

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.

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FEDERAL CONTRACTOR  
ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2007

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**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.

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SOUTHERN ARIZONA BORDER  
SECURITY IS UNACCEPTABLE

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**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.

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

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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.

Another project that is contained in H.R. 1495 is the further opening of the Ballard's Island Channel. The Army Corps completed its last dredging and stone removal at the Ballard's Island site in October 2003 with the intent to study the effects and ramifications. A significant time having passed, it may be time for the Corps to continue with opening up this channel which the Corps closed almost 60 years ago. Cutting through the very large riparian bar which has built up over 60 years and which now blocks the original channel may be a means to this goal. Doing so will divert water flowing into the channel as the result of the Corps reopening.

Both the Illinois & Michigan Canal and the Ballard's Island Channel projects aid the surrounding communities both in environmental restoration and economic revitalization. I look forward to the successful completion of these projects and the important economic benefits these communities will see as a result.

The WRDA legislation not only includes provisions that will assist specific communities in my district but also contains a mandate to update the lock and dam system on the Upper Mississippi arid Illinois Rivers. This project will replace seven key 600-foot navigation locks with seven new 1,200-foot locks. Improvements to the inland water transportation system are long past due. Many structures were built over 60 years ago, when barge tows were less than 600 feet long. Today's barge tows are nearly 1,200 feet long, creating vast backlogs at many locks, and slowing the speed with which Illinois products can be shipped abroad. According to the Army Corps of Engineers, construction of the 7 locks will provide at least 3,000–6,000 jobs per year for the construction period, an estimated 12–20 years.

Farmers in Illinois and my district are dependent on the riverways to ship their products to international markets. Passage of H.R. 1495 will mean shorter shipping times, resulting in decreased costs and increased profit. I am pleased that we are finally joining in a bipartisan manner to assist American farmers in competing on the global level.

Mr. Chairman, H.R. 1495, the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, provides a building block for many communities not only in my district but in every state and region in our country.

In closing, I want to commend Chairman OBERSTAR and Ranking Member MICA for producing a good bipartisan bill again and I am hopeful that this year we can finally get this bill to the President for his signature.

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RECOGNIZING AND CELEBRATING  
THE 175TH ANNIVERSARY OF  
THE VILLAGE OF GENESEO

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**HON. THOMAS M. REYNOLDS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, April 20, 2007*

Mr. REYNOLDS. Madam Speaker, it is with great pride and delight that I rise today to recognize and celebrate the Village of Geneseo on its 175th Anniversary.

From its lush and beautiful landscape to its historical and picturesque architecture, from its tradition of excellent education and thriving agriculture to its wonderful and generous people,

the Village of Geneseo has much to celebrate on its 175th anniversary.

Located in the pleasant Genesee Valley in Livingston County, Geneseo has from the very beginning charmed onlookers and visitors with its natural beauty and landscapes. Centuries ago, Seneca Indians discovered a peaceful, rolling valley near a river that was bordered between the Finger Lakes to the east and waterfalls, which would become Letchworth State Park, to the west. They named the land jo-nihi-yuh, meaning beautiful valley, which would come to be spelled Geneseo. Thus Geneseo's very name captures its beautiful landscape of hills, grand oak trees, waterways and green fields that continue to captivate.

In 1790, two brothers, James and William Wadsworth purchased the "beautiful valley" from the Senecas, and Geneseo was founded. They built homes on both ends of Main Street, many of which still stand today. It was the beginning of what today is one of the most scenic and quaint Main Streets in America. Only one of 24 communities in the country to have its historic district recognized as having national significance, Geneseo's Main Street Historic District reflects the beauty of the area's landscape with unique and delightful architecture nestled in a picturesque, small-town community.

In 1832, the settlement was chartered and would from then on known as the "Village of Geneseo." This important moment marked the official formation of local government and village boundaries, which now mark their 175th year. Later, another important charter would be enacted when in 1897 the New York State Legislature chartered the Wadsworth Normal School at Geneseo, a school that would become SUNY Geneseo. Today, with a reputation as one of the nation's best public liberal arts schools, SUNY Geneseo is an integral part of the community, educating and preparing thousands of young people through its tremendous programs and resources.

Beyond its landscape, history, architecture, and educational tradition, possibly nothing is as inseparable from Geneseo as farming and agriculture. More than just a vital industry that helps feed our nation, farming in Geneseo is a way of life that has shaped the region and sustained its economy. Combined with Geneseo's academic, architectural and natural jewels, this tradition of farms and fields create a dynamic mix that makes the village truly unique.

Finally, Geneseo's most tremendous resource and vital characteristic is its wonderful people. In Geneseo, you find generous, down-to-earth, friendly people who are willing to lend a hand and always wish you well. More than anything to celebrate on this 175th anniversary is the good-hearted and gracious people of Geneseo.

Thus, Madam Speaker, in recognition of its history, its natural beauty, its charming architecture, its educational excellence, its agricultural tradition and its wonderful residents, I ask that this honorable body join me in celebrating the 175th Anniversary of the Village of Geneseo.

REMEMBERING CAITLIN HAMMAREN

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**HON. JOHN J. HALL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, April 20, 2007*

Mr. HALL of New York. Madam Speaker, on Monday, April 16, 2007, the Virginia Polytechnic Institute was struck by one of the most heinous acts of violence our Nation has ever witnessed. This sense of loss has resonated throughout our country and around the world. It has affected the entire Virginia Tech community and led to an outpouring of sympathy and support from all Americans. It has touched families across the Nation, especially those in my home district in the Hudson Valley, where we lost an outstanding young woman, Caitlin Hammaren.

Caitlin was a young person from Westtown, New York, who graduated from Minisink Valley High School in 2005. She was the section leader in the high school chorus, loved to ride horses, and was kind and generous to all who knew her. As a Resident Assistant in her dormitory at Virginia Tech, she looked over and protected her fellow students and guided them through their daily experiences as young people just learning how to become independent adults. Caitlin will be deeply missed by her family, friends, and the campus community that she was such an important and cherished part of. I know all of my colleagues join me on this day of mourning in sending our thoughts and prayers to Caitlin's family and friends.

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IN CELEBRATION OF HARRY DAVIDIAN'S 80TH BIRTHDAY

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**HON. JIM COSTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, April 20, 2007*

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I join my colleague Mr. DEVIN NUNES, and rise today to celebrate the 80th birthday of Mr. Harry Davidian, a wonderful husband, father, and community member.

Harry has an interesting life story. He was born on April 23, 1927 to Agavnie and Giragos Davidian. As the son of immigrants of Armenia, Harry looked out for his siblings, John and Hozanna. All three children attended Dinuba High School in Dinuba, CA. After high school, Harry served in the United States Army as a medic for 2 years and in 1948 received an honorable discharge.

In 1948, Harry met and married Laura Balakian. Throughout the years Laura has remained by Harry's side as his soul mate, confidant, and life partner. Together they had three beautiful daughters: Janice, Phyllis, and Rebecca.

As a life long entrepreneur, Harry furthered his interest in farming and created a partnership with George Zarounian, which became known as Zee & Dee. They became the largest shippers of Vine Ripe Tomatoes in the Nation. After much success they joined the Foursome Development Company in Monterey, with partners Ted Balestreri and Bert Cutino. The ultimate American dream was realized when they developed the Historic Cannery Row.