

573, Recognizing and commending the efforts of the United States public and advocacy groups to raise awareness about and help end the worsening humanitarian crisis and genocide in Darfur, Sudan, and for other purposes, I would have voted "yea."

Had I been present for rollcall No. 1012 on suspending the rules and passing H. Res. 747, Recognizing the religious and historical significance of the festival of Diwali, I would have voted "yea."

HONORING THE PORTLAND
VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2007

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the members of the Portland Volunteer Fire Department for their selfless dedication and bravery in protecting our families, day and night.

The Portland Volunteer Fire Department serves 64 square miles of Sumner County outside the city limits. The department has received three U.S. Homeland Department of Security grants.

Without volunteer fire halls, like Portland, many places in the Sixth District would lack effective fire protection. In the state of Tennessee, over 70 percent of fire service is provided by volunteers. Among these volunteers, almost 75 percent work other daily jobs.

Ensuring our families' safety is not without risk. Sadly, an average of two firefighters die each year in Tennessee in the line of duty. In 2005, the Tennessee Fire Services and Code Academy dedicated a memorial on their main campus in Bell Buckle to honor those Tennessee firefighters who have died in the line of duty.

For their willingness to serve, the following members of the Portland Volunteer Fire Department deserve recognition: Chief Kenny Crowson, Asst. Chief George Knuckols, Captain Richard Lanius, Lt. Jessica Knuckols, Lt. Bobby Wilson, Tony Green, Brent Dyer, Josh Covington, Tav Matthews, Arthur Benjamin, Samantha Roberson, Scott Meece, Lindi Costner, Williams Keen, Russ Caudill, David Roberson, and Jim Youngblood.

IN MEMORY OF JOE CRAPA

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2007

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, we were saddened with the news last week that an outstanding public servant had lost his battle with cancer. Joseph R. Crapa was serving as the executive director of the bipartisan U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) at the time of his passing on October 25. It was my privilege to know Joe and to work with him and his fellow commissioners and the staff at USCIRF in their dedicated efforts to protecting religious freedom throughout the world.

I would like to share the touching remarks our colleague Rep. DAVID OBEY gave at Joe's

funeral on October 29 at St. Peters Catholic Church on Capitol Hill. Joe had served as Congressman OBEY's chief of staff from 1987 to 1997, the last three years as Democratic counsel to the House Appropriations Committee. I also insert for the RECORD a news release from the USCIRF mourning the passing of its executive director.

We express our deepest condolences to Joe's wife of 40 years, Barbara Vaskis Crapa of Alexandria, Virginia; his son Judd, daughter-in-law Gretchen, and grandsons Sebastian and Baird.

REMARKS BY CONGRESSMAN DAVID OBEY—
FUNERAL FOR JOSEPH R. CRAPA

Joe Crapa could do just about everything! He taught high school.

He represented 1,000 teachers in budget negotiations.

He taught college courses in literature, writing, and government.

He was a fundraiser, and outreach director for the congressional Democratic leadership.

He was a key figure in a government relations firm.

He represented three separate government departments in dealing with Congress—Commerce, USAID, and EPA.

Building on his experience growing up in "rural" Brooklyn, he served as staff director for a House Agriculture Subcommittee.

He was staff director for two of the "easiest" people in Congress to work for—Chuck Schumer and me.

He worked at my side for 10 years.

Finally, he served as Executive Director of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

He did all of those jobs well.

He had a superb professional career! But WHAT he accomplished professionally in his life is not nearly as impressive as HOW he did it.

This is a tough and often indifferent town. If you are not alert, it can wear you down. Temptations always abound to cut corners and settle for boilerplate mediocrity. But not Joe!!

Joe was a tough, street smart pol in the best sense of that term, but what epitomized him most of all was his deep understanding of human nature and his unflagging honesty. I cannot tell you how many times he said to me, "Dave, that's the dumbest idea I've ever heard of." And sometimes his language wasn't that sweet. Joe was determined to strip away the irrelevant, the secondary, the trivial, in order to reach the fundamental.

Where did that come from? I think it came from a character and intellect that was expanded and burnished by his exposure to the questions that count by the Jesuits and then as a PhD student in literature, being exposed to the core realities of human experience.

As a practical, operational public man, he—with no guilt—accepted the compromises that are the stock in trade in politics. He understood what Will Rogers meant when he said, "When two people agree on everything, one of them is unnecessary." He understood, as my great Irish friend John Hume once told me, that "in a democracy politics is a substitute for violence."

But Joe also had rock hard convictions on a few essentials:

He fiercely believed that the widening gap between the most privileged and the poor is obscene.

He believed, as Bill Moyers has said, that politics "must be more than who gets what; that it should rise above the merely transactional and become transformational; that it must even the starting gate so that people equal in humanity but not in resources have a reasonable opportunity to pursue a full and decent life."

He passionately believed that every world citizen had a right to pursue their religious beliefs free from persecution or dictation and he was immensely proud of his relationship at the Commission with those of every philosophical bent, including Frank Wolf, who was similarly passionate.

