

and organizations. She has led the school's math and science teams to victory while attaining some personal awards. Recently, Kim was accepted to Stanford University.

I wish to offer my congratulations to Kim. I would also like to recognize her parents and the faculty of Birdville High School for their outstanding commitment to Kim's education. I wish her even greater success as she continues her education, and I am proud to represent her in the 26th District of Texas.

U.S. TROOP READINESS, VETERANS' HEALTH, AND IRAQ ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2007

SPEECH OF

**HON. RUSH D. HOLT**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 25, 2007*

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this conference report because it recognizes the reality on the ground in Iraq. It's past time for the President to recognize that reality and to change course in Iraq.

As events in Iraq have shown repeatedly over the last 4 years, we are fighting an insurgency that retains the support of the Iraqi people. Every previous troop increase the President has implemented has failed to achieve its stated end: to reduce the violence and buy time for Iraq's government to work out a political solution to end the insurgency. So far, the President's latest troop surge has produced the same result: The insurgents have adapted, our casualties are rising, and Iraq's leaders are no closer to a political settlement that will end the fighting than they were before the "surge" began.

This week, the Government Accountability Office provided fresh evidence that events in Iraq are spiraling out of control.

GAO Comptroller General David Walker testified before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense on April 23 that "Despite U.S. and Iraqi efforts to shift a greater share of the country's defense on Iraqi forces, the security situation continues to deteriorate." Mr. Walker further noted that "in November 2006, the State Department reported that corruption and infiltration by militias and others loyal to parties other than the Iraqi government have resulted in the Iraqi security forces being part of the problem in many areas instead of the solution." So despite multiple changes in our approach to training Iraq's security forces over the past 4 years, they remain just as sectarianly fragmented, undermanned and infiltrated by insurgents as when we began the process in 2003.

Additionally, Iraq's civilian government shows no signs of reforming itself. Indeed, as Mr. Walker noted in his testimony, "Some Iraqi ministries, including the Ministries of Interior, Agriculture, Health, Transportation, and Tourism, are led by ministers whose allegiance is to political parties hostile to U.S. goals. These ministers use their positions to pursue partisan agendas that conflict with the goal of building a government that represents all ethnic groups."

The Iraqi population continues to support the insurgents. Iraq's security forces remain ineffective, corrupt, and infiltrated by insurgents. Iraq's sectarian civil war rages. Key

Iraqi Government ministers are actively working against stated American aims in Iraq. And the President of the United States wants this Congress to write him a blank check to continue funding this failed policy.

Fortunately, the conference report before us rejects the President's failed approach and holds him and the Iraqi Government accountable for events on the ground in this civil war-ravaged country. Passing this bill will send a clear message to Iraq's leaders that the patience of the American people has limits. Passing this bill is the best way to pressure Iraq's leaders to do what is necessary to end their civil war, because this Congress will not leave American troops in the crossfire between Iraq's sectarian factions year after year. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for this bill.

RECOGNIZING CARRIE BAGNELL AS SANTA ROSA COUNTY, FL 2007 ROOKIE TEACHER OF THE YEAR

**HON. JEFF MILLER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 26, 2007*

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it is an honor for me to rise today to recognize Carrie Bagnell as Santa Rosa County's Rookie Teacher of the Year.

Carrie Bagnell joined the Santa Rosa School District in 2006, with a background in Elementary Education from Indiana University. Ms. Bagnell is currently in her first year of teaching, where she teaches kindergarten at West Navarre Primary School in Navarre, FL.

Throughout her inaugural year of teaching, Carrie Bagnell has gained experience and training in phonics, literacy block, classroom organization and management, grants, and education of students with exceptionalities, ESE. Above all, she has earned the heart and respect of her students and the school community. Out of her passion for teaching and her love for children, Carrie Bagnell is the positive force behind each student's growth of mind, by giving them the confidence, knowledge, and inspiration needed to succeed.

The Rookie Teacher of the Year recognizes one teacher in his or her third year or less of teaching, and to be honored as Rookie of the Year places Carrie Bagnell among the great teachers in northwest Florida. Santa Rosa County is honored to have her as one of its own.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am proud to recognize Carrie Bagnell on this outstanding achievement and her exemplary service in the Santa Rosa County School District.

IN HONOR OF RICHARD GRESKO AND EXPRESSING THAT HE SHOULD RECEIVE THE MEDAL OF HONOR FOR HIS COURAGEOUS ACTIONS ON MARCH 11, 1970 IN VIETNAM

**HON. PATRICK J. MURPHY**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 26, 2007*

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute Richard Gresko, one of America's true heroes. The reason for my statement today, however, is to correct a grave injustice done to him by our country.

