

from the witnesses today. Despite the federal government's record, it is my sincere hope that this hearing will lead to concrete reforms in contracting practices.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to be present for rollcall votes 121, 122, 123, and 124. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote 121, "yea" on rollcall vote 122, "nay" on rollcall vote 123, and "no" on rollcall vote 124. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my statement appear in the permanent RECORD immediately following these votes.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DC NATIONAL GUARD HOMELAND SECURITY ACT OF 2006

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce the fourth bill in the Free and Equal DC series. This series includes measures that all involve obsolete or inappropriate intervention into the local affairs of the District of Columbia. The other bills in the series are the District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act, the District of Columbia Legislative Autonomy Act, and the District of Columbia Hatch Reform Act. This bill would give the Mayor of the District of Columbia the same authority over the District of Columbia National Guard (DCNG) as the governors of all 50 States have over their guard units. My work on the Homeland Security Committee convinces me that this bill is necessary now more than at any time in the District's history. In most circumstances involving a suspected terrorist incident and in all circumstances constituting local emergencies, the Mayor of the District of Columbia should have the same authority as governors. The National Guards in the 50 states operate under similar dual federal and local jurisdiction. Yet the President of the United States as the Commander in Chief alone has the authority to call upon the DC National Guard for any purpose here, local or national. Each governor, however, as the head of state, has the authority to mobilize the National Guard to protect the local jurisdiction, just as local militia did historically. Today, the most likely need is to call upon the National Guard to restore order in the wake of civil disturbances and natural disasters. Today it could prove necessary to act quickly without knowing the origin of an event. The Mayor, who knows the city better than any federal official and works closely with federal security officials, should be able to call on the DCNG to cover local natural disasters or civil disturbances without relying on the President, who may be preoccupied with national matters, including perhaps war or security matters, or relying on a delegated official with little familiarity with the city. It does no harm to give the Mayor the authority. How-

ever, it could do great harm to leave him powerless to act quickly. If it makes sense that a governor would have control over the mobilization and deployment of the state National Guard, it makes the same sense for the Mayor of the District of Columbia, with a population the size of that of small states, should have the same authority.

The Mayor of the District of Columbia, acting as head of state, should have the authority to call upon the DCNG in instances that do not rise to the level of federal importance necessary to implicate the authority of the President. Today requiring action by the President of the United States could endanger the life and health of DC residents, visitors and federal employees. Procedures that require the Mayor to request the needed assistance from the Commander in Chief for a local National Guard matter are as old as the republic, and are dangerously obsolete. This bill would deprive the President of his authority over the DC National Guard. The President could still nationalize the Guard at will, as he can with the Guards of the 50 states, and particularly here in the nation's capital.

Following the September 11th terrorist attacks, I succeeded in including a provision in the Homeland Security Act recognizing that the District of Columbia must be an integral part of the planning, implementation, and execution of national plans to protect city residents, federal employees, and visitors by including the District of Columbia, as a separate and full partner and first responder in federal domestic preparedness legislation. At a minimum, such recognition also demonstrates the respect for local governance and home rule that every jurisdiction that recruits members of the military to its National Guard deserves, especially today when the Guards are no longer weekend warriors, as the Iraq war demonstrates. The confusion that accompanied the September 11 attack plainly showed the danger inherent in allowing bureaucratic steps to stand in the way of responding to emergencies in the nation's capital. September 11 has made local control of the DCNG an imperative.

This bill is another important step necessary to complete the transfer of full self-government powers to the District of Columbia that Congress itself began with the passage of the Home Rule Act of 1973. District authority over its own National Guard apparently was not raised during the Home Rule Act process. However, it was almost unthinkable then that there would be war in the homeland, much less terrorist threats to the nation's capital. What should be unthinkable after 9-11 in an era of global terrorism is allowing to stand old and antiquated layers. Giving the mayor of the District of Columbia authority to call up the National Guard could make the difference in protecting the safety of the residents, federal employees, and visitors alike. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HOBBS HIGH SCHOOL INSPIRATION AWARD

HON. STEVAN PEARCE

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Hobbs High School, in Hobbs

New Mexico, which recently earned the 2006 College Board Inspiration Award.

The College Board's Inspiration Award annually honors three schools nationwide that have demonstrated extraordinary achievements in expanding access to college, particularly in financially disadvantaged areas.

Hobbs High School is a model of educational success and its receipt of this award is an accolade to their hard work and dedication to improving the opportunities available to their students.

Hobbs is a community that receives less funding per pupil than any other district in New Mexico and has twice as many people in terms of percentage living at or below the poverty level compared to the national average. However, in spite of these setbacks Hobbs High School has made extraordinary advances in expanding access to college for their students.

