

very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 175, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Morgan has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Morgan has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Morgan Walker Martz for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

APRIL 15TH—TAX DAY

HON. MICHAEL T. MCCAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 15, 2008

Mr. MCCAUL of Texas. Madam Speaker, once again the Tax Man cometh. Today, April 15, is the day American taxpayers scramble to comply with a tax code, over 67,000 pages long.

In 2007, individual taxpayers spent an estimated 3.18 billion hours complying with the Federal income tax laws. Individuals spend \$26.5 billion for tax software, tax preparers, postage, and other costs related to filing their Federal income tax, while corporations spend \$156.5 billion to comply with Federal tax laws. Americans may send two and a half trillion dollars to the IRS, but the cost to our economy is much greater. Despite this, the majority party is forcing a \$654 billion tax increase on the American people, the largest in American history.

It's time to scrap the IRS and this oppressive tax code. It's time to look at the fair tax or the flat tax as viable alternatives to our overly burdensome tax code. It's time to stop punishing taxpayers and pass fundamental tax reform.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 15, 2008

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Speaker, I was unable to be present for three rollcall votes on April 14th. If I had been present for those votes, I would have voted as follows:

First, on rollcall No. 183, to suspend the rules and pass H. Res. 886, Expressing sympathy to the victims and families of the tragic acts of violence in Colorado Springs, Colorado and Arvada, Colorado, as a cosponsor of the resolution I would have voted "yes."

As the resolution reminds us all, on Sunday, December 9, 2007, a troubled individual was responsible for killing several innocent people and injuring others at, first, the Youth With a Mission facility in Arvada and, a few hours later, at the New Life Church in the Colorado Springs Area—where he was fatally shot by Jeanne Assam, a volunteer private security guard.

The resolution rightly commends Ms. Assam and the quick response of local first respond-

ers in the city of Arvada and in Jefferson County as well as those in El Paso County and Colorado Springs who, assisted by Federal authorities and medical professionals limited the danger to the church and local community. And it offers the heartfelt condolences of the House of Representatives to the victims and families of these tragic acts of violence in Colorado and conveys our gratitude to Jeanne Assam, city and county officials, as well as the police, fire, sheriff, Federal authorities, and emergency medical teams whose quick response saved lives.

Second, on rollcall No. 184, to suspend the rules and pass H. Res. 994, regarding National Glanzmann's Thrombasthenia Awareness Day, I would have voted "yes."

And, third, on rollcall No. 185, to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3548, as amended, the Plain Language in Government Communications Act, as a cosponsor of that measure I would have voted "yes."

H.R. 3548 requires Federal agencies to use plain language in government documents related to obtaining a service or a benefit. It responds to the fact that government documents often are complex and difficult to understand, particularly when they are not written clearly. To address this problem, President Clinton in 1998 issued a memorandum that, in part, required Federal agencies to use plain language in all documents that explain how to obtain a benefit or service. However, while a few agencies still maintain plain language programs, efforts to promote plain language have waned. H.R. 3548 defines plain language and requires agencies to use plain language in any new document that explains how to obtain a service or a benefit or that is relevant to obtaining a service or a benefit. The bill ensures that many of the letters, forms, and other documents that people receive from the government will be written in a clear, understandable way. Under this bill, for example, the Social Security Administration would be required to use plain language in letters that provide beneficiaries information about Social Security.

I joined in cosponsoring the bill because I think it is important for those of us in government to do more to communicate clearly with our employers, the American people, and I hope that the Senate will join the House in giving prompt approval to the legislation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 15, 2008

Mr. RUSH. Madam Speaker, during the week of February 25–29, 2008, I was unavoidably absent from rollcall votes 69–87.

