

Gene serves on a number of boards, such as the Advisory Board of Marymount Medical Center. Moreover his concern for people, both here and abroad, is impressive and admirable. As part of his titanic work he is helping the people in Poland to raise funds for the Laski Institute for the Blind as well as the Polish Children's Heartline Foundation, and he has significantly contributed to the cooperation between Poland and the United States.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honoring Eugene Bąk for using his unique skills and numerous talents in service to the people of Polonia and Northeast Ohio. May his tireless dedication and his achievements continue to inspire us all.

RECOGNIZING MARK EVERSON

HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 20, 2007

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to thank Mark Everson for his dedication to public service and to congratulate him on his new position as President and Chief Executive Officer of the American Red Cross. Everson's commitment to this country as the Internal Revenue Service Commissioner is an example for everyone in public service.

Mark Everson has served as Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) since 2003, and we will certainly miss him when he officially leaves to lead the American Red Cross on May 29th. His dedication to making sure that taxpayers' needs were heard, and his commitment to expanding access to and knowledge of the Earned Income Tax Credit deserve our congratulations.

Prior to his confirmation as IRS Commissioner, Everson has worked in several other high-profile positions in the public and private sectors. During the Reagan Administration, he worked tirelessly in various positions at the U.S. information agency and the Department of Justice, and he also served at the Office of Management and Budget for the current Administration.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to call Mark Everson a friend, and I thank him for his fine work at the IRS over the last four years. It has been an honor to work with him throughout the years. He is a true public servant who is committed to the highest level of integrity, and the American Red Cross will be well served by his dedication and leadership.

RECOGNIZING FRAN AMIR

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 20, 2007

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Fran Amir, a constituent from Plainsboro, to honor her on the occasion of her tenth anniversary as Principal of the Religious School at The Jewish Center of Princeton.

Ms. Amir grew up in New York City and has been in the field of education and youth programming most of her life. A graduate of Brooklyn College, Ms. Amir taught social stud-

ies in the New York school system for many years. Ms. Amir did graduate work at Wayne State University in Jewish Studies, and has taught in Hebrew Schools in New York, West Bloomfield, Michigan, Toronto, and The Jewish Center of Princeton. She has directed teen programs both in summer camps and during the school year, and has served as the Youth and Family Programs Co-chair at the Jewish Center for five years.

Ms. Amir's students receive far more than just the basics of Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah preparation in her religious school curriculum. When becoming Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah, a young person is expected to assume the moral and ethical responsibilities of an adult, in particular, service to the community, or "mitzvot." Ms. Amir provides the best possible role model of one who performs mitzvot. Along with her service to the local Jewish community, for example, she traveled with a group of her tenth graders to Biloxi to help with cleanup of the local synagogue, Beth Israel, after Hurricane Katrina. The students carefully removed and wrapped memorial plaques from the wall, ensuring their safe storage until a new temple could be built. Not only did the students help in a practical way, but also helped maintain the Jewish tradition of reverence for the synagogue and its trappings.

The highest responsibility in the Jewish faith is to learn and teach the Torah. Through religious classes, youth programs, and by example, Ms. Amir exemplifies someone who celebrates her faith and tradition through her daily life. She shares her passion with her family and friends, and touches the lives of countless students, their families, and the congregation.

I am proud to recognize Fran Amir for all that she has given to the community on the occasion of her tenth anniversary as Principal of the Religious School of The Jewish Center of Princeton.

COMMENDING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE RUTGERS UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

SPEECH OF

HON. MIKE FERGUSON

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 18, 2007

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today in strong support of House Resolution 300, which commends the significant achievements of the Rutgers University Women's Basketball team.

I wholeheartedly join the citizens of our Nation, the people of New Jersey and my colleagues here in the U.S. House of Representatives in congratulating the team for a job well done.

I was not able to formally vote for this important measure that I proudly cosponsored yesterday, because I was in Bound Brook, New Jersey working with local, State and federal officials mapping out a plan to respond to the significant destruction many 7th Congressional District Communities sustained as a result of the massive Nor-easter weekend storm. Had I been present, I would have wholeheartedly voted Yes.

By advancing to the Final Four of the women's National Collegiate Athletic Association championship—the Rutgers University Scarlet

Knight basketball team achieved a tremendous success. Each and every member of the team should be proud of their excellent season and their significant accomplishment. The team's 27–9 season record is testament to their hard work and dedication.

