

TSA PROCUREMENT REFORM ACT
OF 2007

HON. CHRISTOPHER P. CARNEY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2007

Mr. CARNEY. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the “TSA Procurement Reform Act of 2007.” This Act will increase contracting transparency at the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), open opportunities for small businesses, and eliminate wasteful and duplicative bureaucracy. This Act is necessary because TSA was exempted from the near-universal federal contracting system, the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), after the September 11th terrorist attacks.

It makes no sense that every other organization in the Department of Homeland Security—and the vast majority of the federal government—is governed by the Federal Acquisition Regulation, yet TSA plays by its own rules. Even while we are at war, the Department of Defense uses the FAR. This exemption for TSA creates an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy, decreases competition, and shuts out small businesses from too many contracting opportunities.

The legislation will repeal the TSA’s exemption from federal contracting laws 180 days after enactment. The legislation is supported by a broad coalition from the oversight and business communities. Citizens Against Government Waste and the Professional Services Council—a trade association representing more than 220 federal contractors—both support the intent of this bill.

Years of contract mismanagement prove that there is no longer justification for the exemption. Over the last several years, the TSA has awarded contracts filled with wasteful spending, including a contract to Boeing that jumped from \$508 million to \$1.2 billion and a contract to Pearson Government Solutions that first cost \$104 million and skyrocketed to \$741 million in less than one year.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the Capitol and both sides of the aisle to ensure that we strengthen our homeland security as much as possible and eliminate the many deficiencies at DHS and throughout the federal government impeding our Nation from being as safe as we would like.

CONGRATULATING MR. NED NORRIS, JR. ON HIS CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE TOHONO O’ODHAM NATION.

HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2007

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to take the opportunity to honor the new Chairman of the Tohono O’odham Nation.

An exceptional citizen of my community and the Tohono O’odham Nation, Chairman Ned Norris, Jr., is from the remote village of Fresnal Canyon, in the Baboquivari District. He was elected to a 4-year term as the Chairman of the Tohono O’odham Nation earlier this spring.

Chairman Norris is in his 32nd year of serving the Tohono O’odham Nation. In May of 2003, he was elected to serve as Vice Chairman of the Tohono O’odham Nation. Both before and after holding the position of Vice Chairman, he worked with the Tohono O’odham Gaming Enterprise. Chairman Norris served as Assistant Director of Marketing and Public Relations, Director of Marketing & Public Relations, Casino Manager and Director of Community Relations. The Enterprise operates both Desert Diamond Casino locations in Tucson and Golden Ha:san Casino near Why, Arizona.

His service to his Tribe has been ongoing. In addition to holding the position of Chairman and Vice Chairman, he has also served as the Assistant Director of the Tribe’s Children’s Home; Court Advocate; Children’s Court Judge; Court of Appeals Judge; Indian Child Welfare Specialist; Assistant Director of Tribal Social Services and Director of Tribal Government Operations. On February 1, 1993 Chairman Norris completed a 6 year Tohono O’odham Legislative Council appointment as (non-attorney) tribal Judge, the last 3 of those years as Chief Judge for the Judicial Branch.

Chairman Norris is also very involved in the surrounding community of Tucson, AZ. He is currently a board member of the Chicanos Por La Causa, Tucson Urban League, American Indian Association, Inc., and the University of Arizona—Arthritis Center Advisory Board; Tucson Metropolitan Education Commission; KUAT Communications Group-Advisory Board; and the Tucson Airport Authority-Advisory Board. Additionally he is a former board member of the Sunnyside Unified School District Governing Board; and a former Commissioner for the Tohono O’odham Nation’s Tribal Employment Rights Office.

I would also like to acknowledge Isidro B. Lopez, as the new vice-chair of the Tohono O’odham Nation. His leadership and experience will serve Chairman Norris and the Nation well.

I would like to offer my congratulations to Ned Norris for his over three decades of service to his Nation and the people of Pima County and southern Arizona.

THE U.S.-CHINA COMPETITIVENESS
AGENDA OF 2007

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2007

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, today I am proud to join my good friend, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. LARSEN), in unveiling the bipartisan U.S.-China Competitiveness Agenda of 2007. This agenda includes four legislative priorities to expand America’s influence in China and increase American competitiveness in the global marketplace.

As co-chairs of the bipartisan House U.S.-China Working Group, we are working in Congress to elevate the sophistication of our debate on U.S.-China issues. The U.S.-China Competitiveness Agenda provides Congress with a constructive legislative package to expand U.S. engagement with China while supporting key domestic and foreign policy objectives.

