

need to be carried out for an expeditious permit approval to be granted. And it requires that such actions be completed within one year.

My bill will require agencies to give high priority to refinery applications that would result in greater capacity, a cleaner-burning fuel, or a reduction in a refinery's pollution output. And it will require Federal agencies to more carefully examine the impact a proposed rule would have on energy supplies and provide that information to the public.

Instead of bringing an artificial price-control bill to the House floor that could lead to gas rationing and long lines, Democrat leaders should instead offer real solutions.

I urge my colleagues to vote against H.R. 1252 and in support of policies that will lower the cost of gasoline for the American people.

THANKING KANSAS BUREAU OF
INVESTIGATION DIRECTOR
LARRY WELCH

HON. JERRY MORAN

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2007

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Madam Speaker, Kansas was once known for being part of the Wild West. Widespread lawlessness allowed for cattle rustlers and wild cowboys in towns like Abilene and Dodge City. Our great state also has a history of lawmen known for settling issues with a personalized style of law enforcement. Sheriffs Wyatt Earp and Wild Bill Hickok faced threats from individuals bent on destroying a peaceful way of life. The retiring Director of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation is part of this storied tradition of making Kansas a state where families can pursue a way of life envied by others. Today, Madam Speaker, I rise to honor Larry Welch's service as a leader and innovator in law enforcement.

Director Welch and I share a similar academic background. We both received a bachelor's degree and a law degree from the University of Kansas. Director Welch though, went on to serve his country in a noble profession. Where did I go wrong, becoming a lawyer then a banker and then a politician? In 1961, he was appointed as a special agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. For 25 years, his tireless commitment to justice led him around the country. Before returning to Kansas, he served in FBI assignments in Knoxville, Tennessee; Washington, DC; Miami, Florida; West Palm Beach, Florida; San Juan, Puerto Rico; San Antonio, Texas; and McAllen, Texas.

During his lengthy service with the FBI, Director Welch was charged with supervising all FBI operations in Kansas. After his time with the FBI, he began work as associate director at the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center. While at the training center he was promoted to Director and provided leadership in this position for nearly 5 years before he accepted the appointment by Attorney General Robert Stephan as director of the KBI. He was reappointed KBI director by Attorney General Carla Stovall in 1995 and by Attorney General Phill Kline in 2003.

Director Welch has been a strong advocate in the fight against methamphetamine and its devastating impact on communities across Kansas. He recognized the significant harm

and damage this poison inflicts on families and has made combating the manufacture and use of meth a priority of the KBI under his administration. Seizures of meth labs have drastically decreased in our state during the past several years. This can only be attributed to the effectiveness of law enforcement in Kansas making the production of meth an extremely risky business. The humble and relentless man that Director Welch is, could be seen when he quickly responded to compliments of the KBI's many lab seizures by explaining that meth is still coming in from foreign sources and that there was still much work to be done to protect Kansans from this destructive drug.

I would be remiss if I did not include in a tribute to this man, any mention of the care he has shown to the law enforcement community in Kansas. His compassion is well known throughout the state. He is consistently the first to express sympathies, in person, to families who have lost a loved one in the line of duty. Many in this field of work, whether in the city police, sheriff's department, or Highway Patrol, consider Larry Welch a friend and an advisor.

Director Welch has given back to his state and country for 46 years with much of his career dedicated to making Kansas a safe and desirable place to live and visit. In the many important roles he filled in his life, he served out of a sense of duty. I join Larry Welch's many friends and admirers in thanking a great man for great service.

HONORING OAKLAND COMMUNITY
ORGANIZATIONS

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2007

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Oakland Community Organizations (OCO), a faith-based community organizing network in Oakland, California. Today, OCO celebrates 30 years of advocacy and invaluable service to the community.

In 1972, OCO was established as an organizing project of Fathers John Baumann, S.J. and Jerry Helfrich S.J., the founders of the Pacific Institute for Community Organization (PICO) network. PICO is a national network with faith-based organizations at work in over 45 cities in 12 states across the United States, pursuing initiatives in areas such as healthcare access, education reform and affordable housing.

From 1972–1977, Baumann and Helfrich focused on building neighborhood organizations in West Oakland, San Antonio, Fruitvale, Central East Oakland from 50th to 80th Streets, and Elmhurst area. Neighborhood after neighborhood worked on issues like junkyards, stray dogs, prostitution, zoning, crime and vacant housing. On May 14, 1977 over 1,000 people gathered at Merritt College to officially give birth to OCO, articulating the faith values that today are the foundation of OCO's organizing principles.

