

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER THE FDA'S PROPOSAL TO CLOSE TESTING LABORATORIES

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2007

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my grave concern over what I understand to be the Federal Drug Administration's proposal to close down as many as nine regional testing laboratories.

This decision, apparently made in the fall of 2006, has been steadily attracting resistance as more people are made aware of it. It appears that the FDA's Office of Regulatory Affairs (ORA), which, among other activities, oversees the labs, plans to close between seven and nine laboratories—more than half of the current facilities, leaving only four to six labs up and running.

Madam Speaker, this nation has a spectacular technological reputation. I am proud of the work performed by the good men and women of the FDA. Everyone can understand the importance of quickly and efficiently testing dangerous materials, which is but one of the responsibilities of these laboratories. But I would like to emphasize that regional laboratories are even more important today, when an E. coli outbreak in California needs immediate attention and not days of delay because substances must be shipped across the country to a lab in New York. Recent outbreaks of tainted spinach, with immediate testing in California, proved this urgent point.

Madam Speaker, it is imperative that we carefully and cautiously analyze this plan to consolidate our testing labs into a handful of regional centers. President Colleen M. Kelley of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), which represents more than 5,200 FDA employees, has expressed her concern that FDA employees are not being properly considered in this radical transition plan to close labs this spring. The targeted laboratories are located in Philadelphia; Denver; Detroit; Alameda, California; Lenexa, Kansas; San Juan, Puerto Rico; and Winchester, Massachusetts. My understanding of the plan is that these operations, along with an estimated 250 employees, would be moved to five multi-purpose "mega-labs" geared to handle all types of FDA testing. Common sense tells us that our testing response will be altered greatly with fewer laboratories. Common sense also tells us that many loyal Federal employees will be facing drastic changes, including termination.

Sen. TED KENNEDY (D-MA) and Rep. JOHN DINGELL (D-MI) have raised concerns about these FDA lab closure plans. They have received limited response to their questions. This is unconscionable, given that we all work for the same team.

Madam Speaker, in this time of heightened concern about a wide variety of levels of safety in our nation, it seems particularly troubling

to be downsizing our FDA laboratories simply for budgetary concerns. I would be gratified to learn whether or not alternatives to these lab closures have been properly explored.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2007

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, on Monday, May 7, 2007 I was absent for three rollcall votes. If I had been here, I would have voted: "Yes" on rollcall No. 302, "yes" on rollcall No. 303, "yes" on rollcall No. 304.

I would like this inserted into the RECORD in its appropriate place.

IN RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL TEACHER DAY

HON. PATRICK J. MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2007

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise today in honor of our nation's teachers, who every day, are inspiring people—of all ages—to dream, learn and achieve. Today, on National Teacher Day, it is important that we pause to thank educators everywhere for their service to our communities and our country. We entrust teachers with the development of our children—they are responsible for our ability to build a better future.

National Teacher Day should be an opportunity to think about the debt we owe our nation's teachers. Madam Speaker, We thank teachers for showing children the satisfaction and fulfillment of achieving their goals. We thank them for proving that learning can be fun. We thank them for contributing to the moral development of students. We thank them for guiding our children through every new challenge. But most of all, we thank teachers for dedicating their lives to inspiring and leading the next generation of Americans.

Madam Speaker, I am passionate about education because it has always been such an important part of my life. As a former educator and the brother of a schoolteacher I know how important teaching is and how rewarding it can be. I was honored to serve as an associate professor at the United States Military Academy at West Point where I was able to teach the next generation of military leaders. Just recently I saw a former student, who is now an officer in Iraq. Seeing the way he has grown as person and succeeded as a professional is truly gratifying.

All of us had teachers that changed our lives. Outside of our families, teachers are responsible for who we are and how we view the world. And the job can be tough, it can be

tiring and it can be thankless. Madam Speaker, that is why it is so important for all of us to take time to show our appreciation, not just today, but anytime we remember a lesson learned and overcome a challenge. I will take time today to think about the teachers who helped shape my life and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I would like to state for the record my position on the following votes I missed due to the death of my grandmother.

