

concerns about European initiatives on poultry and chemicals used to manufacture cosmetics that have a detrimental effect on American farmers and producers. American members also responded to European concerns about the visa waiver program and legislation requiring 100% cargo scanning to ensure port security. In addition, the delegates discussed the challenge of climate change, the importance of energy security, and the current global financial crisis.

Madam Speaker, I would like to place in the RECORD the joint statement that was agreed upon by American and European legislators at the 64th TLD meeting in Ljubljana. It underscores the rich agenda of this meeting and highlights the many areas in which there was strong transatlantic agreement.

TRANSATLANTIC LEGISLATOR'S DIALOGUE—64TH MEETING OF DELEGATIONS FROM THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE UNITED STATES, LJUBLJANA, 24–26 MAY 2008 JOINT STATEMENT

We, Members of the European Parliament and the United States House of Representatives, held our 64th Interparliamentary meeting (Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue) in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 24–26 May 2008.

Building on the joint statement issued following our last meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada, on 5–8 October 2007, we stressed the importance of regular dialogue on a range of political, social and economic issues that affect all of our citizens. We agreed to report back to our parent bodies on the content and outcome of our discussions, particularly in the areas where joint efforts are likely to result in positive outcomes. We agreed that legislators in both sides of the Atlantic should increase dialogue and consultation amongst themselves in order to prevent possible conflicts of legislation. Direct and timely contacts between specialist committees from Congress and the European Parliament—such as those that have occurred within the TLD framework—have been valuable means of reinforcing cooperation; this exchange of information should be continued and enhanced.

We examined a wide array of foreign policy issues, agreeing that joint action by the European Union and the United States is the most effective way to approach problems that affect both sides of the Atlantic. We took stock of recent developments with regard to the Middle East Peace process, the nuclear threat posed by Iran and the situation in Iraq. On Afghanistan, we recognized the need for a joint long-term strategy aimed at stabilizing the internal situation and reducing risks for regional security. We noted a proposal to develop a joint fund for humanitarian services and infrastructure development in Afghanistan. We discussed the future political and economical development in Kosovo, and recognized that joint efforts were essential in order to ensure a peaceful and prosperous future for the Western Balkans, including an EU perspective. We analyzed development in Russia's domestic and foreign policies, including the U.S. Administration's proposed missile defense plans as well as European efforts to diversify their energy supply and ensure their energy security. We also assessed our economic and political relationship with China, expressing concern over recent events in Tibet.

The dialogue focused on the ongoing discussions between the U.S. and the EU in order to extend access to the U.S. Visa Waiver programme in the future to all EU Member States, as well as to the importance of ensuring safe trade and port security.

We also discussed the current global financial crisis. We agreed on the need for contin-

ued discussion and joint actions to address the effects of climate change.

With regard to the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC), we noted with satisfaction the engagement of the TLD on 13 May 2008 with TEC Co-Chairs Gunther Verheugen and Dan Price in the framework of the 'Advisory group'. The European Parliament Resolution on the TEC and the letter by the U.S. TLD leadership to the TEC formed the basis for this dialogue. We took note of the EU–U.S. High Level Regulatory Forum, the joint reports on strengthening cooperation regarding the safety of imported products, and the impact assessment guidelines. We advocated stronger involvement of legislators in contributing to and overseeing these initiatives. We supported the identification of compatible biofuels standards in order to achieve international harmonization at the level of international standards organizations. We also welcomed the joint statement on open investment, as well as the start of the second phase of negotiations for the air services agreement.

We welcome the fact that the TEC has become a permanent feature of the EU/U.S. relations. We also welcome the decision taken on 13 May 2008 to develop a short term agenda and long term roadmap for TEC activities, and consider that this represents an important step towards ensuring the continuity of the process. As we have done throughout the establishment and initial meetings of the TEC, we continue to assert that the TEC initiative should be characterized by transparency and consultation of stakeholders and we call on the EU and U.S. Administration to reinforce the flow of information to the TLD in advance of the TEC meetings. Awareness of the transatlantic impact of proposed legislation and regulations should be developed in the relevant legislative and regulatory bodies, as well as information about the benefits of rapid advancements towards a barrier-free regulatory environment.

Several items have been identified within the TEC agenda that require further legislative consideration: While achieving reciprocity and mutual recognition of security standards remains critically important, we call on the U.S. Congress to review their legislation requiring 100 percent cargo scanning in recognition of European concerns regarding this legislation. We call on the European Parliament to facilitate an early solution to the ongoing discussions on the ban on imports into the EU of U.S. poultry which has undergone pathogen reduction treatment. In regards to the EU's regulation on the registration of chemicals (REACH) we call on the European Commission to bring forward legislation ensuring that European and U.S. producers of cosmetics are treated equitably in their requirement to register substances used in their products with the EU's chemical agency.