Had I been present I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote 69, H. Res. 978, "yea" on rollcall vote 70, H. Res. 930, "yea" on rollcall vote 71, H. Res. 944, "yea" on rollcall vote 74, H. Res. 974, "yea" on rollcall vote 75, H.R. 3521 the Sires of New Jersey Amendment, "yea" on rollcall vote 76, H.R. 3521 the Meek of Florida Amendment, "yea" on rollcall vote 81, H. Res. 1001, "nay" on rollcall vote 83, H.R. 5351 on Motion to Recommit with Instructions, "yea" on rollcall vote 84, H.R. 5351, "yea" on rollcall vote 85, S. 2272, "yea" on rollcall vote 86, H.R. 4454, "yea" on rollcall vote 87, H.R. 4454.

Madam Speaker, during the week of March 3–7, 2008, I was unavoidably absent from rollcall votes 88–106.

Had I been present I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote 88, H.R. 1143, "yea" on rollcall vote 89, H.R. 1311, "yea" on rollcall vote 90, H.R. 816, "yea" on rollcall vote 91, H.R. 4191, "yea" on rollcall vote 92, H. Con. Res. 278, "yea" on rollcall vote 93, H. Res. 951, "yea" on rollcall vote 96, H. Res. 1014, "yea" on rollcall vote 97, H.R. 4774, "yea" on rollcall vote 98, H. Con. Res. 286, "nay" on rollcall vote 100, H.R. 1424 the Motion to Recommit with Instructions, "yea" on rollcall vote 101, H.R. 1424, "yea" on rollcall vote 102, H.R. 5400, "yea" on rollcall vote 104, H. Res. 1015, "nay" on rollcall vote 105, H.R. 2857 the Flake of Arizona Amendment, "yea" on rollcall vote 106, H.R. 2857 the Inslee of Washington Amendment.

Madam Speaker, during the week of March 10–14, 2008, I was unavoidably absent from rollcall votes 108–145.

Had I been present I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote 108, H. Res. 537, "yea" on rollcall vote 109, H.R. 3196, "yea" on rollcall vote 110, H.R. 4166, "yea" on rollcall vote 115, H. Res. 924, "yea" on rollcall vote 116, Motion, "yea" on rollcall vote 117, H.R. 2082, "yea" on rollcall vote 118, H. Res. 948, "yea" on rollcall vote 119, H. Res. 493, "yea" on rollcall vote 122, H. Res. 1031, "yea" on rollcall vote 130, H. Res. 1036, "yea" on rollcall vote 131, H.R. 5563, "yea" on rollcall vote 132, H. Con. Res. 316, "yea" on rollcall vote 133, H. Res. 936, "yea" on rollcall vote 134, S. 2733, "yea" on rollcall vote 137, H. Con. Res. 312 Kilpatrick of Michigan Amendment, "yea" on rollcall vote 138, H. Con. Res. 312 Lee of California Amendment, "nay" on rollcall vote 140, H. Con. Res. 312 Ryan of Wisconsin Amendment, "yea" on rollcall vote 141, H. Con. Res. 312, "yea" on rollcall vote 142, H. Res. 991, "yea" on rollcall vote 143, H. Res. 1041 On Ordering the Previous Question, "yea" on rollcall vote 144, H. Res. 1041 On Agreeing to the Resolution, "yea" on rollcall vote 145, H.R. 3773.

Madam Speaker, during the week of March 31–April 4, 2008, I was unavoidably absent from rollcall votes 147–160.

Had I been present I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote 147, H.R. 3352, "yea" on rollcall vote 148, H.R. 2675, "yea" on rollcall vote 149, H. Con. Res. 302, "yea" on rollcall vote 150, H. Con. Res. 310, "yea" on rollcall vote 151, H. Res. 1005, "yea" on rollcall vote 152, H. Res. 1021, "yea" on rollcall vote 154, H. Res. 1065 On Ordering the Previous Question, "yea" on rollcall vote 155, H. Res. 1065 On Agreeing to the Resolution, "yea" on rollcall vote 156, H.R. 5501 Carson of Indiana Amendment, "nay" on rollcall vote 157, H.R. 5501 On Motion to Recommit with Instructions, "yea" on rollcall vote 158, H.R. 5501 On Passage, "nay" on rollcall vote 159, H.R. 4847 On Motion to Recommit with Instructions, "yea" on rollcall vote 160, H.R. 4847 On Passage.