For the next 8 years, OCO operated successfully as a neighborhood based organization, bringing people together around local and citywide issues. During this period, OCO achieved major victories in areas such as af-

fordable housing, local hiring, and the rehabilitation of once-vacant houses.

In 1985, with the support of PICO, OCO began the transition from a neighborhood-organizing model to a congregation community-based model. Using this method, OCO developed strong local organizations in seven congregations. During the 1980's OCO received national accolades in many areas, but in particular for its groundbreaking work in partnership with the City of Oakland to combat drug use.

In the 1990s, OCO leaders turned their attention on the root causes of poverty in Oakland and focused on developing sustainable solutions for complex problems. During that time, OCO organized thousands of people for major citywide action that resulted in the creation of Aviation High School, a pilot school-to-work transition program; the Hope Campaign, which created smaller kindergarten class sizes; and the opening of a grocery store in West Oakland.

OCO has continued this proud tradition of advocacy and innovation through the present day. Over the past several years, OCO has again charted new territory in several areas through initiatives such as the Restructuring of two Oakland High Schools, Castlemont High School and Fremont High School, into separate but interconnected schools within their respective schools. Furthermore, OCO continues its extraordinary advocacy work in the areas of healthcare access, immigrants' rights and affordable housing.

On May 11, 2007, OCO will celebrate its 30th anniversary in Oakland, California. I would like to mark this occasion by commending the organization for the exceptional service it has provided to the community not only in its capacity as an institution of faith and worship, but also as a leader in working to provide services and advocacy to the people of Oakland. By remaining committed to the areas of leadership and service throughout its 30 years of community organizing and action, OCO has contributed enormously not only to the Oakland community, but also to our State, our country and our world.

SAN MATEO COUNTY AND SAN
FRANCISCO COUNTY DISTIN-
GUISHED SCHOOLS

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2007

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to proudly praise the educational system within my home state of California and, in particular, the schools in my congressional district. In the face of what seems constant criticism of our school systems, there are actually many, many instances of excellence.

California's State Superintendent of Education Jack O'Connell recently announced a remarkable list of 76 middle schools and 95 high schools that will be designated as California Distinguished Schools through 2011. San Mateo County Board of Education Superintendent Jean Holbrook said that San Mateo County, much of which is within California's 12th congressional district, is the 16th largest county in the state yet ranks fourth in receiving distinguished school awards. I agree completely with her that this "says something

about the great job that the educators of San Mateo County are doing.”

Nine San Mateo County middle and high schools were among the California schools selected as 2007 Distinguished Schools. This annual award recognizes these schools as among the state's most exemplary public schools.

Madam Speaker, I am extremely proud of the work done by the educators in California. The nine distinguished schools from San Mateo County include Ralston Middle School in Belmont, Crocker-Middle School in Hillsborough, La Entrada Middle School in Menlo Park, Corte Madera Elementary School in Portola Valley, Aragon High School in San Mateo, Carlmont High School in Belmont, Menlo-Atherton High School in Atherton and Sequoia High School in Redwood City.

I would like to add praise for two schools in San Francisco, also partly within my home district. Gateway High School and KIPP San Francisco Bay Academy Middle School were likewise selected as Distinguished Schools for 2007.

To be designated a Distinguished School requires a comprehensive review and evaluation. Of California's 2,400 middle and high schools, approximately 478 schools were eligible for consideration. Ultimately, 279 schools submitted the formal application for consideration. And finally, 76 schools were selected for the list.

Madam Speaker, it is my great pleasure to share with my colleagues this information and ask them to join me in recognizing the success of these fine California schools.

TRIBUTE TO JENNIFER KNOPKE,
KANSAS OUTSTANDING JUNIOR
MEMBER OF THE DAUGHTERS OF
THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2007

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding young community leader from my congressional district, Jennifer Knopke, who was named Kansas Outstanding Junior Member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and will be so recognized at the DAR's August convention.

Jennifer is a dedicated teacher of at-risk students in the Shawnee Mission School District, and is an active volunteer in American Cancer Society Relay for Life, as well as her DAR volunteer activities.

To be considered for this award, young women must be between 18 and 35, and must be active in furthering the ideals of “God, Home, and Country” of the Daughters of the American Revolution, as well as other community service activities. State winners will compete in the national contest. I know Jennifer will represent the Kansas DAR well.

The Outstanding Junior Member Contest began in 1963 to honor young women active in their chapter and community activities, and to encourage young members to become involved in DAR activities and programs.