In March of 1970 Richard Gresko was in Vietnam serving as a lance corporal in the United States Marine Corps. On the night of March 11, 1970 Gresko was leading three of his fellow marines in an ambush to protect a village from the Viet Cong. Around midnight Gresko's team was surprised from behind by the enemy. A firefight ensued and one of the enemy threw a grenade in between Gresko and his men.

As the citation on his military award reads, "With complete disregard for his own personal safety and fully aware of the dangers involved, he unhesitatingly threw himself on top of the grenade, absorbing most of the blast fragments with his own body in order to protect his men from certain injury and possible death." Despite being painfully wounded, Gresko continued to direct his men in combat. When he was helicoptered out to receive medical treatment, he continued to give information about the enemy despite bleeding profusely with hundreds of pieces of shrapnel in his face, arms and chest. Madam Speaker, it is a miracle that he survived.

Madam Speaker, I wish I could be here today to say that Richard Gresko, a man who unhesitatingly risked his own life to save his fellow marines, received the recognition that he deserves, but sadly I cannot. Mr. Gresko's bravery, sacrifice, and valor are beyond question, yet he has not been honored as he should. To truly honor this brave American, he should be awarded the Medal of Honor. Despite the fact that Gresko's commanding officer immediately put him in for the Medal of Honor, 6 years would pass before any recognition of Mr. Gresko's heroism was made by our Nation when he was awarded the Navy Cross.

Madam Speaker, as a former soldier I appreciate the amount of courage and bravery it takes to do what Mr. Gresko did for his men. There is no room for subjectivity in this matter. Richard Gresko risked his life to save men under his command. That is the highest form of sacrifice a serviceman can make and it deserves the highest honor that our Nation can bestow.

For over 30 years Mr. Gresko has patiently waited for the recognition that he deserves. His case has undergone countless reviews but each time is caught in a web of bureaucracy and dead ends. It is high time that we honor this hero and pay tribute to him for what he did for us. For that reason, Madam Speaker, I am introducing a bill to authorize and request that the President of the United States award Richard Gresko the Medal of Honor for his acts of valor on March 11, 1970, in Vietnam.

As if his gallantry on the battlefield was not enough, Mr. Gresko is also a pillar of his community in Newtown, PA, in my district. He is a father, a grandfather, and a husband of more than 38 years. Even today, despite the fact that he lives in constant pain from the injuries he sustained that night, Mr. Gresko is adamant that he would do it all over again. His instincts told him to run from that grenade, but Mr. Gresko says, "You have to overcome that. You know you're gonna die, but you have to protect your men. Sometimes the whole is more important than the one."

Madam Speaker, Richard Gresko is truly among the finest that America has to offer. It is my hope that with the introduction of this bill we will move one small step closer toward correcting an injustice that has gone unrecognized for almost 4 decades. Our Nation must do right by this hero whose actions define the phrase "above and beyond the call of duty."

REMEMBERING RUSSIAN  
PRESIDENT BORIS YELTSIN

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2007

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, with the passing of former Russian President Boris Yeltsin, the world lost a truly heroic leader. President Yeltsin was instrumental in placing Soviet Communism on the ash heap of history, fulfilling the vision of Ronald Reagan for victory in the Cold War by liberating Russia for its citizens to benefit from freedom and democracy.

The words of Vladimir Simonov, political commentator for the Russian News and Information Agency Novosti, in the article He Did It His Way memorialize President Yeltsin well.

BORIS YELTSIN: HE DID IT HIS WAY

MOSCOW.—President Bush sees Boris Yeltsin as a historic figure who served his country at a time of great change.

Prime Minister Tony Blair recalls the Russian leader as an outstanding statesman who realized how much Russia needed democratic and economic reforms.

Javier Solana, a European Union official and former secretary-general of NATO, thinks that Yeltsin displayed incredible foresight and courage when he decided to sign a hitherto unthinkable agreement on Russian cooperation with the North Atlantic alliance in the early 1990s.

These statements could be summed up in the following words, which the West could write on a wreath to lay at the grave of Russia's first elected president: "We are grateful to you for creating a Russia that no longer scares us." In other words, Yeltsin made Russia look normal in the eyes of the civilized world.

He gave his people three simple, fundamental rights that citizens of civilized countries have enjoyed for a long time. Under Yeltsin, Russians received the opportunity to say what they thought, elect who they liked to major posts, and own private property, be it a house in the Moscow suburbs or a villa in Nice, although the majority could buy the latter only in theory.