Approximately 55 percent of all secondary students at Hobbs High School now participate in Advanced Placement and Pre-Advanced Placement courses and they currently have the largest Advanced Placement program in the State of New Mexico. Demonstrated success has already been seen with last year's 97 percent graduation rates and the increase in the number of those individuals who went on to college upon graduation.

Hobbs High School is a wonderful example of what can be achieved when teachers, students, and community leaders come together to ensure that plentiful opportunities exist for their students. I ask my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in congratulating Hobbs High School for this wonderful academic achievement.

UKRAINIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY STATEMENT ON CHERNOBYL NUCLEAR DISASTER

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, last Friday evening, I was honored to join Southeast Michigan's Ukrainian American Community in remembrance of a terrible tragedy: the Chernobyl nuclear disaster on April 26th, 1986.

Here in Washington, the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus organized a number of events last week to ensure that Congress adequately remembered this solemn anniversary. Through all of these events, and at the commemoration I attended in Michigan, there was a consensus that as we remember those victims of Chernobyl who lost their lives, we must continue, and indeed strengthen, our efforts to help those who are still living with its consequences.

To that end, I ask that a statement from the Ukrainian American Community in Michigan be placed in the RECORD. It calls on us all to do our part in standing with the Ukrainian people to address the consequences of this disaster that so many still struggle with 20 years later.

APPEAL: TO THE MEMBERS OF THE MICHIGAN DELEGATION TO THE U.S. CONGRESS ON THE OCCASION OF THE SOLEMN 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NUCLEAR DISASTER AT CHERNOBYL, UKRAINE

The Ukrainian American community, gathered at St. Josaphat's Ukrainian Catholic Church in Warren, Michigan, on Friday, April 28, 2006 in solemn commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the Nuclear Disaster at Chernobyl, Ukraine, recommends to the Michigan Delegation to the United States Congress the Testimony of H.E. Oleh Shamshur, Ambassador of Ukraine to the United States, before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe and urges the members of the Delegation to assist in addressing the urgent problems noted in Ambassador Shamshur's testimony, excerpted below:

"Chernobyl was not only a 'maximum credible accident' and the greatest man-made technological disaster. There is much more about Chernobyl catastrophe: this has become a frightening reminder of the awesome human cost—measured in lives and life-threatening health problems—of the lack of freedom, democratic procedures, civic control and transparency.

The plain and awful fact is that the biggest nuclear catastrophe in human history was kept secret from ordinary citizens, who were massively exposed to radiation exceeding the maximum acceptable level by hundred times.

During the critical period after explosion, while evacuating the local population from direct neighborhood of the nuclear power station, the Soviet government let millions of people in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia conduct their daily life as usual—unaware, unwarned, unprotected. On May 1st, four days after the disaster, people in Kyiv and dozens of other cities were urged to go outdoors to celebrate May Day, an official holiday in the Soviet Union. In those moments when radioactive cloud was reaching Sweden, when West Europeans were called to restrain from buying fruit and letting children play outside, in Ukraine parents carried their kids to the festivities. It was only days later, that people of Ukraine came to know the full extent of what had happened to them, their families, their land. By early May millions of people, including children, received unthinkable amounts of radiation as the volume of radioactive materials released into atmosphere exceeded Hiroshima by 400 times.

Experts and humankind are yet to comprehend and assess the full scope of the hazardous consequences of the nuclear devastation, including continuous exposure to radiation of such magnitude. About 5 million people were directly affected by explosion. As of January 2006, 2.6 million Ukrainians have had the status of those affected by consequences of the Chernobyl accident. Over 570 thousand children officially registered as affected by the disaster continue to live in Ukraine. 6,769 children died of horrible diseases caused by the calamity including thyroid and other cancers. Tens thousand square kilometers of once fertile and flourishing land remain radiation-polluted, as well as 2,218 Ukrainian townships and settlements.

The international community should be aware that the period of so-called half-life of radioactive strontium released into atmosphere in 1986 is 90 years. Therefore however scaring it might sound, the full story has not been told yet. The gravest implications of the catastrophe might be still ahead for Ukraine and other nations. We should be well prepared to face this eventuality.

The price Ukraine has paid for the lies, hypocrisy and greed of the Soviet regime epitomized by Chornobyl and its aftermath has

been enormous. What we need now is assistance in addressing two very concrete and urgent problems.

Building a new reliable Shelter. Taking this opportunity I am asking the distinguished members of the Commission to weigh in their political authority to call upon all G8 members and other countries concerned to follow the example of the U.S. Government and to make adequate financial contributions making possible the erection of the Shelter-2. The construction costs are estimated at slightly over 1 billion USD representing rather modest amount of money compared to the damages which 200 tons of highly radioactive waste still glowing underneath the corroded Shelter-1 might incur. We also urge all the signatories of the Ottawa Memorandum to honor their obligations concerning compensation of the losses suffered by Ukraine due to the decommissioning of the Chernobyl NPS.

