

Becker is survived by his wife Crystal and daughters Cierra and Cheyenna; his mother and stepfather, Deborah and Bob Jorgensen, his father and stepmother, Joe and Jean Becker; sister Brooke Jorgensen; stepsister Nichole Becker; and stepbrothers Chris Becker, Adam Becker, Matt Jorgensen and Chris Jorgensen.

Madam Speaker, I am grateful for Mr. Becker's selfless service to our Nation. I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing a man worthy of our honor, Mr. Shane Becker.

## VETERANS GUARANTEED BONUS ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

**HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 17, 2007*

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3793, the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act. I am proud to cosponsor this important, bipartisan legislation which will ensure that members of the Armed Services who are discharged as a result of combat-related wounds receive the full compensation to which they are entitled.

H.R. 3793 was prompted by the recommendations of the Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors, co-chaired by former Senator Bob Dole and former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala. It will reverse a Department of Defense rule that unfairly penalizes wounded soldiers and prohibits them from receiving their full enlistment bonuses.

While facing the threat of a hostile enemy, our veterans have too often returned home to find more trouble: gaps in health care services, limited educational assistance, problems finding employment and a lack of support for their families. Too often, our brave military men and women find that while they have been willing to serve their country, their country is not ready to serve them. We can take an important step in reversing that trend by ensuring that veterans receive all the pay for which they are entitled.

According to Department of Defense rules, enlistees cannot receive their full enlistment bonus unless they fulfill their entire military obligation. Unfortunately, members of the Armed Services who are wounded while on active duty are not receiving their full bonuses because their service was prematurely cut short. The Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act will correct this problem by requiring the Department of Defense to provide veterans who have been discharged due to combat-related wounds with full payment of remaining bonuses within 30 days of discharge. This will ensure that America's wounded warriors receive the full compensation promised to them.

These wounded veterans have earned their bonuses by answering the call to service. Now is the time to heed the recommendation of the Dole-Shalala Commission and fix this problem.

I would like to thank Congressman JASON ALTMIRE for introducing this legislation and Chairman BOB FILNER for prioritizing the health and well-being of the Nation's veterans.

## RECOGNIZING MATTHEW J. ROBERTS FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 18, 2007*

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Matthew J. Roberts, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Matthew has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Matthew has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Matthew J. Roberts for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

## WILDLAND FIRE SAFETY AND TRANSPARENCY ACT

**HON. MARK UDALL**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 18, 2007*

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing a bill to promote wildland firefighter safety and facilitate agency and congressional oversight of the Federal agencies' wildland firefighter safety practices and policies.

The legislation is identical to a bill introduced by Senator CANTWELL and cosponsored by my Colorado colleague, Senator KEN SALAZAR. That measure (S. 1152) has been favorably reported from the Senate's Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, and I am introducing a House companion to assist in securing enactment of the legislation.

The bill would require Interior Department agencies and the Forest Service to provide Congress with an annual joint report on their wildland firefighter safety practices, including training programs and activities for wildland fire suppression, prescribed burning, and wildland fire use.

This will encourage greater focus in the agencies and can assist in our oversight of these important agency activities.

Ensuring timely and sufficient information on the agencies' safety practices and policies is critical to such oversight. For example, the Federal agencies currently do not specifically track the portion of their wildfire-related funding that is expended for wildland firefighter safety and training, making oversight of safety program funding difficult.

Madam Speaker, wildland firefighting has long been a dangerous activity, as shown by a report from the National Wildfire Coordinating Group listing 945 fatalities resulting from wildland fire accidents since 1910. And while evidently from 1910 until the late 1970s and early 1980s, the number of Federal wildland fire fatalities was trending downward, but that trend has reversed, with the number

of Federal fatalities slowly increasing since then.

This disturbing trend reflects the fact that in recent years wildfire behavior has become more extreme, the wildland-urban interface has grown rapidly, and the number and size of wildfires has increased significantly. Despite improvements in wildfire fighting technologies, these and other factors combine to make wildland firefighting more complex today than ever before.

The 1994 deaths of fourteen Forest Service firefighters on Storm King Mountain in Garfield County, Colorado, followed by four more deaths in the Thirtymile Fire in 2001, two in the Cramer Fire in 2003, five in the Esperanza Fire in 2006, and many others, particularly highlight the need for continual improvement in and oversight of safety policies and practices.