Madam Speaker, during the week of April 7–11, 2008, I was unavoidably absent from rollcall votes 161–182.

Had I been present I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote 161, H.J. Res. 70, "yea" on rollcall vote 162, H.R. 2464, "yea" on rollcall vote 163, S. 793, "yea" on rollcall vote 164, H. Res. 1084 On Ordering the Previous Question, "yea" on rollcall vote 165, H. Res.

1084 On Agreeing to the Resolution, "yea" on rollcall vote 166, H. Res. 1077, "yea" on rollcall vote 167, H.R. 2016 the Grijalva of Arizona Amendment, "nay" on rollcall vote 168, H.R. 2016 the Bishop of Utah Amendment, "nay" on rollcall vote 169, H.R. 2016 the Bishop of Utah Amendment, "nay" on rollcall vote 170, H.R. 2016 the Bishop of Utah Amendment, "yea" on rollcall vote 171, H.R. 2016 the Altmire of Pennsylvania Amendment, "nay" on rollcall vote 172, H.R. 2016 the Pearce of New Mexico Amendment, "nay" on rollcall vote 173, H.R. 2016 On Motion to Recommit with Instructions, "yea" on rollcall vote 174, H.R. 2016 On Passage, "yea" on rollcall vote 175, H.R. 2419, "yea" on rollcall vote 176, H.R. 5489, "yea" on rollcall vote 177, H.R. 5472, "yea" on rollcall vote 179, H. Res. 1083, "yea" on rollcall vote 180, H. Res. 1038, "yea" on rollcall vote 181, H. Res. 1092, "nay" on rollcall vote 182, H.R. 2537 the Flake of Arizona Amendment.

THE DAILY 45: 23 CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOL CHILDREN KILLED TO DATE

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 15, 2008

Mr. RUSH. Madam Speaker, today, Americans across the country are engaging in a debate on whether or not they are bitter. Whether it's bitterness about guns or bitterness about the economy.

Madam Speaker, this debate is a diversion from the real issue of the plague of gun violence in our communities. I rise, today, to mourn the gun-related deaths of far too many young people who were students at Chicago's public schools. As of today, that number stands at 23—all but two of those deaths was due to gun violence.

That's 23 young people who, in the pursuit of what other families take for granted—getting an education—have to duck and cover just to learn how to read and write.

Shannon Brown, 17, is the latest student to die from a gunshot. Described by his younger brother, Keishawn, as a "good big brother," Brown was a happy and responsible child who enjoyed school and hanging out with his friends. He became the victim of gun violence following a fist fight in his neighborhood.

Like a scene from a bad Hollywood movie, he stumbled toward his home, while bleeding profusely, and collapsed on the stairs. Last week, law enforcement captured his alleged assailant, the 26-year-old who Shannon had bested in the fist fight.

When will Americans say "enough is enough? Stop the killings!"

INTRODUCTION OF THE ROTH TSP ACT OF 2008

HON. THELMA D. DRAKE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 15, 2008

Ms. DRAKE. Madam Speaker, today is tax day. This is a day when all Americans are reminded of the federal government's treatment

of their hard-earned money, investments, and retirement savings. Our servicemembers in Iraq and Afghanistan think about these issues as well. I firmly believe it is time to improve the options at their disposal to secure a comfortable retirement after their service to our Nation.

Currently, two common options available in the private sector used as retirement savings tools are the Individual Retirement Account (IRA) and a 401(k), which is an employer-sponsored retirement plan where the employer matches the employee's contributions up to a specified limit. Both can be structured as either a "Traditional" or "Roth" plan.