Meeting the health needs of the innocent children, suffering from hazardous effects of Chornobyl. We deeply appreciate the work done in this respect by the members of the U.S. Congress, such as Co-Chairman Chris Smith and Representative Lincoln Diaz-Ballard. It was largely due to Mr. Diaz-Ballard's efforts that on April 20th one of the biggest humanitarian airlifts organized by the Children of Chornobyl Fund arrived in Ukraine for the benefit of Chornobyl-affected children. I know that more projects are in preparation and I'm deeply thankful for them to our American partners."

Ambassador Shamshur concludes with the following words, words which the Ukrainian American community in Michigan and, we trust, our elected officials, fully share and support.

"I strongly believe that our two countries—Ukraine and the United States—will stand united in facing the challenges and preventing any new human tragedies that might be caused by the consequences of the disaster that happened twenty years ago, but remains so present in our lives."

THE PASSING OF BILL WALSH

HON. ROB SIMMONS

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, it is often said one of the best things we can do in this world is to take a tragedy and use it as a catalyst to do something positive. The April 5th death of a 64-year-old homeless man, Bill Walsh, in the woods of southeastern Connecticut has become a rallying cry for the homeless. I hope that the death of Bill Walsh will be turned into something positive.

As a Vietnam veteran I have long been involved in addressing the dilemma of homelessness. Vietnam divided our nation and many soldiers returned from Southeast Asia with a variety of troubles. On far too many occasions their troubles led them to the streets and to the ranks of the homeless. We know that many of the homeless suffer from addictions and mental problems. We will never be able to help them secure a home and until their lifestyle issues are addressed.

In Connecticut we are taking action. A coalition of business leaders, social service agencies and government officials have produced the Southeastern Connecticut Ten Year Plan To End Homelessness. The three pronged attack seeks to establish a safety net by identi-

fying social services available to the homeless and finding more effective ways to deliver them. Supportive housing is an essential component—supportive housing helps address issues of heart and head while providing a place to live. In supportive housing complexes individuals find companionship, security and a staff that will help them address issues such as substance abuse, education and other barriers that prevent people from participating as productive members of society. The third part of the program is to help the homeless find employment.

I attended Bill Walsh's funeral and those who knew him described him as "a gentle soul", "just like us", and a "sweet man who never bothered anybody." No doubt we also would all agree that a 64-year-old "gentle soul" should not be living in the woods.

Many families are one paycheck away from being homeless. They are our neighbors and our friends. Those who are already experiencing life on the street or in the shelter are in need of support. A society that is dedicated to helping others help themselves will take the tragedy of Bill Walsh and use it as motivation to address homelessness. I believe ours is such a society.

In attendance at Mr. Walsh's funeral was the Rev. Emmett Jarrett, of St. Francis House, in New London. He made some insightful and compassionate remarks about Bill Walsh. I ask by unanimous consent that his meditation be included with my statement for the RECORD.

SEEING THE INVISIBLE: A MEDITATION ON
LUKE 16:19-25

(By Fr. Emmett Jarrett, TSSF)

The story you have just heard—the story of Lazarus, the poor beggar, and the rich man—is one of the stories Jesus told to call people to live not in selfish isolation but as sisters and brothers. It's also a story that Martin Luther King, Jr., the great American patriot, preached on many occasions, including the last Sunday sermon he ever preached, a few days before he was assassinated in April, 1968. King said of this story that it was not about Jesus condemning wealth, or the rich. "There is nothing in that parable," King said, "that said [the rich man] went to hell because he was rich. . . . [He] didn't go to hell because he was rich; [he] didn't realize that his wealth was his opportunity . . . to bridge the gulf that separated him from his brother, Lazarus. [He] went to hell because he passed Lazarus by every day and he never really saw him. He went to hell because he allowed his brother to become invisible."

Our country remembers Dr. King because of his dream that America would some day fulfill its promise and become a land of freedom and equality for all. But King was not just a great patriot, he was not just a great civil rights leader. He was also a leader in the movement to end the war in Vietnam. He was a leader in the struggle to end poverty in our country. When he preached his last sermon at the Washington National Cathedral in 1968 he was on his way to Memphis, Tenn., to support sanitation workers in a strike for decent wages. He was preparing to lead a national march on Washington from the rural South, from Appalachia, from the ghettos of Northern cities, a march of white people as well as black people, a "poor people's march." He was working to make the invisible people in our country visible. He was working for brotherhood and sisterhood, for what he called "the beloved community."

We are gathered here today to remember an invisible brother, Bill Walsh, who died in