A number of recent reports have identified serious concerns with the agencies' safety practices. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration found "serious and willful" violations of safety standards by the Forest Service in its investigation of Thirtymile Fire fatalities, noting that a number of them were similar to failures which occurred at the Storm King Mountain fire. It also found willful, serious and repeated violations of safety regulations during its investigation of the Cramer Fire.

The agencies' growing reliance on contract wildfire fighting crews also has presented safety challenges. A report by the Department of Agriculture's Office of Inspector General (Report No. 08601-42-SF, March 2006) identified significant problems with oversight and administration of the Forest Service contracts and agreements for these private crews. The report's "findings confirm the need to address serious control weaknesses with respect to the firefighting contract crews," which led the Inspector General to recommend, among other things, improving oversight of contract crews' qualifications and training.

These and other reports highlight the need for Congress and the Federal agencies to improve oversight in the area of wildfire safety. The agencies indicated at a recent Committee oversight hearing on wildfire that they are working on making some major changes to their training and other safety programs, which further highlights the need for Congress to keep abreast of the agencies' wildfire safety program.

This legislation is intended to assist in that effort, and I think it deserves the support of all our colleagues.

## INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO CODIFY TITLE 51, U.S. CODE

**HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 18, 2007*

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, Ranking Member LAMAR SMITH and I are introducing a bill to codify into positive law as title 51, United States Code, certain general and permanent laws related to national and commercial space programs. It was prepared by the Office of the Law Revision Counsel as part of its functions under 2 U.S.C. 285(b).

This bill is the successor to H.R. 3039, introduced in the 109th Congress. It has been updated to include provisions enacted after the

earlier bill was prepared. It also contains changes made in response to comments received subsequent to the introduction of the previous bill.

This legislation is not intended to make any substantive changes in the law. As is typical with the codification process, a number of non-substantive revisions are made, including the reorganization of sections into a more coherent overall structure, but these changes are not intended to have any substantive effect.

The bill, along with a detailed section-by-section explanation of the bill, can be found on the Law Revision Counsel website at <http://uscode.house.gov/codification/legislation.shtml>.

The Committee on the Judiciary hopes to act on this bill after providing an opportunity for public review and comment. In addition to sharing concerns with the Committee, interested persons are invited to submit comments to Rob Sukol, Assistant Counsel, Office of the Law Revision Counsel, U.S. House of Representatives, H2-304 Ford House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515-6711, (202) 226-2411.

IN HONOR OF STEPHANIE C.  
KOPELOUSOS

HON. CORRINE BROWN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 18, 2007*

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of Stephanie C. Kopelousos, the Secretary of the Florida Department of Transportation.

Throughout her nearly 15 year public service career, Stephanie C. Kopelousos has worked in both State and Federal public policy, with a particular emphasis in transportation. Her impressive rise to Florida's Secretary of Transportation is well deserved and notable.

Stephanie C. Kopelousos is the first woman to serve as Secretary of Transportation of Florida. She oversees more than 7,000 employees and an annual budget of \$8 billion. In an industry so critical to our economy such as transportation, it is sad that women are under-represented. I hope that her status inspires other women to follow in her success. I believe her leadership will fuel Florida's continued economic growth and enhance Floridian's quality of life.

Secretary Kopelousos has served in several capacities in Florida's Department of Transportation since 2001. Prior to becoming Secretary, she was Interim Secretary and Chief of Staff, providing day-to-day management and directing legislative issues since December 2005. From 2001 to 2005, Secretary Kopelousos served as the primary federal liaison for the Florida Departments of Transportation and Community Affairs in Washington, D.C. Her policy portfolio included transportation, emergency management and disaster relief, and housing.

Her career boasts helping Florida receive its fair share of federal transportation funding as federal liaison for Florida Department of Transportation. In addition, her efforts during two back-to-back hurricane seasons in 2004 and 2005 helped Florida receive significant disaster-related assistance.