On Wednesday evening and Thursday May 2 and 3, 2007, I was granted an official leave of absence and thus missed rollcall votes 284 through 301. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall votes 288, 293, 296, 297, and 299 and "yea" on rollcall votes 284, 285, 286, 287, 289, 290, 291, 292, 294, 295, 298, 300, and 301.

In addition, on May 7th I missed rollcall votes 302, 303, and 304 because of flooding in my district. My services were being utilized in the district helping fill sandbags to prevent any further flooding. I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote 302 and "yea" on rollcall vote 303 and 304.

IT IS TIME TO CLOSE THE GUANTANAMO BAY DETENTION FACILITY

HON. JANE HARMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2007

Ms. HARMAN. Madam Speaker, the September 11th terrorist attacks posed a defining challenge for the United States. Our Nation was savagely attacked; our peace and prosperity threatened. A swift and decisive response was necessary.

Many of us offered to work with the Administration to come up with a legal framework to guide that response. One that offered the flexibility needed to meet the challenges posed by al Qaida and 21st century terrorism, but also respected human rights and the rule of law.

Unfortunately, the Administration went its own way and failed to establish a widely accepted legal foundation for its actions. We are all now paying the price.

Nowhere are the problems created by the White House's myopic approach more apparent than at the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

I have visited Gitmo three times.

Each time, I asked hard questions about how the men detained there were being treated, how long they would be held there, and what efforts were being made to ensure that the innocent were released. By the third visit, it became very clear that I was getting the run-around.

The truth was that the Administration was adrift in what I call the “fog of law.” Guantanamo was built on a legal fiction. The Administration claimed the authority to detain any person it deemed appropriate, to deny that person the protections of U.S. and international law, and to do so indefinitely—so long as that person was held outside U.S. soil.

The claim was extraordinary, and the Administration seemed unconcerned that it was without sound legal parameters to guide its actions.

At Gitmo, the Administration effectively discarded the procedures that we have used for centuries—in civilian and military tribunals alike—to separate the innocent from the guilty and ensure fair punishment for those that deserve it.

Hundreds of men were detained at Guantanamo for years, without access to an independent court in which to argue their innocence, without access to the evidence against them, and without protection of the Geneva Conventions.

These are rights that the United States has long pressed developing countries to adopt, arguing that they are fundamental to any just legal system.

It should be no surprise that the Administration’s ad hoc procedures appear to have resulted in the improper detention of many individuals whose only crime was being in the wrong place at the wrong time, or having the wrong name.

The Supreme Court brought the curtain down on the Guantanamo legal fiction in its Hamdan decision.

And now it is time for the Congress to act.

Madam Speaker, the United States is engaged in a long struggle against al Qaida and other jihadist terror organizations. These groups are successfully exploiting the antipathy that many in the Arab world—and, increasingly, not just the Arab world—feel toward the West, and toward America in particular.

In order to erode al Qaida’s appeal and dry up its recruiting base, we have to win the battle for the hearts and minds of the next generation of would-be terrorists.

Guantanamo has become a liability. The real and perceived injustices occurring there have given our enemies an easy example of our failures and alleged ill intent. The prison is so widely viewed as illegitimate, so plainly inconsistent with America’s proud legal traditions; it has become a stinging symbol of our tarnished standing abroad.

Defense Secretary Gates has admitted as much, arguing the facility should be closed because its “taint” would render any trials held there illegitimate in the eyes of the world.

I agree with Secretary Gates. It is time to shut the prison down.

That is why I am proud to introduce, together with my friend and member of the Armed Services Committee Mr. ABERCROMBIE, legislation to require the closing of the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay. Senator FEINSTEIN has introduced a similar bill in the Senate.