I am honored and proud to join our Nation and the citizens of New Jersey in commending the team and their coach C. Vivian Stringer for this accomplishment. Each and every member of the team are true heroes and provide a real inspiration to young people across the Nation.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 1591, U.S. TROOP READINESS, VETERANS' HEALTH AND IRAQ ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 19, 2007

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I could not support this motion to instruct House conferees on the Defense Supplemental appropriations bill, for two reasons: First, I do not support the idea of rigidly insisting on the parts of the House-passed bill that the motion says the conferees should not change. Second, I believe the funding of our troops and the future of our involvement in Iraq are too important and too serious to be used for cheap partisan tricks.

My vote was based on my appraisal of the merits of the motion, without regard to how others may have decided to vote. In other words, unlike the gentleman from California who offered it, I took the motion seriously—and, like its author, I opposed it.

Earlier, when the House considered the Defense Supplemental bill itself, I voted for the bill to ensure that America's soldiers get the equipment and resources they need and the top-quality health care they may require when they come home.

My vote for the bill was not a vote to support the Bush Administration's policy in Iraq. We are 4 years into a war the Bush Administration assured us would be short and decisive. The Administration's misjudgments, lack of planning and poor leadership have made a bad situation worse—and the tactic of increasing troops for a temporary "surge" is no substitute for what is needed, namely, a strategy for containing civil war and a wider regional war.

While I am convinced that it was a strategic mistake to go to war in Iraq in the way that the Bush Administration did, we are still deeply engaged there—and while our troops are in the field, we must provide them what they need. Beyond supplying our soldiers, however, we must extricate them from what objective defense experts have characterized as an emerging civil war.

Disengaging from that civil war is the purpose of the provisions in the House-passed bill designed to hold the president accountable to the benchmarks set by his own administration and the Iraqi government—including enactment of a hydro-carbon law; conducting of provincial and local elections; reform of current laws governing the de-Baathification process; amendment of the Constitution of Iraq; and allocation of Iraqi revenues for reconstruction projects.

I strongly support that approach because I am convinced that holding the president and the Iraqi government accountable for achieving these benchmarks will provide us with the leverage necessary to pressure the Iraqi government to forge the political solution we all know is required. In fact, Defense Secretary Gates has acknowledged that the House-passed a bill has been helpful in this approach by showing the Iraqis that American patience is limited.

As I said when the House debated the bill, however, I do not believe it was a good idea to include a date certain for withdrawing U.S. combat troops from Iraq. As I said then, I do not consider this provision to be wise and if it had been up to me, it would not have been included in the bill. I remain convinced that we should steer clear of arbitrary public deadlines for military actions and focus instead on realistic diplomatic and political goals. Our military needs flexibility to be able to link movements of U.S. troops to the realities of the situation on the ground, and successful diplomacy requires such flexibility as well.

I voted for the bill despite my reservations about the withdrawal language because the deadline—August of 2008—is far enough away that it can be revisited, and while I did not like its inclusion, I do not believe in letting the perfect be the enemy of the good.

But since it would have been better if it had not been included in the first place, I could not vote to instruct the conferees to insist on including it in the conference report.

FEDERAL CONTRACTOR
ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2007

HON. BRAD ELLSWORTH

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 20, 2007

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Madam Speaker, each year, we lose billions of dollars in tax revenue because of fraud and payment delays.

I was particularly angered when I read a March 2006 report issued by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) that found tax debts totaling \$1.4 billion were owed to the federal government by over 3,800 GSA contractors. Shockingly, these GSA contractors represented approximately 10 percent of all GSA contractors during Fiscal Year 2004 and the first 9 months of Fiscal Year 2005.

This is simply unacceptable. It is my aim to increase the scrutiny on government contractors who owe millions in unpaid taxes even as they pad their bottom lines with taxpayer dollars.

Today, I am introducing a bill that will up the ante on bad actors who cheat our government of tax revenue and, in the process, gain an unfair advantage over businesses that play by the rules.

This legislation, the Federal Contractor Accountability Act of 2007, will require prospective contractors to certify that they are not delinquent in their federal tax payments. No prospective contractor will be awarded a contract with a federal agency unless the prospective contractor certifies in writing to the agency making the award or extension, or issuing the

order, that the contractor owes no Federal tax debt.

