

Electricity Prices Increasing? An Industry-Wide Perspective”), if recent investment trends continue, distribution investment will average \$14 billion per year over the next 10 years. This investment is almost triple the projected amount of annual investment in new transmission capacity and is likely to exceed capital spending on generation capacity over the next decade as well.

The American Council for Capital Formation released an analysis yesterday of the depreciation treatment of energy assets of the U.S. compared with 11 other countries. The analysis concluded that the U.S. generally has less favorable tax depreciation rules for electric distribution rules than a number of the U.S.’s major trading partners. The U.S. has slower cost recovery during the first five and ten years after the investment than the comparison countries. For example, U.S. capital cost recovery for distribution lines in the first five years is 29.5 percent compared to 40 percent in China, 58 percent in Korea and 50 percent in Taiwan. Nine of the countries analyzed had faster cost recovery than the U.S. From a competitive standpoint, our depreciation rules need to be updated. My bill will begin to tackle part of the problem.

Investment in electric distribution facilities—in wires, transformers, substations and all traditional utility distribution facilities—is needed, first and foremost to keep pace with growing customer demands. Distribution investment also is needed to replace and modernize our nation’s aging distribution grid.

Tax depreciation incentives for electric distribution systems also would help mitigate the cost of other factors affecting spending on distribution infrastructure. For example, some companies are being directed to place new and/or existing distribution lines underground, particularly in urban areas. Undergrounding power lines costs five to ten times the cost of overhead lines. In addition, large distribution system expenditures have been necessitated by widespread hurricane and storm damage experienced in 2004 and 2005, which has impacted energy and material costs across the nation.

The Brattle Group report estimates that underinvestment in transmission and distribution systems costs the American economy at least \$20 billion a year—a figure certain to grow if transmission and distribution infrastructure investment does not keep pace with demand. In 2005, we reduced depreciable lives for transmission assets from 20 to 15 years as part of the Energy Policy Act. Similarly, Congress should do the same for distribution assets. This action will spur investments needed to update the aging distribution infrastructure to a modern, automated, high-performance network.

IN MEMORY OF SHANE STANFIELD

HON. BARBARA CUBIN

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 3, 2007

Mrs. CUBIN. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor Shane Stanfield of Cheyenne, Wyoming, who was killed in Iraq while serving his nation. It is with deep sadness today that I join Shane’s family in mourning their loss.

Shane Stanfield entered into military service on behalf of his country in 2000, eventually

serving with honor and distinction in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom as a proud member of the United States Marine Corps. In 2004, Shane left the active duty military but continued serving his country as a private security officer. Shane was killed while protecting American personnel during Operation Iraqi Freedom on January 23, 2007.

Shane was only 25 years old. He is remembered both for his love of adventure and for his hardworking nature. Shane may be best remembered, however, for his kindness toward everyone he met.

We must never forget the sacrifice made by Shane Stanfield, or the countless other soldiers, who willingly place the safety and well being of the nation above their own. Shane Stanfield was a beloved husband, son, brother, uncle, nephew, and dear friend to those left behind. His family members and friends selflessly parted with him during his service to our nation.

We recognize that our deepest gratitude cannot possibly begin to diminish Shane Stanfield’s absence, but his memory will live on in the hearts of our nation’s citizens. I hope that this knowledge will provide his family with some measure of comfort as they work to find healing in Shane’s remembrance.

COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 3, 2007

Mr. ISRAEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to talk with my colleagues about a visit I recently made to Deer Park High School in my Congressional District, where the students invited me to participate in a hearing on college affordability.

The Seniors at Deer Park High School and I discussed the skyrocketing costs associated with getting a college education and the ways in which many middle class families on Long Island are put at a critical disadvantage—being too rich to qualify for student aid but too poor to pay for college. They shared their personal thoughts and concerns about how they’ll pay for college. And they advised me on legislation I’m drafting to make college more affordable.

Higher education is so important—but so many parents and students simply cannot afford to pay for college. And many parents and students who find a way to struggle through end up thousands of dollars in debt. Total expenses for public universities (including tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, transportation and other expenses) now average \$12,796 per year. Total expenses for private universities now average \$30,367 per year. And New York has the highest number of subsidized student borrowers in the country.

How can the United States compete in the global economy if our young people cannot afford a college education? We’ve made a start. In the first 100 hours of the 110th Congress, we passed the College Student Relief Act of 2007. This legislation will make college more affordable and accessible by cutting the interest rate on subsidized student loans for undergraduates in half over the next five years—from the current 6.8% to 3.4%.