Finally, we welcome progress on items contained in the 'lighthouse projects' and related initiatives included in the 2007 Summit declaration. In particular, we call for: Steps towards allowing the use in the United States of suppliers' declarations of conformity for electrical, electronic and ICT products; Further progress towards the mutual recognition of U.S. GAAP and EU IFRS accounting standards; Discussion of U.S. and EU regulatory issues in the insurance sector, in order to enhance market access for brokers-dealers, exchanges and other trading systems; and Progress in other areas of regulatory cooperation, including pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and animal testing.

In conclusion, both sides renewed their commitment to make the TLD's work more relevant to the European Parliament and to the United States House of Representatives.

We agreed to identify ways by which to reinforce the involvement of the TLD and our legislatures in the preparation of the EU/U.S. Summit. We also agreed to further improve the effectiveness of our dialogue in order to realize the full potential of our interparliamentary relationship.

JONATHAN EVANS, MEP,
Chairman, European Parliament Delegation.

BENOIT HAMON, MEP,
Vice Chairman, European Parliament Delegation.

HON. SHELLEY BERKLEY,
Chairwoman, U.S. Congress Delegation.

HON. CLIFF STEARNS,
Vice Chairman (Ranking Republican), U.S. Congress Delegation.

HON. GARY ACKERMAN,
Vice Chairman, U.S. Congress Delegation.

HONORING JACK DOWNEY, UNITED STATES COAST GUARD MASTER CHIEF BOATSWAIN'S MATE

HON. WILLIAM D. DELAHUNT
OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 19, 2008

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, I rise today so that my colleagues in the House of Representatives can join me in honoring the exemplary career of a distinguished member of the United States Coast Guard, and a good friend of mine—Master Chief Boatswain's Mate John E. "Jack" Downey, Ancient Keeper.

Jack Downey has led an exemplary career, having served in the United States Coast Guard for over 40 years. His familiarity with the treacherous local waters around Cape Cod is legendary. He has brought that knowledge to a wide variety of operational, command, and staff assignments over the years, including five Officer-In-Charge multi-mission ashore assignments, two Officer-In-Charge afloat assignments, and a position as a rescue boat crewman for water take-offs and landings.

In 1984, he served as Officer-In-Charge at Station Woods Hole. After a stint in command of Coast Guard Cutter *Towline*, a 65-foot harbor tug/icebreaker, Jack returned to the Cape to take control of Coast Guard Station Chatham, which is located on the elbow of Cape Cod. In Chatham, as my friend and colleague Mr. OBERSTAR already noted, upon taking command, Jack faced a fishing community that had lost faith in the Coast Guard. In a very short period of time, Jack made the Chatham station one of the finest in the Coast Guard and quickly won the respect of the entire Cape Cod fishing community. Downey would also serve as Officer-In-Charge of Station Brant Point in Nantucket and would eventually return to Woods Hole in 2005 to take command of Coast Guard Cutter *Hammerhead*.

It is without question that Jack has served honorably in all of his assignments and has been given numerous awards. Most notably, Jack became the first recipient of the Joshua James Keeper Award—the "Ancient Keeper", which is given to Coast Guard members in recognition of their longevity of service and their outstanding performance in boat forces

operations. Joshua James, referred to as the world's most celebrated lifesaver, rescued over 600 people during his 60 years of service in the 1800s. Jack embodies the traits of Joshua James—traits that all Coast Guardsmen aspire to.

Additionally, the Coast Guard presented to Jack the Meritorious Service Medal with a gold star and operational distinguishing device, the Coast Guard Commendation Medal with three gold stars and operational distinguishing device, and the Letter of Commendation with operational distinguishing device. Jack was also awarded the prestigious Navy League Douglas A. Munro Award for his inspirational leadership and professional competence.

A friend of mine, Retired Rear Admiral Jack Linnon, once called Jack Downey an Officer-in-Charge that he would entrust his own child to; a fact that is especially touching considering the dangers of the profession. "Youngsters turned over to his charge," Linnon said, "when transferred, had grown both in their professional development but also in maturity." Jack's greatest legacy may not be his personal heroics, but the wisdom, guidance and experience he has shared with innumerable Coast Guardsmen, from cadets to commanders.

Since 2006, Jack has served as the District One Command Master Chief at the First District Headquarters in Boston. By leaving this position, the Coast Guard loses one of its finest, most talented men. He has earned the respect and admiration from us and from people throughout New England. On behalf of a very grateful constituency, I want to say thank you to Jack and congratulations on a job well done.

TRIBUTE TO KEITH LAFFMAN

HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 19, 2008

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Madam Speaker, I rise before you today to honor Keith Laffman on his eight years of dedicated service to the Office of the Attending Physician (OAP). Prior to his position at the OAP, Keith served as a physical therapist in the United States Navy, training at Fort Sam Houston in Texas, and then stationed at the Bethesda Navy Medical Center.

