

with Teddy Roosevelt, served as prisoners of war at Bataan for horrendous years during World War II, and were deployed to Operation Desert Shield. Whether fighting during a time of war, assisting local and State law enforcement, or guarding our borders, New Mexico's National Guard stands "ready to fight" and accomplishes every mission it receives with distinction and with pride.

We in the House offer our unconditional support of these men and women, and I strongly support this legislation.

TRIBUTE TO KEITH MICHAEL
GREENWOOD

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Keith Michael Greenwood 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 earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Keith has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Keith 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 Keith Michael Greenwood for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

HONORING ROBERT F. RIORDAN

HON. TODD TIAHRT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Mr. TIAHRT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize my good friend, Robert F. Riordan, who is retiring after many years of active involvement in the Kansas business community. Bob is set to retire at the end of the year as the head of government relations for Black & Veatch, a leader in energy and water industries, and one of Kansas's largest businesses.

Bob is the eldest of Francis Xavier and Elizabeth Parris Riordan's four sons. He was raised in Wichita and Salina, KS. Despite the loss of his father when Bob was only 13 years old, he excelled in academics and sports while at Sacred Heart High School in Salina. At Sacred Heart, he was captain of the basketball team, a member of the 1958 American Legion State Champions, and valedictorian of his class.

Upon graduation from Sacred Heart in 1960, he attended the United States Naval Academy. Bob received his commission as an ensign in 1964 upon his graduation from Annapolis. He married Pamela Elizabeth Sutton, and together they have three children and three grandchildren, with two more grandchildren on the way. Bob served his country for 11 years while on active duty as a naval officer. He made numerous deployments to Vietnam and

saw much combat. His deployments included serving on the USS *Haverfield* (DER 393) and the USS *New Orleans* (LPH-11). While on active duty, he achieved the rank of lieutenant commander, a rank he made as an early selectee.

Wanting to spend more time with his family, Bob returned to Kansas after 11 years of service. Bob has always put his family first, and is a loving and caring husband and father. Throughout the years, he made financial and professional sacrifices to make sure that his relationship with his family came first.

Bob spent 3 years in Salina, working for Marymount College and the engineering firm of Wilson & Sons. While in Salina, he became interested in our Nation's energy policies and alternative energy. He started his own business for alternative energy in Salina before being appointed to a position with the then Kansas Department of Energy. After leaving his appointment, he moved to Lawrence, KS, and spent several years with the University of Kansas developing various forms of alternative energy. In 1982, Bob began doing government relations work for Kansas Power & Light, and was central to the development of their energy policies. While at Kansas Power & Light, Bob became vice president of operations, and helped to create a successful strategy to bring economically efficient power to Kansas.

In 1991, Bob left Kansas Power & Light to help create a fuel-cell company based out of Connecticut. He then came to work with Black & Veatch, starting with a project to build a power plant in Florida. He returned to Kansas in 1994 as head of Black & Veatch's government relations, and has continued in this position to the present day. Throughout his time at Black & Veatch, I have had the opportunity and privilege to work with Bob on a wide range of exciting projects.

Throughout his life, Bob has always been a man of integrity, honor, and loyalty. Bob's word is his pledge. More importantly, Bob will do something or take some action simply because it is the right thing to do. Bob never carries a grudge, and he never keeps score of what he has done for others. Through his service to his country, dedication to his career, and devotion to his family and friends, he exemplifies all that is best about Kansans.

I would like to wish Bob, and his wife Pam, all the best as they enter this new chapter of their lives.

IN SUPPORT OF THE JAMES
ZADROGA 9/11 HEALTH AND COM-
PENSATION ACT

HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Mr. ROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, our Nation owes a debt of gratitude to those who selflessly rushed to Ground Zero to help their fellow citizens during and immediately following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. These courageous American men and women thought of others first and themselves second. Truthfully, if it were not for the firefighters, rescue workers, emergency medical providers, and volunteers who helped in the days following 9/11, then the death toll may have been even higher. The healing process

would have been even slower. And the cleanup would have taken even longer.

Today, however, many of these rescue workers and volunteers suffer severe respiratory illnesses and diseases as a result of their exposure to toxic debris and materials at Ground Zero. To add insult to injury, the Bush administration has failed to provide them with adequate health care and, in some cases, actually challenged the cause of their illnesses, which doctor after doctor has diagnosed as stemming from the poisonous air at Ground Zero.