The bill requires the President to close the facility within one year of enactment, and gives him a range of choices for dealing with the detainees. These options include transfer to a detainee’s country of origin (so long as that country provides certain assurances regarding treatment of the detainee); transfer to a facility in the United States to be tried before military or civilian authorities (like the first 1993 World Trade Center bombers and John Walker Lindh); transfer to a qualified international tribunal; or, if appropriate, outright release.

Make no mistake: this legislation is not about setting terrorists free. Many of those held at Gitmo are the worst of the worst—hard-core haters who cannot be rehabilitated. This legislation is about being true to America’s most fundamental values and legal norms.

Closing Guantanamo alone will not heal America’s moral black eye. But it is a necessary first step.

TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH PETERSEN

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2007

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life and accomplishments of a great American and one of my constituents, the late Joseph Petersen of the Bronx, New York. I wish to recognize Mr. Petersen for the lifetime he spent in the service of his country as a Tuskegee Airman and I thank his loved ones for the sacrifices they made as well on behalf of this nation.

Mr. Petersen passed in December 2006 at the age of 97. Though he died too soon to see his unit awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest decoration of bravery that Congress can bestow, his life and spirit exemplify the heroism upon which the award was founded. Mr. Petersen and his unit fought gallantly and throughout four years of war they lost almost none of the bombers charged under their protection. Mr. Petersen was a soldier in combat in the truest form, striving against both enemy planes and domestic racism, and the courageous example he set will remain an everlasting inspiration to us all.

Madam Speaker, I join with my colleagues in saluting and honoring the memory of Joseph Petersen and in mourning his passing.

HONORING NEWTOWN HADASSAH

HON. PATRICK J. MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2007

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Newtown, Pennsylvania Chapter of Hadassah on its 20th anniversary. The Newtown Hadassah should be commended for its remarkable efforts as both a women’s organization and an advocate for the Jewish community.

Hadassah was founded in 1926 by Henrietta Szold and has since grown immensely in membership. With chapters in all fifty states and Puerto Rico and with more than 300,000

members in the women’s Zionist organization, Hadassah has bridged the divides among religions, creeds, races, and political beliefs through its presence in more than thirty countries worldwide.

Its primary focuses are in five areas: health, Jewish growth and community, partnerships with Israel, social action and advocacy, and life skills. Through these different areas Hadassah shows its allegiance to the improvement of society, by all and for all.

The Newtown, Pennsylvania Chapter of Hadassah, founded in 1987, celebrates this year their 20th anniversary. It has more than 500 members and these women work to educate themselves and the community about Judaism and Israel. They help others to understand their connections to history and to life in the United States. The members are active in local Jewish and secular communities and reflect the national and international efforts of the greater Hadassah organization.

Madam Speaker, the Newtown Hadassah has spent the last 20 years showing their devotion to our community, enriching our society and strengthening our values. Today, they are working to usher in a new era of Hadassah’s growing membership. It is with great pride that I honor and thank the Newtown Chapter of Hadassah for their tireless work in the past and urge them to continue their great work in the future.

RECOGNIZING CHRISTINA PORRELLO

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly rise to recognize an outstanding individual, Christina Porrello of Kansas City, Missouri, who received a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Art, a double major, from William Jewell College, on May 5, 2007.

The commencement ceremony was held at the Mabee Center for Physical education shortly after the graduating class observed the campus tradition of the last walk around the quad at approximately 1:45 p.m.

Christina has been very active in pursuing her degree, while also participating in many Delta Zeta sorority activities. Christina intends to teach art or special education classes. Also, I want to acknowledge the support of her parents, Joe and Sandie Porrello, and her siblings Andrea, Connie Jo and Joe Jr.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in congratulating Christina Porrello on her achievement and wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors. It is an honor to represent her in the United States Congress.

RECOGNIZING VANDEN HIGH SCHOOL’S STATE CHAMPION ACADEMIC DECATHALON TEAM

HON. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2007

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Vanden High School’s Academic Decathlon Team for winning the Division II State Academic Decathlon Title.