In closing, I’d like to commend the students at Deer Park High School for all of the hard

work and preparation they put into our college affordability hearing and I want to thank them for all of their wonderful suggestions. The time I spent at Deer Park High School truly helped reinforce my commitment to making college more affordable for Long Island families.

NEED TO ADDRESS H-1B SHORT-FALL IN COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM LEGISLATION

HON. GABRIELLE GIFFORDS

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 3, 2007

Ms. GIFFORDS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of comprehensive immigration reform that is tough, practical and effective. I urge my colleagues to work together in a bi-partisan manner so that we can move legislation to the floor as soon as possible.

Our inability to solve the Nation’s immigration crisis is taking a major toll on the high-tech business sector and crippling their ability to have the workforce they need. As American companies struggle to compete in the global information-economy, they are continually seeking the brightest minds to develop new innovations and technologies. Sometimes, those minds are in other countries. Many of these individuals studied at top U.S. colleges and universities but have returned to their native country.

H-1B visas allow American businesses to hire temporary skilled foreign employees in specialized occupations when they are unable to find a qualified U.S. citizen for the job. These specialized occupations include architecture, engineering, mathematics, physical sciences, social sciences, medicine and health, education, law, accounting, business specialties, theology and the arts.

Each year, the number of H-1B visas are capped at 65,000. Applications for 2008 were only open for 1 day, after 150,000 applications were filed on April 1.

Robert Breault, president and founder of the Breault Research Organization of Tucson, called the cap on applications “a catastrophe.” Southern Arizona’s “Optics Valley,” as well as other high-tech corridors, depend on foreign workers with advanced degrees—degrees often earned in U.S. universities—to supplement the workforce.

Our high-tech companies are competing in a global marketplace. To keep pace, they must hire the best employees. As comprehensive immigration reform legislation begins to take shape, congress must ensure that the number of H-1B visas is increased.

A TRIBUTE TO FRANCIS T. MIKO

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 3, 2007

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the accomplishments of Francis T. Miko, Specialist in International Relations with the Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division of the Congressional Research Service. Mr. Miko retired on

April 27, 2007, after serving the Congress for over thirty years in various positions at CRS. Mr. Miko's tenure spanned multiple Congresses and several epochs in foreign policy and European affairs, his area of specialization. He has served as the institutional memory of Congress on important issues in which he was the recognized expert. His work as an analyst, manager, and leader in the CRS organization is particularly notable for his tact, judgment, and unswerving commitment to the core CRS mission of supporting an informed national legislature with nonpartisan analytical and research work.

Mr. Miko began working at CRS in 1974 as a research assistant in Soviet and Eastern European affairs. As an analyst and later as a specialist, Mr. Miko served as the principal CRS expert on Central and Eastern Europe. The quality of his work earned him widespread recognition and significantly contributed to CRS's reputation as a center for advanced policy analysis. During the Cold War years, he produced numerous studies on Eastern Europe and the détente period between the United States and Soviet Union, including major east-west initiatives such as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). He participated in the congressional delegation to the Belgrade Conference of the CSCE in 1977 and the Budapest CSCE Cultural Forum in 1985. He was seconded to the Department of Defense in 1992 to serve as a representative of the Secretary of Defense at the CSCE Review Conference in Helsinki. As the Cold War wound down, Mr. Miko completed major CRS projects on the impact of the transformation of Eastern Europe after 1989 and the end of the Soviet Union in 1991. Later, he provided key analyses on global security issues such as organized crime, trafficking in persons, and approaches to counterterrorism. In the immediate aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, Mr. Miko served as co-coordinator of the CRS Terrorist Task Force that worked across subject divisions to coordinate related research needs for Congress.

I got to know Mr. Miko well in another role, one through which he also provided invaluable service to Congress. He has played an instrumental part in two congressional programs to assist with the development of new democracies. From 1990 to 1996, Mr. Miko coordinated the CRS role in the Frost-Solomon Special Task Force on the Development of Parliamentary Institutions in Central and Eastern Europe. The role of the Task Force was to help strengthen the parliamentary infrastructures of the formerly passive legislatures in twelve countries of post-communist central and eastern Europe. This unprecedented initiative of the U.S. Congress entailed extremely demanding and complex activities involving technical assistance on legislative practice, library and research institutional development, and automation systems and design. Mr. Miko's understanding of Europe on the one hand, and of Congress on the other, was essential to the success of the program, as his first-hand knowledge of the people and cultures of Eastern European countries helped the Task Force appropriately tailor its activities to the needs and working styles of its legislative partners in the region.