Our Nation can and must do far better by our heroes. That is why I strongly support and have cosponsored the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act. This legislation would establish a World Trade Center Health program to provide medical monitoring, treatment, and compensation to emergency responders, recovery and cleanup workers, and other Ground Zero workers suffering serious diseases as a result of their efforts. It would also expand the number of individuals who are to be covered by such arrangements and creates a nationwide network of health care providers for treating victims residing outside the New York City area.

The American people understand that we have a duty to support our heroes—from those who saved lives in the aftermath of 9/11 to all of our service men and women returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It's sad that we need legislation to force the Bush administration to do right by our heroes—but such is the situation we face. Thus, I will continue to fight for passage of the James Zadroga Act, will continue to seek increased funding to treat veterans and troops with post-traumatic stress disorder, severe brain injury, and other needs, and will work hard to elect a new President of the United States who will do more than pay lip service to the needs of our heroes.

Finally, I wish to applaud the good people at the Unsung Heroes Helping Heroes organization. While they never asked for anybody's praise, they have earned it—not only through their actions on 9/11, but also through their tireless advocacy on behalf of all those struggling with serious health problems caused by 9/11 and through their assistance to sick and injured 9/11 responders.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE
INDUSTRY TO THE UNITED
STATES ECONOMY

SPEECH OF

HON. DAVID WU

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 17, 2007

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.J. Res. 15—Recognizing the contributions of the Christmas tree industry to the United States economy. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this resolution.

During the holiday season, it is appropriate that we consider this resolution. Many Americans participate in the tradition of Christmas and Christmas trees are an important part of this tradition. Many memories associated with Christmas include a beautiful natural tree decorated with lights and ornaments with gifts underneath, shared with family and friends.

Whether families purchase a pre-cut tree or cut the trees themselves—the tree most likely came from a tree farm. More than 36 million Christmas trees are produced each year, and 98 percent of them come from Christmas tree farms. Christmas tree farms have a positive contribution to our economy.

None know the importance of Christmas trees to our economy better than Oregonians. In 2006, Christmas trees accounted for more than \$121 million of the Oregon economy. Our number one agricultural commodity is nursery products, including Christmas trees. While many people know Oregon for our forests, it is fitting that we are also first in the Nation in Christmas tree production. I am proud to represent thousands of Oregonians who are part of the Christmas tree and nursery industry.

Christmas trees are both part of the Christmas and winter holiday season, and important to Oregon and the nation's economy. I commend my colleague, Ms. FOXX, for introducing this resolution.

HONORING RETIRING DIRECTOR
OF THE BUFFALO AND ERIE
COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYS-
TEM MICHAEL C. MAHANEY

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of Mr. Michael C. Mahaney, Director of the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library System, whose exemplary service will conclude on January 4, 2008.

Mr. Mahaney began his involvement with the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library (B&ECPL) in December of 1973 as a Library Page in the Central Library's Stack Department. In 1976, he received his Master of Library Science degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo, and began working as a part-time Librarian at the Fairfield, Mead and Kensington Branch Libraries before being appointed to a full-time Librarian position in the Central Library's Business and Labor Department.

Mr. Mahaney's love of the library system and his natural leadership abilities soon propelled him to more senior positions within the B&ECPL, including liaison to the Erie County Legislature, Library constituents, local and regional media and the Library Board of Trustees, and Chairman of the Library's long range planning committee. He was also an active member of the New York Library Association and American Library Association, frequently representing the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library on committees and task forces and at various state and national conferences.

In January 2000, Mr. Mahaney was promoted to the post of Deputy Director, Chief Operating Officer of the B&ECPL, responsible for the administration of all Library public support and planning functions and played a critical role in the development of the Library's strategic plan.

Following a national recruitment effort in January 2003, Mr. Mahaney was chosen overwhelmingly by the Library's Board of Trustees to serve as permanent Director of the B&ECPL. During this time, he was instrumental in guiding the community through the reorganization of the Library in the aftermath of Erie County's worst budget crisis in history.

In his last year as Director of the B&ECPL, Mr. Mahaney oversaw a \$500,000 increase in county funding and the passage of the Library Protection Act, a local law safeguarding library funds after the county's annual budget is adopted, a goal library officials had sought for 14 years.

