

Reagan and Bush administrations. As his first act in office, President George W. Bush restored the Mexico City Policy on January 20, 2001 and released a letter stating, "I will veto any legislation that weakens current Federal policies and laws on abortion, or that encourages the destruction of human life at any stage."

The Mexico City Policy should not have been weakened. Taxpayer dollars should not, in any way, be used to promote abortion as a method of family planning. The United States should never be active in promoting abortions overseas. Instead, the U.S. should offer family planning programs that support the health of the mother, child and family unit.

There are several known organizations that use U.S. foreign aid funding to promote and provide abortions, as well as sterilizations, overseas. In 1998, newspapers were filled with stories of women participating in U.S. funded family planning programs who were forced to undergo sterilization procedures, especially in Peru. There were also stories of women coerced to participate in family planning programs by threatening to withhold food, clothing and shelter from their family.

In response to these atrocities, I introduced an amendment to the State, Foreign Operations Appropriations bill in 1998 that defined the meaning of "voluntary participation" in family planning programs. It was to ensure the NGOs receiving USAID funding for family planning programs understood what voluntary participation meant and required informed consent for women on the benefits and risks associated with different family planning methods. Since it was enacted for fiscal year 1999, there have been several violations and vulnerabilities in countries receiving funding. These violations and vulnerabilities were identified and corrected by USAID.

Without strong direction from the United States on how taxpayer dollars are spent, we will continue to find violations that are destructive to women and families.

It is due to the Lowey amendment, which undermines the Mexico City Policy, that I will be voting against final passage of a bill that contained important foreign aid for countries in need, such as Israel. It is unfortunate this amendment was adopted, and organizations that promote and perform abortions to the women overseas will be able to receive U.S. taxpayer funding. It is my hope the Senate will take up this bill and strike this harmful language.

Tonight, I will vote against H.R. 2476 on the basis that it clearly undermines good policy and subjects what could have been a good piece of legislation to a veto by the President. I urge my colleagues to vote against final passage of this bill.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED
AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS
ACT, 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 26, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under

consideration the bill (H.R. 2643) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes:

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Chairman, two days ago the House voted to defeat an amendment to H.R. 2643 offered by Mr. PETERSON that would have lifted the moratoria on the Outer Continental Shelf for natural-gas only leasing. While I voted against the amendment, I wanted to elaborate on my views on this matter.

I certainly support the gentleman's goal of increasing our access to domestic supplies of natural gas, and we have demonstrated that it is possible to explore and produce oil and gas in our oceans and remain environmentally responsible at the same time. There are dozens of platforms operating off the coast of California today, producing nearly 30 million barrels of oil and 60 billion cubic feet of natural gas each year while releasing a negligible amount of that into the environment. There hasn't been a spill of larger than 50 barrels since 1996, and there has not been a truly significant spill in nearly 40 years.

This demonstrates that when oil and gas development is done correctly, it can be a tremendous resource with little detrimental environmental impact. I support taking a close look at areas that are currently under a moratorium, so that we understand both the opportunities and the risks of opening up these regions.

Unfortunately, we are sorely lacking up-to-date information on the oil and natural resources of our Outer Continental Shelf. Earlier today I chaired a hearing in the Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee, in which the Acting Director of the Minerals Management Service, Walter Cruickshank, testified that the most recent data on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts was collected in the late 1970s. When opponents of Outer Continental Shelf development argue that 80 percent of the oil and gas is already accessible to leasing, they are using badly outdated data.

If we are going to have this discussion, we need to have a much better knowledge of the extent and value of the oil and gas resources of the Outer Continental Shelf. Only then will we be able to really look at the big picture and determine the proper balance between energy development and other important resource values, including tourism, fisheries and national security, to name a few.

My primary concern with Mr. PETERSON's amendment is that it proposed to allow for gas-only leases.

Unfortunately, this idea is, quite simply, not feasible.