Having embarked on the path of democracy and the market economy, no matter how awful it seemed to some initially, the mysterious and dangerous communist controlled Russia turned into a sensible and understandable country. Russians became more

like Westerners. Perhaps at that moment, when differences were swept away, the Cold War came to an end. Credit for this historic accomplishment largely goes to Yeltsin as well.

By the end of his eight-year-long rule, Boris Yeltsin had lost the admiration of his compatriots. His popularity in Russia, but not in the West, had gone down. Well-to-do analysts watching events in Russia from afar thought that nothing tragic was happening. To be more precise, they believed that Russia had to go through its ordeals like any country undergoing a great change.

The West shares our grief because it also understands the greatness of the late Russian president. After all, it was Yeltsin who buried communism and made Russia part of the free world. In history textbooks he will always be remembered as a giant Russian standing on a tank, the man who prevented his country's return to the gloomy era of totalitarianism.

Frank Sinatra once sang "I did it my way." The same words can be applied to Yeltsin. He did it his way, and both Russia and the West are grateful to him for choosing freedom.

HONORING MARIO GALLEGOS, JR.,  
FOR BEING NAMED "GOVERNOR  
FOR A DAY"

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2007

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend Mr. Mario V. Gallegos, Jr., on being named "Governor for a Day" in the State of Texas. Senator Gallegos, a long time Houstonian, has served his community first as a Houston firefighter, then as a Texas State Representative, and now as a Texas State Senator. He was the first Hispanic Senator elected to represent Harris County.

Senator Gallegos, like myself, is a graduate of the University of Houston. In Austin, he continually serves as a strong voice for the university, to ensure levels of funding increase with the growing population of his district.

Having served 22 years as a firefighter, where he retired as Senior Captain, Senator Gallegos has fought for growth and increased funding for firefighters and law enforcement, alike. He was recently recognized for his work in the 77th Legislative Session by the Texas State Association of Fire Fighters and the Combined Law Enforcement Association of Texas. Senator Gallegos has also received such accolades as the Texas Municipal League's "Distinguished Legislative Service Award," Legislator of the Year by the Mexican American Bar Association of Texas, and the Fiestas Patrias Distinguished Hispanic of the Year Award.

And so it is with great pleasure that I recognize my good friend in his continued work to serve Texas, Mario Gallegos. His distinguished legacy of service speaks volumes and I congratulate him on being named "Governor for a Day."

CONGRESSIONAL ART COMPETITION WINNER KRISTEN HRIZO

HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2007

Mr. DOYLE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the artistic ability of a young woman from my Congressional District, Kristen Hrizo of West Mifflin High School.

Kristen is the winner in the 2007 14th Congressional District of Pennsylvania's High School Art Competition, "An Artistic Discovery." Kristen's work, a piece utilizing pencil, ink, watercolors, color pencil, and marker, is entitled "A Walk in the Jungle."

Kristen's artwork was selected from a number of outstanding entries to this year's competition. I am certain that her family is proud of her artistic talents as well as this accomplishment.

It gives me great pride and pleasure that Kristen's painting will be representing the 14th Congressional District of Pennsylvania in the national exhibit of high school students' artwork that will be set up in the United States Capitol in the coming weeks. The winners of the Congressional Art Competitions held in each Congressional District will be displayed in that exhibit.

I encourage my colleagues as well as any visitor to Capitol Hill to view Kristen's artwork, along with all of the other winning artwork that will be on display throughout the next year. It is amazing to walk through this corridor and see the interpretation of life through the eyes of these young artists from all across our country.

I would also like to recognize all the other participants in this year's 14th Congressional District High School Art Competition, "An Artistic Discovery." I would like to thank these impressive young artists for allowing us to share and celebrate their talents, imagination, and creativity. The efforts of these students in expressing themselves in a powerful and positive manner are no less than spectacular. I hope that all of these individuals continue to utilize their artistic talents, and I wish them all the best of luck in their future endeavors.

I want to congratulate all of the participants in this year's 14th Congressional District Art Competition and thank them for sharing their gifts with us.

U.S. TROOP READINESS VETERANS' HEALTH, AND IRAQ ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 25, 2007

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the Fiscal Year 2007 Emergency Supplemental Spending bill.

A few weeks ago, the House of Representatives passed a version of this legislation that included billions of dollars in non-emergency spending and numerous provisions relating to troop withdrawal that were not requested by the Administration or our military leaders. The conference agreement before us today endorses these extraneous provisions, and as a