Working as a Physical Therapy Technician in the OAP since November of 2000, Keith has consistently maintained close working relationships with the patients he serves. His dedication to his work and patients, along with his ability to organize and manage, made him a competent and effective office manager during much of his tenure at the OAP.

Keith is an integral part of the team in the Attending Physician's office. As a person who has broken many bones and suffered multiple injuries, I can attest to the fact that Keith is one of the most professional, caring, and healing physical therapists I have ever worked with during my time as a patient. In addition to providing basic care to a wide variety of patients, the Office of Attending Physician provides a broad spectrum of services, including emergency evaluations, flu vaccinations, physician referrals, and occupational exams and certifications. Eight separate health units in Con-

gressional and other federal buildings ensure that the OAP is able to provide convenient and quality health care around the Hill.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join with me today to honor Keith Laffman for his committed service to his patients, from visitors and staff to high ranking government officials. It is with great pride that I congratulate Keith for his work at the Office of Attending Physician and his continued exemplary service to our Nation.

HONORING FLORESTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. TIM MAHONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 19, 2008

Mr. MAHONEY of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Floresta Elementary School of Port St. Lucie, Florida. The National Energy Education Development (NEED) Project Youth Award has selected Floresta Elementary as Florida's Rookie Elementary School of the Year. Floresta was also selected as a Finalist for Rookie of the Year Elementary School at the National Level for 2008.

Floresta Elementary's school-wide project, "Floresta Dolphins NEED Energy," gave students from kindergarten through the fifth grade the opportunity to learn about renewable and non-renewable energy resources. Students in the fifth grade specifically focused on wind energy and worked to increase community awareness regarding Florida Power and Light's wind turbine project on the local coastline. The entire school also took part in Energy Star's Change a Light, Change the World campaign that encourages citizens to conserve energy by switching to more energy efficient light bulbs.

I am proud that the teachers, staff, and students of Floresta Elementary School are working to educate themselves and their community on what we can do to meet our country's critical energy needs.

I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating Floresta Elementary School.

THE DAILY 45: IT'S THE NATION'S PROBLEM

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 19, 2008

Mr. RUSH. Madam Speaker, the Department of Justice tells us that, everyday, 45 people, on average, are fatally shot in the United States. The reflections I continue to share happen in communities big and small, everyday, all across our nation. Like Chicago, the city of Los Angeles is having its own unprecedented wave of deadly gun violence.

Earlier this month, during the weekend of June 7 and 8, the Los Angeles Times reported that 14 people lost their lives to violence with most of those dying at the hands of a gun. That's 14 people who lost their lives in one weekend in only 48 hours! Why no national outrage over this senseless violence? Even though the headlines read that many of these deaths "appear to be gang-related," those

who died—regardless of their age, their economic status or their race—are children of God. They had lives that mattered to somebody. They certainly mattered to me.

Americans of conscious must come together to stop the senseless death of "The Daily 45." When will we say 'enough is enough, stop the killing!'

THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY COMMUNICATIONS AND VIDEO ACCESSIBILITY ACT OF 2008

HON. HEATHER WILSON

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 19, 2008

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, the advancement of technology over the last 20 years has revolutionized daily life for Americans. Most of us use some form of technology every day. Cell phones, computers, iPods, webcasts, and televisions are everywhere.

User-friendly technology is also important for people with disabilities. Televisions, computers, and cellular devices are available to the public at-large, but, unlike the "plain old telephone" there are no requirements to ensure that every American is able to use them. Technology can enable the disabled with things like specialized hardware that simulates the human voice reading the computer screen. Assistive or adaptive technology has taken down many barriers to education and employment for disabled Americans. The technology is there, and now we need to encourage its national availability.

Alice Marshall is a mother of two from Albuquerque, New Mexico. She works for the Bureau of Land Management and when she was watching the news a few weeks ago, northern areas of New Mexico were receiving warnings of possible tornados in the area. She was not aware of this news because it was scrolling across the emergency ticker at the bottom of the screen and Alice is blind. The only audio descriptor technology available to her has to be ordered by mail and costs about \$100.

Another constituent, Priscilla Stansbury, a grandmother caring for her 3 grandchildren, is not able to get information easily about snow days and school cancellation. She is blind and tells me that school cancellation and amber alert information generally runs along the bottom of her TV screen with no audio that she can hear.

The Twenty-first Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2008 would require that IP-enabled communication equipment manufactured in the United States have a built-in speaker and a closed captioning decoder. The speaker and decoder would allow Americans with visual and hearing impairments to access the Internet, computers, and cellular devices. Furthermore, it would ensure that IP enabled equipment is manufactured to be accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.

Most Americans get emergency information over the radio, the television or the Internet. Warnings about tornados, such as the one we received on Capitol Hill the other week, should be accessible to all Americans. This bill would require audio and visual accessibility for those who are deaf and blind.