There are various reasons I come to this conclusion. Most fundamentally, however, is the simple fact that oil and gas are often co-located and it is unrealistic to assume or assert that the industry would be interested in buying a lease that would preclude development of any oil found in the leased tract. As the former director of the Minerals Management Service, Johnnie Burton, said in a Senate hearing just last year, the vast majority of comments they received from the oil and gas industry on this idea were negative, because it was, "not terribly practical." The fact is, as Ms. Burton put it, "you never know what you are going to find until you drill."

I maintain that we should certainly be taking a hard look at those areas that are currently off limits, many of which may be appropriate

places to explore. As Chairman of the Energy and Mineral Resources subcommittee, I look forward to working with my colleagues to help craft a forward-thinking energy bill that looks at the big picture, and admit that there is no silver bullet for solving our nation's energy challenges. We must increase domestic production of fossil fuels while at the same time focusing on renewables, conservation, and ensuring that we strike the proper balance of development of our nation's abundant resources and good environmental stewardship.

HONOR OF CITY OF HASTINGS,
NEBRASKA

HON. ADRIAN SMITH

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2007

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to honor a community in Nebraska's Third Congressional District, the City of Hastings, for being named the Greenest City in America by Yahoo! Incorporated. The contest to be the Greenest City in America began on May 14 and ended earlier this month.

Residents of Hastings made an online pledge on Yahoo's website to live their everyday lives in a more environmentally-friendly way and then followed through on their pledges. I am proud Hastings earned this title, and I look forward to its ongoing efforts to make the City as eco-friendly as possible.

This contest and the improvements Hastings made on its way to the top are perfect examples of an effective and fun way to protect our environment and learn about activities which can improve our lives. This is also a perfect example of how a private company—not a government mandate—can encourage cities throughout America to improve their local communities. This was not a government program compelling improvement, it was a private company helping towns and cities do what is right, and I commend both Hastings and Yahoo for their stewardship.

I hope other companies follow Yahoo's lead, as I hope other communities in our country follow Hastings' example.

RECOGNIZING "NATIONAL HOMELESS YOUTH AWARENESS MONTH"

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2007

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, today Representative McDERMOTT and I introduced a resolution to designate November as national homeless youth awareness month.

Earlier this month the Ways and Means Income Security and Family Support Subcommittee on which I serve as Ranking Member held a hearing on "disconnected youth." That's a group that includes young people who often drop out of school, don't work, and wind up on the streets. These young people may have family conflict issues, may experience abuse and neglect, or may be or have been in the past involved in the foster care

system. Research completed by the University of Chicago suggests there were nearly 25,000 homeless youth in Illinois in 2004, including 6,353 in the northern Illinois region where the Congressional district I represent is located.

Despite an infusion of millions of dollars in Federal assistance and the dedicated efforts of many interested adults, too many children are troubled, homeless, and disconnected from their families and others who would like to help. Federal initiatives such as the Runaway and Homeless Youth program, the Education for Homeless Children and Youth program, the Family Violence Prevention and Services Discretionary Grants program, and the Chafee Foster Care Independence program have been directed at these problems in recent years.

Yet better serving these children and preventing more youth from winding up on the streets will require better use and coordination of current program funds. We also need to recognize, as one witness at our recent hearing put it, that "strengthening families is the best way to prevent the suffering and social disconnection among our young people." Even as we applaud those young people, including foster youth, who overcome tremendous challenges to succeed in school and beyond, it is hard to overstate the importance of strong families to the raising of young people who grow up to be productive adults. Last year in the Deficit Reduction Act we included specific funds to support private groups that work to strengthen families and promote healthy marriage, which is the foundation for raising healthy children. I am eager to see how those efforts pay off, including to reduce the turmoil in homes that results in too many children ending up on the streets.

We also must acknowledge that kids are connected, and especially as they get older, through their schools. That really means through the circle of friends, teachers, coaches, and other mentors they rely on as they become more independent and develop the habits and skills needed for life on their own.

Kids in foster care already have suffered the trauma of being removed from their own parents. In addition to being bounced from home to home, many foster children suffer the additional turmoil of being bounced from school to school. Studies show high school students who change schools even once are less than half as likely to graduate as those who don't change schools. So it is no wonder there is "a 20 percentage point difference between the high school graduation rates of foster youth and their peers," according to the Kids Count organization.

