Luis Garcia Perez and every prisoner of conscience in totalitarian Cuba.

**INADEQUACY OF REIMBURSEMENT
FOR IMMUNE GLOBULINS**

HON. JOSEPH R. PITTS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2006

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the House's attention a very important issue relating to the reimbursement of plasma protein therapeutics. Specifically, I continue to be concerned regarding the inadequacy of reimbursement for immune globulins.

A fragile Medicare beneficiary population is dependent on immune globulins for life saving therapies. As a result, Congress and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) share a responsibility to assure access to these therapies. CMS recently recognized the importance of this issue by providing for a pre-administration fee in both sites of service for immune globulins, physician offices and hospital outpatient settings. This provision was outlined in CMS's Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System final rule and in the Physician Fee Schedule final rule.

Third party studies are currently underway to identify the true costs associated with the acquisition, handling, and administration of immune globulins. Congress anticipates that CMS will issue a Program Memorandum reflecting the study findings upon receipt of the data.

To guarantee access, I urge CMS to provide for product specific reimbursement for each separate immune globulin and to recognize that the infusion of immune globulins should be classified as a biologic response modifier for reimbursement purposes.

I intend to follow this matter carefully and look forward to working with the Administration and my colleagues on the Energy and Commerce Committee to address these concerns.

TRIBUTE TO JEAN SIRI

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2006

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, it was with great sadness that I

learned of the passing of Jean Siri last week. I knew Jean well, enjoyed our conversations, and highly valued her opinions on local and national concerns.

Jean Siri was born Jean Brandenburg on March 11, 1920, in Lakot, North Dakota. She grew up in a farming family her father was a prominent veterinarian. She earned a bachelor's degree from Jamestown College in North Dakota, then did graduate work at San Francisco State University and the University of California, Berkeley. Jean was a staff biologist at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory from 1945 to 1952, then a board member and Chair of the Stege Sanitary District in El Cerrito from 1975 to 1979. She also served on the El Cerrito City Council from 1980 to 1985 and again from 1987 to 1991, including two terms as Mayor.

At the time of Will Siri's passing in 2004, the couple had been married 54 years. Mr. Siri was renowned as both a scientist and mountaineer. From 1943 to 1945 he worked as a member of the Manhattan Project. In 1963 he was the co-leader of the first American expedition to climb Mount Everest. Will was a leading researcher in biophysics at Lawrence Berkeley Labs. During the 1960s and 1970s he also served as President-Director of the Sierra Club.

The impact of Jean's life-long work on behalf of the environmental movement, public access to recreational resources, and public health is immeasurable. Among the long list of agencies that Jean supported with her time and endless energy were the West Contra Costa Conservation League, County Hazardous Materials Commission, the League of Women Voters, the West County Toxics Coalition, the Contra Costa County Public and Environmental Health Board, the Gray Panthers, and the Fresh Start Homeless Board of Directors. Along with her husband Will, Jean was instrumental in the creation of Save the Bay and was a long-time member of the Sierra Club. Jean will always be remembered as a staunch environmentalist and lover of the outdoors. Together, she and Will were recipients of many awards, including the Feinstone Environmental Award from Syracuse University in New York for their work on corrective legislation for air pollution, land use and solid waste treatment.

Perhaps though, her greatest advocacy role was her representation on the East Bay Regional Park District Board of Directors. She was elected in 1992, and re-elected in 1996, 2000, and 2004. Jean loved the District, its staff, her colleagues on the Board and those who advocated on the District's behalf. She was passionate about the parks and contributed not only her great leadership experience, but a sharp wit and a wonderful smile for all who had the good fortune to work with her.

To Jean's two daughters, Lynn Siri Kimsey of Davis and Anne Siri of Philo, and their families, I extend my heartfelt condolences. Their loss is shared by all who came to know and admire Jean. All Californians will benefit for generations to come from her work born of an uncommon passion for people of all walks of life and our fragile environment.