A graduate of the University of Alabama with a degree in Political Science, Secretary Kopelousos has proven herself to be a great asset to Florida's transportation needs. I am pleased to honor Stephanie C. Kopelousos for her distinguished accomplishment and her many years of outstanding service, and to thank her for her extraordinary dedication to the people of Florida.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT E. SCHWENK,  
U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

HON. ROBERT A. BRADY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 18, 2007*

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, as Chairman of the Joint Committee on Printing, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Mr. Robert E. Schwenk, Managing Director of Plant Operations at the Government Printing Office, who is retiring next month following 45 years of dedicated Federal service, most of it at the GPO in support of the Congress and Federal agencies.

Beginning as a GPO apprentice in 1962, Mr. Schwenk rose through the ranks to become Managing Director of Plant Operations in 2003. As Managing Director, he oversaw the daily operation of GPO's printing services, including prepress, press, and binding services, as well as the ancillary services supporting them, including supply stores and engineering functions. Employing approximately 1,200 skilled men and women, these operations are responsible for producing the publications that are essential to the legislative operations of this House and the Senate in the discharge of our constitutional obligations—the daily CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, bills, reports, hearings, committee prints, and the host of other documents created as we conduct the people's business. Without them, there would be no publicly accessible record of our work, no documentation for the media, judiciary, educational and research institutions, and the American people to refer to and rely upon as the foundation for our government of laws and democracy. He also oversaw production of the daily Federal Register and Code of Federal Regulations, the annual Budget of the United States, and other significant Federal documents, including U.S. passports.

One of the many fundamental changes in GPO's printing systems which took place during Mr. Schwenk's career was the development of congressional and other Federal information databases that could be used not only for printing, but for online and other electronic dissemination. Since 1986, when Mr. Schwenk was appointed to head GPO's electronic photocomposition division, he played a major role in the development of GPO's information technology operations, guiding successive generations of upgrades to GPO's prepress systems, leading the implementation of computer-to-plate technology, and assisting in GPO's transition to online dissemination in the 1990's with the creation of GPO Access, which quickly became one of the Federal Government's largest and most heavily used Web sites. GPO's transition to these systems has improved access to congressional information immeasurably, and yielded significant savings in congressional printing costs.

Mr. Schwenk's expertise in electronic systems and production operations were combined in his most recent achievement at GPO, in which he oversaw the implementation of electronic chips in U.S. passports and managed the growth in passport production from approximately 11 million total in 2003 to more than 2 million each month today. When the demand for passports increased exponentially over the past year, GPO quietly fulfilled its role, increasing both its staffing and productivity to meet the State Department's requirements. Mr. Schwenk leaves the GPO with the staffing, equipment, and plans in place to meet the future demand for this important document.

During his career at the GPO, Mr. Schwenk witnessed and participated in vast changes in Federal printing operations, as the impact of new technologies reduced GPO's staffing needs from its peak of nearly 8,500 in the mid-1970's to 2,300 today, while at the same time leading to an explosion in the access to Government information via the Internet. During that period, Mr. Schwenk saw history being made and helped record it for posterity—at the GPO, as that office worked to produce the official versions of the Warren Report, historic civil rights and other legislation, photographs of the first landing on the moon, transcripts of hearings on Vietnam, Watergate, and Iran-Contra, the report on the Challenger space shuttle disaster, and many more.

Next month, he will retire from a long and distinguished career of public service. I ask my colleagues to join me in conveying our thanks to Mr. Schwenk and best wishes for a healthy and happy retirement.

TRIBUTE TO MR. RONALD F.  
DEATON

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 18, 2007*

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of Mr. Ronald F. Deaton. Mr. Deaton retired December 1, 2007 from the city of Los Angeles after 42 years of dedicated service to the people of Los Angeles. While Mr. Deaton is officially retiring as General Manager of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), the Nation's largest municipally owned utility, he spent 11 years as the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA), reporting directly to the Los Angeles City Council. In this position he was the chief advisor to the City Council and, with a staff of 50 professionals who researched and analyzed public policy issues, played a leading role in the critical decisions, actions and initiatives facing the city of Los Angeles during that period. He was one of the most clear-sighted, intelligent, and effective public servants I have had the opportunity to engage with in my 35 years in elected office. I consider him a good friend as well.

Mr. Deaton began his career in public service for the city of Los Angeles in 1965, when he first joined the LADWP and worked in budget preparation and market research. From there he moved to the City Administrative Office (CAO) in 1969, where again he was responsible for budget analysis and management audits. In 1976, he accepted a position