He believed in a religion of tolerance and respect.

He worried that politicians could trivialize and cheapen religion. He did not believe it was legitimate for politicians to claim God as their own celestial party chairman, as a fellow New Yorker once warned against.

As Barbara pointed out Saturday, he believed that a respectful but separate relationship between church and state was essential to preserve and protect both religion and democracy.

Joe loved his last job, but I will always see him as a superb example of so many on Capitol Hill who never serve in public office, whose name is never on the door, who day in and day out love their country and try to make this a better world.

Because I believe so many of you see Joe the way I see him, I would like to share with you part of a letter I wrote to Joe when he went into the hospital for the last time:

"Joe—Judd was in my office yesterday and told me the latest on your health situation. I wish to God you had received better news. I'm about to leave to catch a plane for Wisconsin, but before I did I wanted to put a few thoughts down on paper so that you know how I feel about you.

When I was first interviewing you to run my office, my first impression in the first 10 minutes we talked was that there was no way in God's green earth that I could ever develop chemistry with this fast talking refugee from Brooklyn. I have been forever grateful that you proved me wrong.

I hope you know how grateful I am for everything you did with and for me. . . . I was blessed to have your energy, know how, insight, judgment, and wisdom. I hate to think how little I would have accomplished without having you beside me during these years.

But even more than that, I appreciate the personal support and friendship you gave me in those years, even down to today. Politics is a tough life and those of us who live it know how exposed and vulnerable we all are.

During these years, you were able to give me sound advice on every front, but the most valuable aspect of your counsel was the fact that underneath it all was a moral core that was true to both you and me. That is a special link between "brothers" that I hope we both treasure.

You are a great public servant, a great friend, and a great human being. Thank you for understanding and accepting my weakness and shortcomings and for enhancing my strengths. Please know that there are many, many, many people in this town who feel the same way about you. . . ."

And as we say in the House of Representatives, I ask unanimous consent that these sentiments be considered the views of all of you here who knew, respected, and loved him.

USCIRF MOURNS PASSING OF EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR JOSEPH CRAPA

WASHINGTON.—Joseph R. Crapa, the Executive Director of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, died Thursday after a struggle with cancer. Mr. Crapa, 63, had led the Commission since 2002.

"Joe had sharp political instincts but a soft personal touch," said Michael Cromartie, current Chair of the Commission. "He had an unwavering, principled commitment to advancing the work of this bipartisan Commission in protecting religious

freedom worldwide. Everyone who knew and worked with Joe found him to be a remarkably committed public servant."

"We have lost a uniquely talented leader, trusted counselor and beloved friend to each of the Commissioners," said Commission Vice Chair Preeta D. Bansal, who served as Commission Chair in 2004-2005. "I respected tremendously his commitment to the substance of our work and his appreciation for the critical issues at the juncture of religion and foreign policy at this unique period in our history. His sharp political and human instincts and his deep love for humanity were crucial to our work in this sensitive arena. We loved him and will miss him dearly."

"It was an honor to serve on the Search Committee that recommended Joe Crapa to be the Executive Director of the Commission," said Vice Chair Richard D. Land. "As a Republican appointee, I was most happy to enthusiastically endorse and commend this faithful Democrat who loved America and loved the freedom for which it stands. He was a tireless proponent of religious freedom around the world and was instrumental in making the Commission an extremely effective voice for religious freedom. It was an honor and a privilege to have known him and served with him. All of us who knew him will miss him."

"Joe Crapa took a newly established Commission, at a crucial time in U.S. history, and, during his tenure, turned it into a respected voice on post-9/11 foreign policy and a source of new research and insights into the influence of religious freedom and related human rights on world affairs," said Felice D. Gaer, Chair of the Commission in 2002-2003, when Mr. Crapa joined USCIRF, and in 2006-2007.

"Joe's great love of people and respect for religion transcended all differences. With ebullience and panache, he effectively directed the Commission through a transformative period when the salience of the universal and inalienable right of religious freedom has been demonstrated daily by world events," said Nina Shea, who has served as a Commissioner since USCIRF's founding in 1999. "He will always be an inspiration for me and those who had the privilege of working with him."

Prior to coming to the Commission, Mr. Crapa served as Chief of Staff to Senator Charles E. Schumer (D-NY). Mr. Crapa spent the four prior years as Assistant Administrator at the U.S. Agency for International Development. He also served as Assistant Secretary at the Department of Agriculture and Associate Administrator at the Environmental Protection Agency, where his portfolio included Congressional Relations and Public Affairs.

For 10 years, Mr. Crapa served as Chief of Staff to Rep. David Obey (D-WI), currently the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, and also as counsel to the House Appropriations Committee. He was an Adjunct Professor of Government at Georgetown University (1990-1995) and was a Stennis Fellow of Congress (1995-1997). He also was a Lecturer for the Washington Campus, a consortium of universities where he lectured on Congress and the policy process.