Madam Speaker, it is my honor to stand here today to pay tribute to the inspired leadership and remarkable contributions of Michael C. Mahaney during his 34 years of dedicated service to the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library System. I thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me this opportunity to honor Mr. Mahaney's past service and ask you and the rest of our colleagues to join me in wishing Mr. Mahaney the very best of health and success in the years to come.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FALSE CLAIMS ACT CORRECTIONS ACT OF 2007

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce the False Claims Act Corrections Act of 2007, a bill designed to return the False Claims Act to its original intent. This legislation is sorely needed today, with the Department of Defense budget raided by unscrupulous contractors willing to enrich themselves at the expense of our Nation, and the Medicare program at risk of insolvency while organized crime and others pilfer funds meant for the care of our elderly and disabled. The proposed amendments would correct the effect of unduly restrictive judicial opinions by clarifying that Congress intends the law to reach all types of fraud on the Federal fisc, regardless of the form of the transaction. The amendments would also restore the intended incentives for whistleblowers, to act when they discover fraud against the United States Government.

The False Claims Act was signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln in order to combat rampant fraud in Civil War defense contracts. The Supreme Court has called the law the "Government's primary litigative tool for combating fraud," a law "intended to reach all types of fraud, without qualification, that might result in financial loss to the Government." The statute, which embodies principles developed in centuries-old English common law, contains incentives for private individuals to report false claims and fraudulent activity. It also allows private parties to sue on behalf of the United States and bring their private resources to support the Government's investigation and litigation. If the United States investigates and finds merit to the private party's allegations, it may intervene in and take control of the lawsuit.

During the first century after its enactment, however, the law fell into disuse as amendments and adverse case law chipped away at the incentives needed to bring whistleblowers forward. Moreover, the courts had restricted the law by construing ambiguities in the act against the Government. It had also become apparent that, in order for the law to have its intended impact, the Department of Justice needed the power to compel testimony and production of documents to investigate allegations made by informants.

In 1986, Senator CHARLES GRASSLEY and I worked together in an effort to restore the req-

uisite incentives for whistleblowers and to clarify that the law was intended to reach all frauds on the Government, regardless of the form of the transaction. The False Claims Amendments Act was passed by Congress and signed into law on October 27, 1986. In addition to addressing incentives, the new law also provided for a subpoena-type authority for the Department of Justice so that the Department could fully investigate allegations raised by whistleblowers. Congress intended that the Department of Justice would use this new "civil investigative demand" authority to obtain documents and testimony, and then question witnesses and experts about this information to fully comprehend its significance.

I am very happy to report that, in the years since 1986, the amended Act has returned over \$20 billion to the United States Government that otherwise would have been lost to fraud. For the most part, the law has been a resounding success. The Government has received full compensation for many of its losses, and has also imposed financial penalties on many who have knowingly over-billed the Government. It has utilized information from False Claims Act informants to impose criminal sanctions, including imprisonment, on the worst offenders. The Department of Defense and the Department of Health and Human Services, in turn, have debarred from participation in the Medicare program, some of those subject to judgments and convictions. Other agencies have taken similar action. As a result of this aggressive enforcement action by our executive branch, many companies have been motivated to initiate compliance efforts, and have been deterred from engaging in the types of fraudulent schemes subject to enforcement activity.

Nonetheless, the law has not been a success in one critical respect: it could be doing far more. If construed according to Congress' original intent, it could be bringing in many billions of additional dollars in recoveries from those who have cheated at the expense of the taxpayer. Instead, some courts have misconstrued our intent, even in clear language in the law, in a manner that leaves entire categories of fraud outside the reach of the law. For example, courts have thrown out cases in which the Government has administered Government programs, and expended its funds through contractors and other agents, as opposed to direct expenditure. Many courts unreasonably have barred whistleblowers with potentially meritorious claims from pursuing cases. For example, the courts have dismissed cases brought by insiders who know key details of fraudulent schemes because they can't plead specific details of the billing documentation, such as the dates and identification numbers of invoices—information ordinarily sought and obtained in discovery. Finally, due to procedural requirements and an oversight in our original drafting, the Department of Justice has not employed the civil investigative demand authority as hoped.

The amendments proposed in this legislation will remove these debilitating qualifications and to clarify that the Act is intended to "reach all types of fraud, without qualification" leading to Government losses. We intend for these amendments to apply to all future cases as well as all cases that are pending in the courts on the date the amendments become law.

The Amendments' most critical goals are the following: Clarifying that the Act covers