Rep. DAVID DREIER and I worked closely with Mr. Miko on the Frost-Solomon Task Force, and our positive experiences inspired

us, in 2005, to establish the House Democracy Assistance Commission to strengthen democratic institutions in emerging democracies worldwide. In this effort Mr. Miko has again proven an invaluable resource as a veteran expert in the development of democratic legislatures. He has helped the Commission determine appropriate partner nations, participated in needs assessments, and delivered direct technical assistance to partner legislatures. Most recently he accompanied us on a mission to Georgia, where we are working to support the democratic gains of the Rose Revolution. I and other Members of the Democracy Assistance Commission will greatly miss having such ready access to Mr. Miko at CRS, but we hope to find ways to continue to draw upon his insights and expertise as we move ahead with our work.

Over the years, Mr. Miko assumed several senior management positions at CRS, serving twice as section head of the Europe, Middle East, and Africa section, and once as deputy assistant director for the foreign affairs division. He represented the Library of Congress at the National War College in 1984–1985. He earned a Distinguished Service Award for his performance as representative of the Office of the Secretary of Defense at the 1992 Helsinki Review Conference.

In all of his professional endeavors, Mr. Miko has been a role model of the highest level of service to the U.S. Congress, the Library of Congress, and CRS. He has excelled as a capable manager of programs and resources, as a nationally renowned expert in his field of policy expertise, as a diplomat, and as a notable contributor to the legislative work of Congress.

On behalf of my colleagues in Congress, I want to express my appreciation to Francis Miko for his many years of public service and for his multiple contributions to the Congress, and to wish him well in his retirement.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO PANCH R.
PRASAD

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 3, 2007

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Panch R. Prasad, C.E.O. of U.S. International Trading Corporation, for his recent professional successes and achievements.

Panch is the President and C.E.O. of U.S. International Trading Corporation. The company was founded in 1990 in Portland, Oregon, however, their corporate offices are now located in Las Vegas, Nevada. Since its founding, the U.S. International Trading Corporation has been committed to providing quality hair care, skin care, and cosmetics products. The company's beauty and cosmetics products are sold across the world with the products being available to consumers in East Asia, Europe, South America, the Middle East, and Australia.

Most recently, Panch was honored as the Small Business Exporter of the Year by the Nevada District Office of the U.S. Small Business Administration. The Small Business Administration utilizes an independent panel of judges that use several factors in awarding these honors to the recipients.

The panel evaluates businesses on several factors such as the growth in number of employees, increase in sales, current and past financial reports, innovativeness of product or service, and contributions to community-oriented projects. This is an outstanding and well-deserved honor. Panch believes in supporting a commitment to excellence by providing quality distribution and products to U.S. International Trading Corporation's customers. I applaud his commitment to excellence.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Panch R. Prasad. His professional success is truly commendable. I congratulate him for his recent recognition by the Nevada District Office of the U.S. Small Business Administration and wish him the best in his future endeavors.

FEDERAL AGENCY DATA BREACH
PROTECTION ACT

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 3, 2007

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, secure information is the lifeblood of effective government policy and management, yet federal agencies continue to hemorrhage vital data. Personal information continues to be placed at risk, and we must ask: What is being done to protect the sensitive digital identities of millions of Americans, and how can we limit the damage when personal data does go astray?

As we all now know, a Department of Veterans Affairs employee reported the theft of computer equipment from his home—equipment which stored more than 26 million records containing personal information. VA leadership delayed acting on the report for almost two weeks, while millions were at risk of serious harm from identity theft and the agency struggled to determine the exact extent of the breach.

But this is only one in a long string of personal information breaches in the public and private sectors, including financial institutions, data brokerage companies, and academic institutions. Last year, we found the Census Bureau could not account for over one thousand laptops containing sensitive information issued to employees. And just recently, we learned the Department of Agriculture left sensitive data on a website, putting the personal information of 150,000 individuals at risk.

These breaches continue to illustrate how far we have to go to reach the goal of strong, uniform, government-wide information security policies and procedures.

On the Government Reform Committee, I focused on government-wide information management and security for a long time. The Privacy Act and the E-Government Act of 2002 outline the parameters for the protection of personal information. These recent incidents highlight the importance of establishing—and following—security standards for safeguarding personal information. They also highlight the need for proactive security breach notification requirements for organizations—including Federal agencies—dealing with sensitive personal information.

Congress continues working on requirements for the private sector—but Federal agencies present unique requirements and