A native of Brooklyn, New York, Mr. Crapa graduated from Cathedral College Preparatory Seminary. He received a B.A. from St. John's University, an M.A. from Duke University, and a Ph.D. at the University of Arizona, where he was a National Defense Teaching Fellow.

The Commission extends its most sincere condolences to Mr. Crapa's wife Barbara, son

Judd, daughter-in-law Gretchen, grandsons Sebastian and Baird, and his extended family.

HONORING THE ORLINDA
VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2007

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the members of the Orinda Volunteer Fire Department for their selfless dedication and bravery in protecting our families, day and night.

The Orinda Volunteer Fire Department was established in 1973 and today is made up of 20 brave, hardworking men and women. These firefighters also serve as medical first responders.

Without volunteer fire halls, like Orinda, many places in the Sixth District would lack effective fire protection. In the state of Tennessee, over 70 percent of fire service is provided by volunteers. Among these volunteers, almost 75 percent work other daily jobs.

Ensuring our families' safety is not without risk. Sadly, an average of two firefighters die each year in Tennessee in the line of duty. In 2005, the Tennessee Fire Services and Code Academy dedicated a memorial on their main campus in Bell Buckle to honor those Tennessee firefighters who have died in the line of duty.

For their willingness to serve, the following members of the Orinda Volunteer Fire Department deserve recognition: Chief Dusty Johnson Sr. Assistant Chief Nancy Johnson, Captain Dusty Johnson Jr. Captain Charlie Groves, Captain David Spivey, Clay Frey, Justin Barnhill, Bubba Dorris, Nick Poe, Jason Hemper, Ashley Johnson, Amanda Groves, Travis Garman, Mike Brinley, Jason Vanderheyden, Derrick Crossfield, Larry Phillips, Peter Pecori, Tommy Clowers, Judy Barnhill, John Barnhill, Rachael Payne, Paul Jones, Noah Payne, and Daniel Couch.

IN MEMORY OF HOWARD NEWTON

HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2007

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Howard Newton of Dumas, Arkansas, who passed away September 25, 2007, at the age of 89.

Howard Newton was a decorated World War II veteran, a retired farmer and an inspiration to all who knew him. Upon graduating from Tillar High School, he enlisted in the Army where he honorably served his country earning numerous medals including the Silver Star, the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. His bravery and courage was exemplified by his selfless leadership in battles including the noted rescue of trapped Allied forces in Bastogne, Belgium, during World War II.

After the war, Howard Newton returned home to Desha County to pursue his true pas-

sion of farming the land that he loved. He worked thousands of acres of farmland in Desha County and was the first farmer in the area to irrigate cotton. He continued his work in agriculture by chairing the committee to build a Farm Bureau office in McGehee that would eventually benefit thousands of farmers from across the region.

In addition to his leadership in the field of agriculture, Howard Newton was also a man of devout faith. He was a member of the Newton Chapel United Methodist Church where he served as board member and Sunday School teacher, as well as a familiar face in the congregation, and always someone with open ears for conversation and fellowship.

Howard Newton will forever be remembered for his outstanding service to our country and his community. I extend my deepest condolences to his wife, Frances Rands Newton; his daughter, Gene Beard Curry of Pottsboro, Texas; his sister, Hazel Wheeler of Sulphur Springs; his stepchildren, Sarah Jones of Soldotna, Alaska and Allan Rands of Dumas; and to his numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews and friends. Howard Newton will be greatly missed in Dumas, Desha County and throughout the State of Arkansas, and I am truly saddened by this loss.

HONORING THE MT. VERNON
VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2007

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the members of the Mt. Vernon Volunteer Fire Department for their selfless dedication and bravery in protecting our families, day and night.

In 2005, Mt. Vernon Volunteer Fire Department responded to 14 wild land, brush and grass fires. They ran 24 vehicle accidents and E.M.S. calls, eight residence fires, and 23 others for a total of 69 responses.

Without volunteer fire halls, like Mt. Vernon, many places in the Sixth District would lack effective fire protection. In the state of Tennessee, over 70 percent of fire service is provided by volunteers. Among these volunteers, almost 75 percent work other daily jobs.

Ensuring our families' safety is not without risk. Sadly, an average of two firefighters die each year in Tennessee in the line of duty. In 2005, the Tennessee Fire Services and Code Academy dedicated a memorial on their main campus in Bell Buckle to honor those Tennessee firefighters who have died in the line of duty.

For their willingness to serve, the following members of the Mt. Vernon Volunteer Fire Department deserve recognition: Chief Ray D. Hicks, Faye Hicks, David Dyer, Cheryl Dyer, Coel Bean, Rickey Bean, Randy Bean, Mary Bean, Harold Hatcher, Eddy Hatcher, Jason Rhoton, Shawn Hatcher, Shannon Hatcher, Johnny Young, Denise Rhoton, Crystal Key, Robert Cox, Adam Bryant, and Craig Copes.