Many are familiar with the Roth and Traditional IRA options as Roth IRAs have been around since 1998. However, a Roth 401(k) is a fairly new option that is similar to the Roth IRA in that it allows after-tax contributions to fund tax-free retirement income.

The Roth 401(k) option was established as part of the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 (EGTRRA) and went into effect on January 1, 2006. The Pension Protection Act of 2006, signed into law by President Bush on August 17, 2006, makes the Roth 401(k) permanent, removing the December 31, 2010 expiration date that previously was in force.

Traditional IRA and 401(k) plans are funded through tax-deferred contributions or "before-tax" contributions, which means the money contributed is taken out of a person's pay before Federal and, in almost all cases, state income taxes are withheld. Any earnings are also tax-deferred. This means that an individual does not pay income taxes on contributions and earnings in their IRA or 401(k) account until their money is withdrawn, usually at retirement.

With a Roth plan, an individual does not receive the tax deduction for their contribution, but all the money in the account grows tax-free and can be withdrawn tax-free subject to certain criteria. For many, the Roth is the better deal.

As such, more and more companies have started to offer Roth 401(k)s since they were allowed to start doing so two years ago, and many firms that don't yet provide this option are considering adding it in the future.

However, in a glaring omission, this same option has not been extended to the federal Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), which is the federal government's in-house 401(k) retirement savings plan for the federal workforce and our men and women in uniform.

That is why today I have introduced the Roth TSP Act of 2008. This bill will simply provide the same 401(k) options available in the private sector to participants in the TSP. Currently, there are 3.9 million account holders in the TSP. These include civilians who are employed by the U.S. Government and our military personnel.

Our men and women in uniform and the federal workforce may find the option to structure their retirement plans as a Roth TSP to be a better deal. My legislation will place the same options available in the private sector at their disposal and provide another option when considering their long term financial and retirement planning. Allowing this option could provide greater growth potential and greater return on investment for their retirement savings than under the traditional TSP structure.

Consider the potential benefit to our military. If military personnel serve in a combat zone

as an enlisted person or as a warrant officer for any part of a month, all military pay received for military service in that month is excluded from their gross income. For commissioned officers, the monthly exclusion is capped at the highest enlisted pay, plus any hostile fire or imminent danger pay received. With a Roth TSP, these individuals could earn this pay tax-free, grow their investment in their Roth TSP, and then withdraw it all tax-free after age 59½, having never been required to pay taxes on the invested money.

The men and women of our military worry about consequences on a day-to-day basis that most Americans never even consider. The least we can do in return is provide our service members with choices and options that will allow them to plan for their future and help to ensure that they never have to worry about a secure retirement.

WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD

SPEECH OF

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 14, 2008

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, let me take this means to add my voice of support to the Head Start program. As you know, since the program began more than 40 years ago, it has served millions of low-income children and their families across the United States.

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to visit Head Start centers across Missouri's 4th Congressional District, which I have the honor to represent in Congress. I am always impressed by the dedicated staff who do so many good things to help prepare the children for their school careers. Every child in America has the right to a good start in life. It can make all the difference in their future. By partnering with parents to promote early childhood development, which is so critical, Head Start helps make sure that those futures are not jeopardized on the basis of a family's income.

This year, I have continued my strong support for Head Start funding and will work with my colleagues in the days ahead to see that this vital program's future is secure. Children truly are the hope of our Nation. They will be the leaders of tomorrow, and we owe it to them to see they have every opportunity to succeed.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EDGE HILL FIRE COMPANY

HON. ALLYSON Y. SCHWARTZ

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 15, 2008

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate the Edge Hill Fire Company on the celebration of their 100th anniversary. Beginning in 1908 with just a few volunteers and hand drawn equipment, the Edge Hill Fire Company has developed into a modern, professional fire company.

In Philadelphia 272 years ago, Benjamin Franklin started the first fire department in