Outstanding young leaders like Jennifer are the backbone of every community. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize Jennifer for this well-deserved award.

HONORING THE SCHOOL DISTRICT
OF PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today in praise of the School District of Palm Beach County, Florida, home to three high schools ranked among the best in the nation by Newsweek magazine. Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Arthur Johnson, is doing an outstanding job, for which we are all very grateful. The School District of Palm Beach County currently includes 166 public schools and over 170,000 students. The efficient operation of so many institutions of learning is a considerable undertaking, and Dr. Johnson, his administrators and the faculties of the various schools deserve great praise for their hard work and huge success.

I want to offer particular praise for Suncoast High School, rated fifth best high school in America by Newsweek and Dreyfoos School of the Arts, also in the top 20, both of which are in my district. Suncoast, an international studies magnet school, has been recognized before for the high quality of its programs. Additionally, at least five Suncoast teachers have been singled out for excellence, and both schools have seen many awards go to their students.

On this occasion, I also want to recognize Jessica Su, a junior at Suncoast High School, one of 81 students in America to receive the 2006–07 Siemens Award for Advanced Placement. This prestigious distinction is given to students who demonstrate the highest proficiency in mathematics and science. Ms. Su is one of only seven juniors to win this award. A brilliant young lady, her remarkable accomplishment can be credited in part to the education she is getting at Suncoast.

I am delighted to be able to stand here today praising these fine accomplishments, and it is with great pride that I congratulate both schools, their administrators, faculty and students and Dr. Johnson for the fine work they are all doing.

IN HONOR OF SPECIALIST LANCE
C. SPRINGER, U.S. ARMY

HON. KAY GRANGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2007

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, I Rise today to honor the courage of a brave and dedicated hero of the Fort Worth community and of our Nation.

Specialist Lance C. Springer II was a United States Army soldier and a true American hero who gallantly and selflessly gave his life for his country on March 23, 2007, during combat operations in Baghdad, Iraq.

Lance—or Craig as his family and friends called him, enlisted during time of war, which speaks volumes about his character and patriotism.

Assigned to the 25th Infantry Division, Craig's service as a field medic, placing the well-being of others ahead of his own, exem-

plifies the type of selfless and caring man that he was.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Craig's parents and all of his family and friends.

Our community and Nation honor Specialist Springer's memory and we are grateful for his faithful and distinguished service to America.

Specialist Craig Springer will not be forgotten. His memory lives on through his family and the legacy of selfless service that he so bravely imprinted on our hearts.

INTRODUCTION OF “THE SAFETY,
EFFICIENCY AND ACCOUNT-
ABILITY ON TRANSPORTATION
PROJECTS THROUGH PUBLIC IN-
SPECTION ACT OF 2007”

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2007

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Safety, Efficiency and Accountability in Transportation Projects through Public Inspection Act of 2007 (H.R. 2485).

This bill would require public employees to perform the inspection and related essential public functions on all state and local transportation projects. My bill is intended to ensure that public safety is protected, transportation funds are not wasted and projects are delivered in a timely manner.

On transportation projects, the construction inspector is the eyes, ears and voice of the public. Inspectors ensure that construction and seismic standards are met, that projects meet safety requirements and that the materials used will stand the test of time. In short, inspectors are there to ensure that the motoring public gets what they pay for and public safety and the public interest are protected.

When the construction inspection function is outsourced to a private company, there is no longer a representative of the public on the job site. In this circumstance, one private company is charged with the task of inspecting the work of another private company. This creates multiple conflicts for the private inspector. First, the private inspectors' primary obligation and responsibility is not to the public, but to the success and profitability of his company. Because the private construction company whose work they are inspecting on one project may be a business partner on a future project, private inspectors may also feel pressure from the private contractor to take steps that ensure larger profits for both firms. I am concerned that these conflicts have led private inspectors to cut corners and overlook problems that threaten public safety, increase costs and delay projects.

There are many examples in which public safety has been threatened by the use of private inspectors, including Boston's “Big Dig” (where a concrete slab from a tunnel ceiling fell and killed a woman), the L.A. Redline subway (Hollywood Blvd. collapsed), the 8–805 Interchange in San Diego (10,000 defective welds on a seismic retrofit), the Connecticut I–84 project (hundreds of drains that lead nowhere).

Contracting out public inspection work also does not save money. Defective work requires extensive repairs, and inevitably, the taxpayer gets stuck with the bill. Comparative studies