To certify, the prospective contractor must acknowledge that within a 3-year period, they have not been convicted or had a civil judgment rendered against them for violating any tax laws, failing to pay any tax, or has been notified of any delinquent taxes for which the liability remains unsatisfied.

Additionally, to certify, the prospective contractor must acknowledge that they have not received a notice of a tax lien filed against them for which the liability remains unsatisfied or the lien has not been released.

It is that simple. It is not too much to ask that a private entity that wishes to do business with the federal government certify that they pay their taxes in good faith.

Madam Speaker, the Federal Contractor Accountability Act of 2007 is a practical and efficient way to ensure that we close the ever-widening tax gap. This legislation protects good faith contractors who are playing by the rules. These contractors should not have to unfairly compete against tax cheats for federal contracts.

SOUTHERN ARIZONA BORDER
SECURITY IS UNACCEPTABLE

HON. GABRIELLE GIFFORDS

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 20, 2007

Ms. GIFFORDS. Madam Speaker, the insufficient border security in my district in southern Arizona is unacceptable. Our inspection infrastructure is deficient, and this is the critical reason why the Tucson Sector has more drugs seized and illegal immigrants apprehended than any other sector bordering Mexico.

The U.S. Border Patrol agents in southern Arizona seize an average of 2,670 pounds of drugs and apprehend 2,000 illegal immigrants every day. We must end this crisis and secure the border now.

Currently, we have no idea how much contraband or how many people are actually coming across. However, what we do know is that Tucson has become the largest land corridor in the country for marijuana and the most heavily used route in the Nation for illegal immigrants.

While all of Arizona requires additional border security measures, some communities are affected more than others. The current makeshift checkpoint on I-19 just north of Tubac creates an intolerable situation for nearby residents. Human and drug smugglers can easily circumvent or penetrate it, and there has been a recent increase in violence and crime. Residents, tourists and business people have also been inconvenienced by the checkpoint in Tubac because it has led to a massive increase in traffic.

A Federal law that prohibited Arizona's development of a permanent checkpoint in southern Arizona was rejected by the House of Representatives last year. However, at my request U.S. Border Patrol Chief David Aguilar agreed that no permanent checkpoint will be planned for the Tucson sector without signifi-

cant and direct community involvement. Southern Arizonans must work with our law enforcement agencies to create a plan for securing our borders and reducing the violence against citizens and immigrants.

Chief Aguilar, Tucson Sector Chief Patrol Agent Robert Gilbert, and I have agreed to form a working group of residents along the I-19 Corridor to collaboratively decide what future security measures need to look like.

A permanent checkpoint on I-19 can only be successful in reducing the total number of drugs and undocumented individuals if several additional measures are taken. These measures include active community involvement in the planning for the checkpoint and an overall network of border security technology that includes surveillance cameras, an array of sensors and vehicle x-ray technology similar to what exists at our ports of entry.

I believe strongly that decisions are best made at the local level. The recent change in Federal law provides citizens and law enforcement officials an opportunity to work collaboratively to secure our border, protect our communities, and foster a secure and vibrant economy.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION
OF H.R. 1495, WATER RESOURCES
DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 19, 2007

Mr. WELLER of Illinois, Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1495, the Water Resources Development Act of 2007. For the 11th Congressional District that I represent as well as for all of Illinois, passage of this legislation is of utmost importance. WRDA contains instructions for the Army Corps of Engineers to carry out studies and projects within my district at LaSalle and at Ballard's Island in the Illinois River.

The City of LaSalle, IL, has taken an aggressive approach to promoting itself as a historical tourism destination as a way to compensate for the loss of manufacturing. The highpoint of this project is the Port of LaSalle and the Illinois & Michigan Canal. The Illinois & Michigan Canal was integral to the success of Chicago as a transportation hub back in the 19th century as it connected Chicago to the Illinois River. While it fell into disuse and disrepair, the Canal Corridor Association and the City of LaSalle have remade a stretch at the Lock 14 site in LaSalle. A replica canal boat is planned to be constructed and act as a tourist attraction and also a unique venue that can be rented for private functions to bring further revenue to the community.

However, further contaminant testing for cadmium and zinc needs to be completed so that dredging may take place in order to create a long and deep channel for the canal boat to be successfully operated. In passing this bill today, we will be giving the Army Corps of Engineers the authority to carry out the additional testing and the possible dredging that may be needed so that this project can come to fruition and this national treasure can be restored to its original glory.