Along with two other Working Group members, Congresswoman SUSAN DAVIS (D-Calif.)

and Congressman STEVE ISRAEL (D-N.Y.), we are introducing bipartisan legislation to expand America’s diplomatic infrastructure in China, boost support to small- and medium-sized businesses exporting to the China market, increase funds for domestic Chinese language instruction and build new cooperative energy ties between the U.S. and China.

The U.S. has one embassy and four consulates in China, leaving more than 200 cities with a population greater than one million people with little to no American representation. Additionally, while 60 percent of U.S. exports go to the Asia-Pacific market, the U.S. contributes 100 times more dollars to Europe’s Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development than to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum.

My legislation, the U.S.-China Diplomatic Expansion Act of 2007, authorizes the construction of a new consulate in Wuhan (population eight million) and 10 smaller diplomatic posts in cities with more than a million people. The bill triples funding for public diplomacy, boosts funding for a range of language, student and teacher exchange programs, increases funding for rule of law initiatives and more than triples the U.S. contribution to Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation.

If we are serious about intellectual property rights, consumer product safety and economic competitiveness, we need a diplomatic infrastructure in China that reflects those priorities. We can’t send more food inspectors to China to ensure the safety of imports if we don’t have a place to put them. We can’t work on issues like the theft of American patents, environmental protection, human rights and labor standards if we don’t fund rule-of-law initiatives. My legislation would expand the diplomatic infrastructure to accomplish these objectives.

I am proud to co-sponsor three other bipartisan bills in the U.S.-China Competitiveness Agenda, including Mr. LARSEN’s U.S.-China Market Engagement and Export Promotion Act of 2007, Ms. DAVIS’ U.S.-Chinese Language Engagement Act of 2007 and Mr. ISRAEL’s U.S.-China Energy Cooperation Act of 2007.

Mr. LARSEN’s bill would help states establish export promotion offices in China and create a new China Market Advocate program at U.S. Export Assistance Centers around the nation. The bill provides assistance to small businesses for China trade missions and authorizes grants for Chinese business education programs.

I strongly support the U.S.-China Market Engagement and Export Promotion Act because we need innovative programs that support our small business exports and arm them with the tools they need to succeed in China.

Roughly 200 million students are learning English in China today. By contrast, only about 50,000 primary and secondary school students study Chinese in America. Ms. DAVIS’ bill increases Chinese cultural studies and language acquisition for elementary, high school and college-age students. Grants would be available to fund university joint venture programs, virtual cultural exchanges with Chinese schools and intensive summer language instruction programs.

We have more than just a trade deficit with China—we also have a knowledge deficit. That is why I strongly support the U.S.-Chinese Language Engagement Act. We need additional funding for domestic Chinese language programs, educational exchanges and

Chinese teacher exchanges to fix this knowledge imbalance.

Recently declared the world's top polluter, China's power consumption increased more than 15 percent in the first half of 2007 alone. Mr. ISRAEL's bill authorizes new grants to fund U.S.-China energy and climate change education programs, along with joint research and development of carbon capture, sequestration technology, improved energy efficiency, and renewable energy sources.

In my view, China's connections to unstable energy markets like Iran, Sudan and Venezuela could set a foreign policy collision course with the United States. I strongly support the U.S.-China Energy Cooperation Act. To protect our environment and avoid future conflict, we need creative programs to boost U.S.-China energy cooperation.

I want to thank my colleagues for their hard work on this bipartisan agenda. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor all four bills and move quickly to enact this legislation into law.

PUBLIC SAFETY TAX CUT ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce the Public Safety Tax Cut Act. This legislation will achieve two important public policy goals. First, it will effectively overturn a ruling of the Internal Revenue Service which has declared as taxable income the waiving of fees by local governments who provide service for public safety volunteers.

Many local governments use volunteer firefighters and auxiliary police either in place of, or as a supplement to, their public safety professionals. Often as an incentive to would-be volunteers, the local entities might waive all or a portion of the fees typically charged for city services such as the provision of drinking water, sewerage charges, or debris pick up. Local entities make these decisions for the purpose of encouraging folks to volunteer, and seldom do these benefits come anywhere near the level of a true compensation for the many hours of training and service required of the volunteers. This, of course, not even to mention the fact that these volunteers could very possibly be called into a situation where they may have to put their lives on the line.

Rather than encouraging this type of volunteerism, which is so crucial, particularly to America's rural communities, the IRS has decided that the provision of the benefits described above amount to taxable income. Not only does this adversely affect the financial position of the volunteer by foisting new taxes about him or her, it has in fact led local entities to stop providing these benefits, thus taking away a key tool they have used to recruit volunteers. That is why the IRS ruling in this instance has a substantial deleterious impact on the spirit of American volunteerism. How far could this go? For example, would consistent application mean that a local Salvation Army volunteer be taxed for the value of a complimentary ticket to that organization's annual county dinner? This is obviously bad policy.