At this hearing, we heard from Rep. MICHELE BACHMANN of Minnesota. She and her husband have helped raise 23 foster children, and she discussed the importance of achieving stability in their lives, and especially stability in home and school. I have attached her testimony as further evidence of the importance of such stability, and the need for programs to promote it.

In addressing the issue of youth homelessness, we should start by doing whatever we can to ensure that young people in the foster care system complete at least high school, vastly improving their chances of getting a decent job and supporting themselves. One way to do that would be to provide more foster youth especially the opportunity to stay better connected to their schools, including by re-

maining in a single school whenever possible. That might mean offering scholarships so those in private schools can stay there, or so those who might benefit from private school could do so. Or it could involve something as mundane as bus vouchers so kids can continue going to their current public or private school even if they are sent to live in a foster home across town.

Such efforts will increase the chances foster youth graduate and can create the foundation for a productive and happy life that is the American dream. That will also mean far fewer wind up on the streets, as is the goal of the resolution introduced today. We should all support that.

[Statement of the Honorable Michele Bachmann, a Representative in Congress from the State of Minnesota, June 19, 2007]

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON INCOME SECURITY AND FAMILY SUPPORT OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Mr. Chairman, Congressman Weller, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to discuss the educational challenges faced by disconnected and disadvantaged youth, specifically foster children.

I am Michele Bachmann, a first-term Member of Congress serving Minnesota's Sixth District. I have a special interest in the quality of education received by foster children because over the course of six years, my family cared for 23 high-need teenagers through the Lutheran Social Services' Treatment Foster Care program.

I believe every child deserves the chance to gain a high-quality education. Growing up, I attended public schools where I was taught using a rigorous curriculum despite the fact that my community was not particularly affluent. While I was in school, my parents divorced and almost overnight my stable, middle-class family was changed forever. Although times were extremely tough, whenever my three brothers and I would become frustrated my mother would tell us to concentrate on our schoolwork, because no matter what happened, no one could ever take our educations away from us. She was right—I left my public high school with a quality education and went on to graduate from college, then law school, and finally to earn an L.L.M. in tax law.

Years later, when my family began to take in foster children, I felt that although our circumstances were very different, I could identify with their pain and frustration. All of them had challenges considered serious enough that they were unable to be placed through the traditional county foster care systems, and our family's role was to provide them with a safe home and see them through to their high school graduations.

We quickly learned that our foster children had very different needs than most children. Almost all of them had been given Individualized Education Plans—individual plans designed for students with special educational needs. Many of the kids had been under the care of counselors, many suffered from eating disorders, and others had difficult behavioral or learning issues. All of them had switched schools at least once, and as a result of their tumultuous home lives, none of them had very strong educational backgrounds.

While through the years some of our foster children performed better in school than others, my husband and I noticed some common problems. Many times, we got the impression that the kids were seen by both their peers and their teachers as if they were only going to be there short term. Although their teachers were welcoming, little special attention

was provided to ensure that they caught up to their classmates, and their other needs were often not considered because there were so many other students to attend to. They became small fish swimming in a very large pond.

We also began to notice that not all of our foster children were presented with the quality of coursework we had thought they would receive. Many of them were placed in lower-level classes, as if they were not expected to succeed. One of the kids remarked to me once that she was in "stupid people math." Another brought home an 11th grade math assignment that involved coloring a poster. Yet another told me she had spent an entire week of classes watching movies, and others were being selected for the "School to Work" program, in which high school students attended classes for half of the day and were then sent to work minimum-wage jobs at local businesses. Although it had been evident to us from the beginning that because of their backgrounds, our foster children were going to struggle in school, it was frustrating to see that rather than being given the leg up they needed, so many of them felt that they were being left behind. Unfortunately, national studies indicate that this is an extremely common experience for foster children.