This legislation would rectify this situation by specifically exempting these types of benefits from Federal taxation.

Next, this legislation would also provide paid professional police and fire officers with a \$1,000 per year tax credit. These professional public safety officers put their lives on the line each and every day, and I think we all agree that there is no way to properly compensate them for the fabulous services they provide. In America we have a tradition of local law enforcement and public safety provision. So, while it is not the role of our Federal Government to increase the salaries of these, it certainly is within our authority to increase their take-home pay by reducing the amount of money that we take from their pockets via Federal taxation, and that is something this bill specifically does as well.

President George Bush has called on Americans to volunteer their time and energy to enhancing public safety. Shouldn't Congress do its part by reducing taxes that discourage public safety volunteerism? Shouldn't Congress also show its appreciation to police officers and fire fighters by reducing their taxes? I believe the answer to both of these questions is a resounding "Yes" and therefore I am proud to introduce the Public Safety Tax Cut Act. I request that my fellow Members join in support of this key legislation.

IN MEMORY OF JANE GRAVES

HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2007

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of my dear friend Jane Graves of Nashville, Arkansas, who passed away July 30, 2007, at the age of 58.

Jane Graves was a beacon of light and hope to all of those who knew her and were blessed to call her friend. As someone who was determined in her fight against cancer, Jane completed a victory lap less than two months ago at the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, marking her fourth year as a cancer survivor. As encouragement for countless others fighting cancer, Jane used her talents through her writing to tell of her experiences. Through a series of inspirational articles, she literally changed and impacted the lives of numerous cancer survivors she never even had the opportunity to meet.

The victory lap during the Relay for Life was symbolic of more than Jane's bout with cancer, it was also representative of her selfless nature in life. She took great joy in helping others and worked tirelessly to create a strong sense of community in Nashville. As a co-founder and co-publisher of the Nashville Leader, she was a highly acclaimed and respected journalist who consistently kept the residents of Nashville informed with the latest news and community events. Her coverage earned her awards from the Arkansas Press Association, the National Newspaper Association and the National Federation of Press Women, among others.

During her 35 years in Nashville, Jane was determined to leave her mark not just as a journalist, but also as an activist. She helped found the annual Howard County Children's benefit golf tournament, she was a recipient of the Chamber of Commerce Woman of the Year Award, she was a board member of the Howard County Children's Center and she

served as a past President of the Nashville Rotary Club.

I send my deepest condolences to her husband, Louie Graves of Nashville; her daughter Julie Murphy of Little Rock; her mother Glenna Siddon and stepfather Rupert Mobbs of Greenbrier; her brother and sister-in-law Bill and Pam Siddon of Great Falls, Virginia; and several nieces and nephews. Jane Graves will be greatly missed in Nashville, Southwest Arkansas and throughout the state of Arkansas, and I will continue to keep her family in my thoughts and prayers.

STUDENT AND TEACHER SAFETY ACT

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2007

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Student and Teacher Safety Act. As a former teacher, I understand that when you enter the classroom you develop a sense of feeling safe and protected from the violence of the outside world. The classroom is meant to be a place where our children's minds can be developed and nurtured. Students should be focused on pursuing their dreams, not worrying about drugs and violence in the classroom.

Columbine High School, Colorado; in my own district at Hubbard Wood School in Winnetka; and most recently on the campus of Virginia Tech. Each of these schools and many others had their sense of safety shattered when they were subject to attack by an individual with a gun.

The Student and Teacher Safety Act will help promote a safer school environment by allowing full-time teachers the right to search a student or their property should they have reasonable suspicion that a weapon or illegal drugs have entered their classroom. The legislation simply codifies guidelines established by the U.S. Supreme Court in *New Jersey v. TLO* (1985), which states that reasonable searches by school officials do not require a warrant signed by a judge if the search would reveal that the student violated the law or school rules and asks school districts to develop and implement a policy on school safety.

Teachers know their students. They know when a student is acting suspicious or that there is a problem. We must trust their instincts when they believe that their classroom is at risk. We also must protect these teachers from the risk of being punished or sued for following their instinct. Students have the right to a safe learning environment and teachers have the right to a safe workplace.

The Student and Teacher Safety Act passed the 109th Congress unopposed. The nation's largest teacher union, the National Education Association, supports the bill and believes "that a safe and effective learning climate is necessary for promoting educational excellence in public schools." As I have said before, if this bill helps one teacher stop one Columbine massacre, then Congress will have served the Nation well and protected its children.