What made this experience so heart-breaking is we could clearly see that despite our wishes, our foster children did not get the same opportunities or attention that our biological children received in their school. Our biological children's classes were smaller and more rigorous, the teachers knew all of the students, the students knew each other, and parents were able to be much more involved in their children's educations—all goals which are not always attainable in a large school, but which could have done wonders for our foster children.

As a result of these experiences, I believe it is imperative that Congress examine creating a federal school choice program for foster children, through which foster parents are given the option to place children in their care in either a public or private school long-term, depending on their specific needs. Such a plan would allow foster children requiring more individual attention to attend a school better equipped to help them. Just as important, for the first time in their lives, these children who have become so used to being uprooted would have the chance to be placed in an environment where they could have their special educational needs met and feel as if they belong, where they could remain enrolled even if their homes changed.

Currently, the federal government operates a program for older foster children—the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program—which assists them in transitioning from foster care to life on their own. Among other things, the Chafee Program provides vouchers of up to \$5,000 to foster children ages 16 through 18 for education and training. Congress should consider extending this voucher program to foster children of all ages, so foster parents are able to best meet the educational needs of the children in their care by either allowing them to choose a private school or providing them with the funds necessary to transport their children to their original school even if it is outside of their immediate area.

Additionally, Congress should consider extending the extremely successful D.C. school choice program aimed at low-income students, which has drawn more than three times the number of applications as there are available spots. Creating a similar program to serve D.C. foster children as well as those who come from low-income families would be an important step in the direction of giving the option of school choice to all foster children.

In closing, even if placed in the best families, foster children often face the possibility that they will have to change homes, and as a result they must find a safe place of their own where they can become accepted and gain a sense of stability. Although for many foster children school can be such a place, the cases of many others show that under the current system, this is not always possible. I hope my family's experiences highlight the special challenges facing foster children as well as the need for an examination of whether limiting their educational options is truly in their best interests. I thank the Subcommittee for holding this hearing, and I thank you, Mr. Chairman, Congressman Weller, and Subcommittee members for the opportunity to share our story today.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRUCE L. BRALEY

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2007

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Madam Speaker, on rollcall 564, the Brown-Waite of Florida Amendment, I was not present. If I had been there, I would have voted "no."

On rollcall 565, the Campbell of California Amendment No. 51, I was not present. If I had been there, I would have voted "no."

UNITED STATES-KOREA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2007

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, this House recently approved H. Res. 295, sponsored by my good friend and colleague from New York, Rep. PETER KING, as well as 35 other Members from both sides of the aisle, to recognize the strong alliance between the Republic of Korea and the United States and to express the House of Representatives' appreciation to the Republic of Korea for its contributions to international efforts to combat terrorism. This resolution properly acknowledged the longstanding and heartfelt friendship between our two great countries.

This coming Saturday, June 30, 2007, marks the 125th anniversary of the Korean-American Treaty of Amity and Commerce, which was signed in 1882, and the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation between the Republic of Korea and the United States, which was ratified in 1957.

Saturday June 30th will also mark another historic milestone in the ever growing relationship between the people of the United States and the people of the Republic of Korea when, in a ceremony to be held right here on Capitol Hill, representatives of both governments are expected to sign the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement.

The proposed Free Trade Agreement—which still requires Congressional approval before coming into force—is a natural extension of the strong affinity between our two countries, marked by extraordinary diplomatic, political, military, and economic cooperation. Al-

though the devil is always in the details, I understand that this agreement could potentially be the most commercially significant free trade agreement signed by the United States in more than a decade. As many of my colleagues already know, South Korea is already the United States' seventh largest export market and sixth largest market for U.S. agricultural products. In fact, according to the latest statistics, our annual bilateral trade totals nearly \$80 billion. Any agreement that can open up more Korean markets to U.S. goods and services can only have a positive effect on the American economy by creating more and better jobs, enriching consumer choice, and boosting U.S. industry and manufacturing.

But there's more at stake here than just economic growth; this FTA recognizes our special relationship with South Korea and reinforces the message that the United States stands squarely behind our friends and allies. I would ask my colleagues to consider just a couple of points:

South Korea is the fifth largest tourism generating country to the United States (with over 800,000 Koreans visiting the U.S. annually);

South Korea has the largest foreign student population in the U.S.;

Nearly 2 million Americans of Korean descent live in communities all across our nation—which is why I support giving serious consideration to South Korea's entry into the Visa Waiver Program;

South Korea is a strong, unwavering ally in the U.S.-led Global War on Terror, having dispatched troops to Iraq (the third largest contingent after the United States and Great Britain), and Afghanistan (where a South Korean soldier was killed during hostile action), and to Lebanon in support of peacekeeping operations; and,

South Korea is a key partner in the Six-Party Talks to resolve North Korea's nuclear issue.

Madam Speaker, I believe that South Korea may be the premier success story of U.S. foreign policy in the post-World War II period. Having assisted South Korea in transforming itself from a war-torn, impoverished economy into a successful democracy with a free enterprise economy (the world's 11th largest), South Korea is now an indispensable partner with the United States in promoting democracy and free market economic principles.

The anticipated ceremony marking the conclusion of negotiations toward a U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement will be another opportunity to celebrate and honor the 125 years of friendship and cooperation between the Republic of Korea and the United States. Whether you're for free trade agreements or against them, I ask all my colleagues to join me in recognizing the historic significance of the U.S.-Korea alliance and its growing importance in the years to come.

STATEMENT AGAINST CONGRESSIONAL PAY INCREASE

HON. JERRY MORAN

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2007

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I rise to oppose the current system of administering pay increases for Members of Con-

gress. Since I was first elected by Kansans to represent them in our Nation's capital, I have opposed the hidden process by which Members of Congress receive an annual pay raise.

Right now, the House Agriculture Committee is reauthorizing the farm bill. For Kansans and rural citizens across the country, this is perhaps the most significant piece of legislation Congress will consider this year. Unfortunately, the Democrat-crafted budget does not include enough funding to meet the needs of our Nation's agricultural producers, fulfill the environmental and conservation needs of our country and carry out food stamp and nutrition programs. Congress has been irresponsible with taxpayer dollars for too long and the limitless spending is catching up with us. Vital legislation, like the farm bill, that supports millions of Americans does not have the money available to it to meet the needs of our country.

Members of Congress should not receive a pay increase when the federal budget is this tight. Congress needs to follow the lead of American families and cut out spending that is unnecessary. We should begin today by cutting out the automatic pay raise for Members of Congress.

TO COMMEMORATE CHANGE OF COMMAND, COAST GUARD STA- TION, HOUSTON, TEXAS

HON. NICK LAMPSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2007

Mr. LAMPSON. Madam Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity today to commemorate the Change of Command at the Coast Guard Air Station located at Houston's Ellington Field. Captain Norman S. Schweizer was relieved of his command by Commander Sean M. Mahoney on Monday, June 25, 2007.

Captain Schweizer was born and raised in Miami, FL, and graduated from Florida State University in 1984, earning a bachelor of science degree in accounting. Following Officer Candidate School in 1984, his first assignment was as the Assistant Operations Officer at Group Key West, FL. After 20 years of service, Captain Schweizer assumed the duties of Commanding Officer of the Coast Guard Air Station in Houston, TX. His accomplishments include two Meritorious Service Medals, four Coast Guard Commendation Medals, two Coast Guard Achievement Medals, and the Commandant's Letter of Commendation.

The Air Station's new commander, Sean M. Mahoney, is a native of Fishkill, NY, and a graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy where he received a bachelor of science degree in government. His first assignment was as a Deck Watch Officer aboard the *USCGC Morgenthau* in Alameda, CA. Due to honorable service, his decorations include the Air Medal, Coast Guard Commendation Medal, Commandant's Letter of Commendation, and two National Defense Service Medals. He is also a recipient of the Air Force Association of Canada's Air Search and Rescue Award.

Captain Schweizer has played an integral role in leading Air Station Houston in its service to a wide range of Coast Guard missions including search and rescue, homeland security missions, environmental protection, and